

Sermon Notes for March 1, 2015

Marks Of A Disciple Of Jesus Sermon Series
“The Disciple Of Jesus Is Totally Committed To Him”
John 12:20-26

Video - grandfather

Introduction

A. The Reason For This Current Sermon Series

1. Today, we continue our new sermon series on “Marks of a Disciple of Jesus”
 - a. never in my ministry have I felt a greater need to preach such a series as this
 - b. never before have I sensed in the church that there is a wavering and a failure of believers to realize what a disciple of Jesus Christ truly is
 - c. never before have I sensed a shift in the lives of believers who really think that “it is all about them”
 1. it seems rather obvious to me that many believers have been overtaken with society’s effort to make you happy
 2. a local Honda dealer; “Come to _____ Honda Where It’s All About You”
 3. Self magazine
 4. our lack of patience when we don’t get instant gratification
 - a. a slow internet connection
 - b. our I-phones don’t work immediately
 - c. we don’t want to wait in line at the grocery store, so we check ourselves out at the self check-out area
 - d. and, that view of self **HAS** to affect the way we look at churches
 1. “I didn’t like the choice of songs at worship today.”
 2. “The sermon was boring and did not hold my attention.”
 3. “As I shop for a church, I want to “feel good” or I will keep looking for another church.”
2. As believers in Jesus, we **CANNOT** establish our view of life based on what our society does
3. as believers; we **MUST** focus our view of life on the Word of God and the work of Jesus Christ in our lives.
4. I began this sermon series on “The Marks or Attitudes of a Disciple of Jesus”
 - a. we **first** looked at the need to be born again
 1. before a person can become a disciple of Jesus, they must first become a Christian
 2. and, the only way that this can happen is that the person must be saved: born again; born from above
 - b. the **second** step in being a disciple of Jesus is that the believer must become committed to the lordship of Jesus Christ
 1. it is my opinion that most believers do not truly understand the lordship of Jesus in their lives at their conversion

2. for most of us, including me, we made “another decision” after our conversion
 - a. for many of us, it took months or even years to actually understand our conversion
 - b. but then, we begin to realize that Jesus wanted more than “a part” of me; He wanted all of me
 - c. let me ask you a question; as a believer:
 1. when did you get saved?
 2. now; when did you give your life totally to Jesus?
 3. some of you will say that you gave your life to Jesus **at** your conversion
 4. while the majority of you will say that you committed your life to Jesus sometime **after** your conversion

B. The Representation Of Spiritual Commitment In Scripture

1. Much of Scripture seems to be calling Christians **to commit** their lives to Jesus
 - a. **Matthew 16:24** – “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone would come after me, **he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**”
 - b. **Luke 17:33** – “Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and **whoever loses his life will preserve it.**”
 - c. **Romans 12:1** – “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, **to offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”
 - d. **Philippians 1:21** – “For to me, **to live is Christ and to die is gain.**”
 - e. **Revelation 3:15-16** – “ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish you were either one or the other!** So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”
2. Let me ask you a question; if all believers have given their life fully to Jesus, why does Scripture speak so many times to believers to live a committed life?
3. today, we look at yet another verse that calls the believer to commit his life fully to Jesus:

John 12: 23-26 – “Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of corn falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

I. The MODEL OF JESUS In His Commitment

A. THE COMMITMENT Of Jesus In His Ministry

1. Let me ask you a question; why **DID JESUS CHRIST COME TO THIS EARTH?**
 - a. was it so that He could enjoy “a vacation” from being in heaven?

- b. did He just “need a break” from being in glory?
 - c. there is one reason and one reason alone why Jesus Christ came to this earth; that was to die for the sins of man
2. **THUS; JESUS IS OUR MODEL FOR BEING HIS DISCIPLE!**
- a. Jesus’ time on this earth was NEVER about Him
 - b. He NEVER complained because He did not get what He wanted
 - c. Jesus clearly stated His reason for coming to this earth in **Matthew 20:28** – “Just as the Son of Man **did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.**”
 - 1. the word, not is an absolute negative in the greek; “The Son of man did **NOT** come to be served.”
 - 2. the word serve is the greek word; diakonia
 - a. to minister to another
 - b. to wait on another
 - 3. in other words, Jesus did **NOT** come to this earth to be waited on by others **BUT TO WAIT ON OTHERS HIMSELF!**
 - 4. essentially, Jesus “died to self” to come to this earth.

Pastor Antonio Torrence – “We have trouble coming to church and losing something. We come to **get** something. We come to **get** a blessing – be it financial, relational, or spiritual. We come to get an encouraging word, some hope for tomorrow, and some assurance that everything is going to be all right. **We do not come to church to lose.** Instead, we pray, “Lord, **give me** a financial breakthrough. Lord, **give me** some peace of mind. Lord, **give me** a better husband. Lord, **give me** a well-behaved child.” After all, **who sets out on a journey to lose?** That doesn’t make sense to us. We have been told that, in this world, it is best to be a winner. It is best to get all that you can get and to do all that you can to hold on to what you have gotten. **No one wants to lose.**”
3. today, we want to hear what God expects of His disciples.

B. THE CULMINATION Of Jesus’ Commitment In His Ministry

John 12:23 – “Jesus replied, “**The hour has come** for the Son of Man to be glorified.”

1. While it was true that, Jesus **had** come to this earth, fully prepared to die on the cross, “**it was not yet time**”
 - a. at the **wedding at Cana** – **John 2:4** – “ “Dear woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “**My time has not yet come.**”
 - b. at the **feast in Jerusalem** – **John 7:4-6** – “No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” For even his own brothers did not believe in him. Therefore Jesus told them, “The right time for me has **not yet come.**”
 - c. **when the people wanted to lay hands on Jesus** – **John 8:20** – “He spoke these words while teaching in the Temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized Him, **because His time had not yet come.**”

2. **BUT NOW, Jesus said; “The hour has come** for the Son of Man to be glorified.”
John 12:23 – “Jesus replied, “**The hour has come** for the Son of Man to be glorified.”
 - a. The time **had** come for Jesus Christ to fulfill the task that He had come to the earth to do
 - b. It **was** time for Jesus to make the ultimate sacrifice; to give His life for the sins of man
3. In fact, the greek word for **hour** meant; “a point of season when an appointed action is to begin”

II. THE MESSAGE OF JESUS In His Commitment

A. The ILLUSTRATION Of Jesus In His Commitment

Vs. 24 – “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of corn falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

1. as Jesus was absolutely committed to His own mission on this earth, He then communicated the same expectation of His disciples
2. in making the comparison to His own death, Jesus used the illustration of the planting of a kernel of corn
 - a. the kernel of corn that was **NOT** planted
 “unless a kernel of corn falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed.”
 1. if there was a kernel of corn that was **NOT** planted, then it would remain “a single seed”
 2. those of us who plant seed in the fall; if we do not plant the seeds, we have no grass
 3. in a sense, the seed is “safe and saved”
 - b. however, if you **DO** plant the kernel of corn, you **can** feed the world from th at one kernel
 “but if it dies, it produces many seeds.”
 1. in a typical ear of corn, there are 800 kernels on 18 rows
 2. with 2 to 5 ears per stalk
 3. so, 5 ears X 800 kernels = 4000 kernels per stalk
 4. there are approximately 30,000 corn stalks per acre; that produce a total of 120 million kernels of corn
 5. if you plant 120 million kernels, you will produce another 480 billion kernels of corn
3. This is a great illustration of this kind of “dying to self”:

Discipleship Journal, Skip Gray writes:

When Joseph Ton was a Pastor in Romania before the fall of Communism, he was arrested by the secret police. Pastor Ton had published a sermon calling for the churches in Romania to refuse to submit to the communist government’s demand for control over their ministries. When an official told the Pastor that he must renounce his sermon, Ton replied; “**No sir, I won’t do that.**” The official, surprised that anyone would respond so forcefully to the secret police, said, “**Aren’t you aware that I can use force against you?**”

“**Sir, let me explain something to you,**” Ton said. “**You see, your supreme weapon is killing. My supreme weapon is dying . . . You know that my**

sermons are spread all over the country on tapes. When you kill me, I only sprinkle them with my blood. They will speak 10 times louder after that, because everybody will say, ‘That preacher meant it because he sealed it with his blood.’ So go on, sir, kill me. When you kill me, I will win the supreme victory.” The secret police released the Pastor, knowing that his martyrdom would be far more of a problem than his sermon.

B. THE IMPLICATION Of Jesus In His Commitment

1. On the one hand, if the believer “keeps” his kernel of corn and does not “plant it;”
 - a. he will be safe
 - b. he will be kept
 - c. **and**, he will never make any real impact
2. **BUT**, if the believer “dies to self,” and “plants” his kernel of corn, the believer can reproduce “exponentially” in terms of spiritual impact
3. **PLEASE NOTICE THE MEANING OF THE GREEK WORDS IN THIS VERSE:**
 - a. “unless a kernel of corn falls to the ground and dies, it **remains only a single seed.**”
 1. the kernel does **not “fall”**
 - a. to descend from a high place to a lower place
 - b. to be prostrated
 - c. to be cast down from a state of prosperity
 - d. to lose authority
 2. the kernel does **not “die”**
 - a. to perish
 - b. the violent death of man or animal
 3. the kernel **“remains only a single seed”**
 - a. remain
 1. abides
 2. sojourn
 3. to continue
 4. present active indicative
 - b. a single seed
 1. alone
 2. forsaken
 3. destitute of help
 4. without a companion
 - b. “if a kernel of corn **“does die”**
 1. the kernel of corn dies
 2. **“it produces many seeds”**
 - a. “it produces”
 1. to bear
 2. to bring forth
 3. to endure

- b. “many seeds”
 - 1. many
 - a. many
 - b. large
 - c. great
 - 2. seeds
 - a. fruit
 - b. posterity
 - c. advantage
 - d. profit
 - e. to reap a harvest
- 4. **DO YOU REALIZE WHAT JESUS IS SAYING TO THE CHRISTIAN?**
 - a. as long as the believer “hangs on” to the control of his life
 - 1. he will be safe
 - 2. he will be satisfied with himself
 - 3. **but**, he will not be a blessing to anyone but himself
 - b. however, when a believer “gives up” the control of his life, there is no telling what God can do with his sacrificial life
 - 1. if one stalk of corn can produce billions of kernels of corn, what can happen to the believer who dies to self and turns over the control of his life to Jesus?
 - 2. my house fire in Mississippi
 - a. we hired an Interior Decorator after our fire to decorate our house
 - b. but, I wanted control of my house
 - c. because the decorator was a friend of my wife’s family, they told me to “trust her”
 - d. in the end, I had to admit that she did a great job because I let go of the control of my house
 - 1. we loved her colors
 - 2. we love her fabrics
 - 3. and, when we moved to Knoxville, we copied what she did in our house in Mississippi

III. THE MESSAGE Of Commitment To Believers

A. The Believer At His Salvation

- 1. If you were like me; I got saved and struggled to realize what had happened to me
 - a. what had I just done?
 - b. who was Jesus and what impact would He make in my life?
 - c. could I live my life like I had always lived or did I have to change everything about me?
 - d. for almost a year, I tried to live “on both sides of the street”
 - 1, to live as a non-believer
 - 2. as well as a believer
 - 3. **AT THE SAME TIME!**
- 2. However, after about a year of living this way, God got my attention

- a. I attended a youth conference in Pensacola, Florida
- b. all of that week the Preacher was preaching “directly at me” about giving my whole life **to** Jesus
 1. yes, I was a Christian
 2. but, no one was going to control my life but me
 3. because, for the first 17 years of my life, I had lived the life of a monk in a monastery
 - a. my mother was a real “Puritan”
 - b. and I was sick and tired of being a “goody two shoes”
 - c. I was going to college and I wanted to be on my own
- c. **BUT**, by the end of the week, God had used that preacher to get my attention
 1. I had realized that I could not spiritually walk on “both sides of the street”
 2. **I had** to give up the control of my life
 3. so later, during that week, I relinquished
 - a. I gave it up
 - b. I surrendered to Jesus
 - c. I told Him that I would go anywhere, do anything and be anything that He wanted me to be
 - d. that is really where my Christian life began to take shape

B. The Believer And His Struggle

1. Where are you in your spiritual life?

- a. have you already made the decision to die to self?
- b. have you already taken the conscious steps to tell God that He can have it all: that you will hold nothing back?
- c. one of the ways that you will **know** that you have made this decision is this:
 1. you want, more than anything else, to live for Jesus
 2. no longer are you living just for yourself; you are living to serve Jesus **and** to serve others
 3. and, when you fall into sin, you can’t wait to confess your sin and get back to your walk of peace with Jesus

2. Or, are you still holding on to the controls of your spiritual life?

- a. Are you hating this message? Is your heart rebelling at the call of Jesus to give up the control of your life?
- b. Are you yelling in your spirit: **LEAVE ME ALONE!** I want to be in control of my life!
- c. But, underneath all of your rebelliousness, you are not at peace
 1. you know that you have a divided heart
 2. and, because of that, you don’t know where you truly fit
 - a. you don’t really fit in the church
 - b. and, you don’t really fit in the world
 - c. as one man said, “you are like the man in the Confederate shirt and the Yankee pants; you are being shot at by both sides

Conclusion:

1. We have a model of how we are to live the Christian life
 - a. it is the model of Jesus, who died to self by leaving His perfect, holy heaven
 - b. who died to self to serve and minister while He was on this earth
 - c. the setting of our text is right before the Passover meal before he would be arrested

Pastor Scott Cramer – “This was the night that Jesus **CHOSE**. He **CHOSE** to walk the lonesome valley. He **CHOSE** to give up his life. He **CHOSE** to submit Himself to the executioner’s cross. He **CHOSE** this path freely and confidently.”
 - d. so, if you want an idea of what it means to be a disciple, then look at Jesus and how He died to self
2. now, if Jesus is our model of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus
 - a. have you, like Him, died to self?
 - b. or, are you hanging on to the control of your life?
3. **Max Lucado**, in his book **Six Hours One Friday**, tells the story of a missionary in Brazil who discovered a tribe of Indians in a remote part of the jungle near a large river. The tribe needed medical attention because a contagious disease was ravaging the population and the tribe was desperately in need of medication. Many of them actually needed to be hospitalized. People were dying every day. There was a hospital not very far away, but in order to get to the hospital you had to cross a river. The people of the tribe would not cross the river because they believed that evil spirits lived in that river. They were certain that to enter the water would mean certain death. The missionary explained that he had crossed the river and nothing evil had happened to him, but the Indians were not convinced. The missionary then took the tribe to the bank of the river and placed his hand in the water. Still they wouldn’t go in. He then decided to walk into the water up to his waist. He even splashed water on his face, but it made no difference. The tribe was still afraid to enter the river. Finally, the missionary dove into the river and swam beneath the surface until he emerged on the other side. Once there, he smiled and raised a triumphant hand into the air. He had entered the river and lived. It was only then that the people of the tribe broke into a cheer and followed him across.