

“JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA”

Text: John 19:28-42
Subject: “How The Burial Of Jesus Inspires Great Faith”

Introduction

Fact: Two groups of people were involved in the burial of Jesus:

#1. The Roman soldiers (vs. 31-27) and

#2. The Jewish believers (vs. 38-42)

Fact: The Roman soldiers were permitted by Pilate to set a guard at the tomb:

◆ The guard would put an official Roman seal on the stone.

Fact: The two believers were lead by God to give Jesus a decent burial (in fulfillment of prophecy):

◆ The two believers were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

(Every Evangelist Adds To This Account)

#1. Matthew says:

“When the evening was come, a **rich man** of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was Jesus’ disciple; went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus...and laid it in his own (Joseph) tomb” (Matthew 27:57-60)

#2. Mark says:

“Joseph of Arimathea, and **honorable counselor**, which also **waited for the kingdom of God**, came and **went boldly** unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus...and Pilate gave the body to Joseph”. (Mark 15:42-46)

#3. Luke says:

“And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a **good man** and just (righteous). The same was a member of the Jewish high council and **did not agree with the decision and action of the other religious leaders**. Joseph took the body down from the cross, wrapped it in a long linen cloth and laid it in **his new tomb**”. (Luke 23:50-53)

#4. John says:

“And after this (the crucifixion) Joseph of Arimathea, being a **disciple of Jesus**, but **secretly for fear** of the Jews, besought Pilate for the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes...there they laid Jesus in a new tomb, never used before”. (John 19:38-42)

I. The Promises Of God To Your Heart

Question: How does Jesus’ burial reveal the truthfulness of God’s promises to you?

Answer: Because the burial of Jesus reveals that what God promised would happen to Jesus, (actually did happen).

#1. The **unbroken bones** of Jesus

“The soldiers broke the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified, but when they came to Jesus, **they brake not his legs**” (John 19:32 & 33)

Question: Why is this so incredible?

Answer: Because the Roman soldiers **did not do** what they were commanded to do (which was) break the victims legs:

“The Jewish leaders didn’t want the victims hanging there the next day which was the Sabbath, so they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths **by ordering that their legs be broken**, (so their bodies could be taken down)”. (v. 31) (**In Other Words**)

Question: Why didn’t the Roman soldiers do what they were supposed to do?

Answer: Because God is always true to His promises, (He had said:)

◆ “Neither shall ye break a bone thereof” (Exodus 12:46)

(Pg. 1 of 4)

- ◆ “They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it, according to all the ordinances of the Passover” (Numbers 9:12)
- ◆ “He keepeth all His bones, not one of them is broken” (Psalm 34:20)

#2. The pierced side of Jesus

“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water”. (John 19:34)

Fact: The Roman soldiers were not supposed to pierce the side of Jesus.

Fact: The soldiers (at crucifixions) would hasten the death of the crucified by smashing their legs with an iron mallet.

Fact: This would make it impossible for the victim to push up with the legs to get air for breathing (and the victim quickly expired).

Question: So why did the soldiers pierce the side of Jesus?

Answer: Because God is always true to His promises, (He had said:)

- ◆ “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one who mourns for his only son”. (Zechariah 12:10)
- ◆ “Behold, He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him”. (Revelation 1:7)

#3. The place of burial

“Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid”. (John 19:41)

Question: Why is this verse so incredible?

Answer: Because bodies of crucified people were normally thrown into a trench in a field.

Question: Then why was Jesus buried in a rich man’s tomb (Josephs) with 75 pounds of spices provided by Nicodemus?

Answer: Because God is always true to His promises, (He had said:)

- ◆ “The suffering Servant will be assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death”. (Isaiah 53:9)

Question: Why is there such incredible faith building in the burial of Jesus?

Answer: John 19:36 & 37 give the answer:

“For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of Him shall not be broken”.

“And again, another Scripture saith, they shall look on Him whom they pierced”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The bones, piercing and grave site speak to your heart in a wonderful way!

(They Are Saying To You)

- #1. That God will always keep His Word to you!
- #2. That God is worthy to be trusted with every area of your life!
- #3. That God cannot lie and will do what He has promised you!
- #4. That faith still moves mountains, so believe the Lord for the impossible!

II. The Providence Of God In Your Life

Question: What is the providence of God?

Answer: The English word “**Providence**” comes from two Latin words:

- #1. “**Pro**” (which means “Before”)
- #2. “**Video**” (which means “To see”)

(The Providence Of God In Your Life Means:)

- #1...That God “**goes before**” you to prepare the path for you to walk in.
- #2...That God “**sees ahead**” and orchestrates events that you don’t even know about.

Question: How does the burial of Jesus reveal the providence of God to you?

Answer: In the who, what and how of His burial:

#1. **The Who** (was Joseph and Nicodemus)

- ◆ Joseph was a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin (the 71 member Jewish council)
- ◆ Nicodemus was a wealthy member of the council as well.

#2. **The What** (was what these two men did)

- ◆ Joseph furnished the linen bandages and his own new tomb. (Matthew 27:60)
- ◆ Nicodemus provided the spices of myrrh and aloes.

#3. **The How** (reveals the providence of God)

Fact: God had to prepare these two men (in advance) for their burial service.

Fact: God had to direct their paths because of how Jesus was buried:

(This was not a sudden decision of the moment)

#1. Joseph had to prepare the garden tomb **beforehand**.

#2. Joseph had to prepare the tomb **near** where Jesus would die.

#3. Joseph and Nicodemus would have to obtain a large quantity of spices beforehand, (because the shops were **closed** for Passover).

#4. The entire preparatory work had to be done with skill and **secrecy** without the council's knowledge.

#5. The two men had to be hiding **nearby** when Jesus died (so that Joseph could appeal to Pilate and Nicodemus could guard the body until the official release of it).

Question: Why did the burial have to be a calculated plan?

Answer: Because there was only a 3 hour window of opportunity.

Fact: Jesus died at 3 PM on Friday.

Fact: Friday was the preparation day for the Sabbath day.

Fact: The Jewish Sabbath began at 6 PM on Friday (and went to 6 PM on Saturday).

(In Other Words)

- ◆ These two disciples had only 3 hours to work because work was forbidden on the Sabbath.
- ◆ Jewish law also stated that no burial of the dead could take place on the Sabbath.
- ◆ Thus, if Jesus was not buried quickly, (within these 3 hours) the Romans would have dumped His body on the trash heaps, (and prophecy would have not come true).

(But Praise Be To God That:)

#1. God is always working **behind** the **scenes** of your life.

#2. God will always have a way to **provide** for your needs.

#3. God will always "**go ahead**" to **prepare** for what is unknown to you.

#4. God will always be at **work** to complete His plan that He has in store for you.

- ◆ Not even a crucifixion by evil men can thwart the will of God in your life!!!

(Why Not?)

- ◆ Because God is always **one step ahead** of evil intention that may come your way!!!

III. **The Principles Of God To Live By From Joseph**

Question: Who was Joseph of Arimathea?

Answer: "A secret disciple for fear of the Jews" (John 19:38)

Question: How was Joseph changed from a secret fearful disciple?

Answer: By the phenomenal events surrounding the cross:

(What Did Joseph Experience?)

#1. The words of Jesus upon the cross.

#2. The darkness that came over the land.

- #3. The earthquake that shook the ground.
- #4. The veil that was supernaturally torn.
- #5. The prophecies that were fulfilled before his eyes.

Question: How can embracing the cross change you and me for the better?

(Let's Covet The Character Of Joseph Of Arimathea)

- #1. Joseph was a **responsible** man;
 - ◆ He was a counselor, senator and member of the Sanhedrin, (the ruling body of Israel).
 - ◆ He was esteemed and responsible as a leader.
- #2. Joseph was a **good** man:
 - ◆ He was moral in his character (and)
 - ◆ He was just in his decisions.
- #3. Joseph was a **spiritual** man:

(Mark records that Joseph "waited for the kingdom of God" (15:42-46) which means:)

 - ◆ Joseph experienced a spiritual, life changing blessing.
 - ◆ Joseph accepted God's rule, reign and authority in his life as a believer.
- #4. Joseph was a **giving** man:
 - ◆ He had not purchased the tomb for himself (since a wealthy man would not choose to be buried near a place of execution).
 - ◆ He had purchased and prepared the tomb ahead of time out of love for the Savior to fulfill Bible prophecy.
- #5. Joseph was a **decisive** man:
 - ◆ He "consented not to the counsel and deed of them" (Luke 23:51)
 - ◆ In other words, Joseph voted against the Sanhedrin's plan to condemn Jesus before He was crucified.
- #6. Joseph was a **courageous** man:
 - ◆ He actually braved the threat of Pilate's reaction in asking for the body of Jesus.
 - ◆ Joseph even risked the discipline of the Sanhedrin who could have expelled him (a harsh reaction from his closest friends).
 - ◆ Yet, Joseph openly took the body of Jesus from the cross and openly cared for His body at the risk of great danger.
- #7. Joseph was a **faith – filled** man:
 - ◆ When Joseph heard the words "It is finished, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit", he went to work by securing Jesus' body.
 - ◆ He then wrapped the body in linen, covered it with spices and laid it in his own tomb.
 - ◆ He even forfeited his participation in the Passover feast because no one could do so after being defiled by touching a dead body.

Question: Why such courage and dedication from the disciple?

Question: Why such change and determination from a former "Secret disciple"?

- ◆ Because Joseph believed that Jesus was truly the Lamb of God and would keep His word and rise again!!!

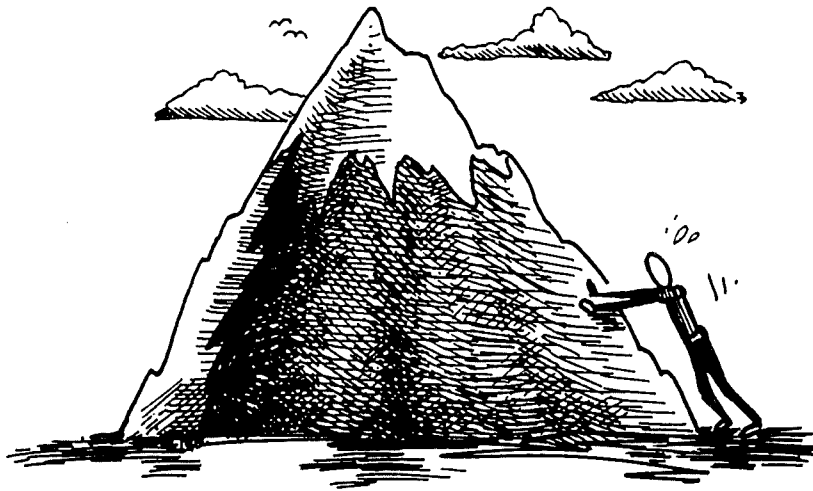
(Life Application)

- #1. You can rest assured that what God has promised you He will fulfill on time!
- #2. You can rest assured that the providence of God is at work behind the scenes of your life right now!
- #3. You can rest assured that your faith and dedication will be rewarded one day, because all believers will see the risen Savior face to face!

AMEN!
 Bill Kirk, Pastor
 (Pg. 4 of 4)

OVERCOMING ALL ODDS

(Living As An Overcomer Like Nehemiah)



NEHEMIAH OVERCOMES

- *Rejection
- *Opposition
- *Frustration
- *Deception

“So the wall was finished, and all the enemies were much cast down, for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.” (Nehemiah 6:15,16)

Bill Kirk

“NEHEMIAH”

Text: Nehemiah 4:1-8

Subject: “So the wall was finished, and all the enemies were much cast down, for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God” (Nehemiah 6:15, 16)

Introduction

1. Nehemiah came along after the United Kingdom had been divided into the Northern and Southern Kingdom. (This division took place over taxation in 931 B.C.)
 - A. Israel was the Northern Kingdom (10 Tribes), Samaria was the capital.
 - B. Judah was the Southern Kingdom (2 Tribes), Jerusalem was the capital.
2. In 586 B.C., the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem, destroyed the city walls and took many people captive into exile. (II Kings 25:1-21)
3. The Persian kings permitted the Jews to return and rebuild their temple and city.
 - ◆ 536 B.C. (The first group of 50,000 Jews return).
 - ◆ 457 B.C. (The second group returns).
 - ◆ 444 B.C. (The third group returns).
4. The Gentiles hindered the Jews in their work and the temple was not completed for twenty years. (Ezra 1-6)
 - ◆ The gates and walls were never repaired and the city remained vulnerable to enemy attack.
5. Then, in 444 B.C., Nehemiah meets Hanani who had just returned from Jerusalem. (1:2).

Nehemiah’s Inquisition

“I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem”. (1:2)

Nehemiah’s News Received

- #1. “There is only a remnant of Jews living there” (1:3)
- #2. “The people are in great affliction and reproach” (1:3)
- #3. “The wall of Jerusalem is still broken down” (1:3)
- #4. “The gates are burned with fire” (1:3)

Nehemiah’s Response To The Sad News

- #1. He weeps, mourns, prays, and fasts. (1:4)
- #2. He asks for “Time off” to go to Judah to build. (2:5)
- #3. He leaves Persia with letters of permission. (2:6-9)
- #4. He arrives at Jerusalem and surveys the walls. (2:11-16)

Nehemiah’s Battle Cry **As He Sounds The Alarm To Rise**

“You see the distress that we are in, come, and let us build up the wall or Jerusalem that we be no more a reproach” (2:17)

Fact: Nehemiah had a good beginning and a good ending.

Fact: In the beginning (God gave him the burden, 1:4).

Fact: In the end (God got all the glory for a job well done, (6:15)

Fact: But in between the call and the completion, the enemy tried to sift, sideline, discourage and defeat the Lord's servant. (But Nehemiah prevailed).

(Tactics The Enemy Still Uses Today)

I. Unexpected Rejection

"It grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. (2:10)

Fact: Nehemiah received no red carpet treatment.

Fact: Nehemiah wasn't given the keys to the city.

Fact: Nehemiah experienced some cold shoulders.

(Remember:)

1. Jeremiah (was put in a mud hole).
2. David (was rejected by his brothers).
3. Paul (was stoned in Lystra).
4. Jesus (came unto His own but they received Him not).

Question: Why is rejection to be expected?

Answer: Because no one appreciates the one who attempts to reform them!

- ◆ So expect, (and don't be shocked or thrown for a loop) when you encounter resistance to the gospel you live and proclaim.
- ◆ After all, you are moving into enemy territory.

II. Unwarranted Opposition

"They laughed us to scorn and despised us" (2:19)

"Sanballat mocked the Jews when building". (4:1)

"They were very wroth" (4:7)

"All of them conspired to fight and hinder it' (4:8)

Fact: Expect opposition if you are growing in God.

Fact: Expect the devil to fight you in the process.

Fact: Expect heated warfare before your great victories.

Fact: Expect fiery darts and intense struggle before great victories.

Question: Why must we be sensitive and aware of hindering spirits?

Question: Why must we be "Prayed up" before public ministry?

III. Unfair Condemnation

"Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?" (4:2)

Fact: The walls had laid in ruins for over 100 years.

Fact: The enemy is shrewd in his tactics. (He says)

- ◆ "Look at the mess of your past"
- ◆ "Focus on the rubbish of yesteryear"
- ◆ "Look back on the rubbish of your sins"
- ◆ "Remember all the mistakes you have made"
- ◆ "Look back and get discouraged"

Question: Why does the enemy of your soul want you to live in the past?

Answer: So he can keep you from your glorious future.

Question: Why does the enemy want your focus on time that's behind you?

Answer: To rob you of faith for what God can do in the present.

Fact: Some of you believe that things cannot change.

Fact: Some of you are frustrated with where you are.

Fact: Some of you are looking back, (instead of forward).

IV. Unwanted Intimidation

"Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall". (4:3)

Fact: The enemy said, "Your work won't endure".

Fact: The enemy said, "You won't stand the test".

Fact: The enemy said, "Your life will fall under pressure".

(But Jesus Said:)

A. "You are more than a conqueror"

B. "You will overcome the world"

C. "You will experience great victory"

Question: Why does the enemy intimidate God's people?

Answer: Because fear paralyzes growth, Because fear produces nothing good.
Because fear polarizes our faith, Because fear presumes God is small.

V. Undesirable Stretching

"There was a great cry of the people against their brethren the Jews. (5:1)

Fact: A personal crisis arose because of financial pressure to pay taxes.

Fact: Jew was exploiting Jew out of greed.

Fact: Nehemiah called a public trial, appealed to the government officials and saw God solve the crisis.

Question: Why does God allow us to be stretched (instead of sheltered) in difficulty?

Answer: A. God is growing our character!
B. God is building our faith!
C. God is proving His faithfulness!
D. God is producing more fruit!
E. God is fulfilling His plan!

VI. Unsolicited Deception

"Sanballat and Geshem said, Come, let us meet together in Ono. But they thought to do me mischief" (6:2)

Fact: Five times the enemy tried to get Nehemiah off the job.

Fact: Five times the enemy tried to get Nehemiah to quit.

Fact: Five times the enemy tried to get Nehemiah to minimize his work.

Question: What must you remember about the work that God is doing in you?

Answer: (V. 3), That it is God's work! That it is eternal work! That it is a great work!

(So Never minimize What God Is Doing In You)

(Pg. 3 of 4)

VII. Unfounded Insinuation

“Their hands will weaken from the work that it be not done” (6:9)

Fact: The enemy said, “God won’t complete the work He began in you”.

Fact: The enemy said, “You are wasting your time”.

Fact: The enemy said, “Your hands will weaken and you will quit”.

(But He Lied (And Lies Now))

Fact: Expect some seasons of patient waiting.

Fact: Expect more seasons of weariness and fatigue.

Fact: Expect some seasons of holding on in prayer.

Fact: Expect some seasons of frustrations.

How Did Nehemiah Overcome?

#1. **Fasting and Prayer** (1:4)

“I sat down and wept, and fasted and prayed” (1:4)

- A. This changes us first (then it changes things).
- B. Our battles are spiritual (not carnal, fleshly, horizontal or in the natural).
- C. If we prostrate ourselves before the Lord, we will never be prostrated before the enemy.
- D. Prayer made in secret will see an open reward.

#2. **Personal Cleansing** (1:6)

“I confess the sins which we have sinned against Thee” (1:6)

- A. Nehemiah was full of repentance and humility.
- B. He wanted his motives and methods to be pure.
- C. He desired no credit for what God was doing.
- D. He shows us that repentance precedes revival.

#3. **Faithfulness Daily** (2:1)

“And it came to pass that I took up the wine and gave it unto the king” (2:1)

- A. Nehemiah went to his job as a cupbearer after prayer.
- B. Nehemiah believed that God would make a way to help.
- C. He knew his present field was limited, but he was not limited by his field.

#4. **The Strength Of God** (6:9)

“O God, strengthen my hands” (6:9)

- A. Nehemiah needed to be strengthened by God.
- B. In prayer, he exchanged his weakness for God’s strengthening grace.
- C. And God granted him this earnest request.

(Did He Overcome All Odds?)

“So the wall finished... and they perceived that this work was wrought of our God” (6:15, 16)

Conclusion **Remember Beloved**

- #1. God will finish what He starts in you!
- #2. God will grant victory over every enemy stronghold!
- #3. God will see to it that His Name is glorified!
- #4. God will prove Himself to be faithful!
- #5. God will overcome everyone of your obstacles

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

(Pg. 4 of 4)

“THE BRIDEGROOM”

Text: Song Of Solomon 5:1-8

Subject: The Drawing Power Of Jesus

Introduction

1. The Song of Solomon was written by Solomon in the tenth century B.C.
2. Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs according to I Kings 4:32.
“And Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five”.
3. The Bible gives us the best that he wrote #1, and #2- we have the ones that the Spirit of God wants us to have.
4. The Song of Solomon is both poetical and practical:
 - ◆ It describes both the love of King Solomon for a peasant girl (and) the love of Christ for you.
 - ◆ It reveals the sacredness of married love between a husband and a wife.
 - ◆ But most of all, it’s a **picture of communion between Christ and individual believers.**

(What’s The purpose Of This 5 Part Song?)

- #1. To deepen the union between Jesus and His people.
- #2. To unite our hearts with the heart of Jesus.
- #3. To increase God’s anointing upon your life and His church.
- #4. To call us closer and teach us how to live in the presence of God.

(Hear The Beckoning Of God)

- In (chapter 1:4) - “Draw me, and we will run after thee”.
- In (chapter 2:10) - “Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away”.
- In (chapter 3:2) - “I will rise now and seek Him whom my soul loveth”.
- In (chapter 4:16) - “Let my beloved come into his garden”.
- In (chapter 5:2) - “I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved saying, open to me, my sister”.
- In (chapter 6:13) - “Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return”.
- In (chapter 7:10) - “I am my beloveds and his desire is toward me”.
- In (chapter 8:7) - “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it”.

I. The Desire Of The Bridegroom (V. 2)

“I sleep, but my heart waketh (why)? It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night”.

Question: Why did the bride awaken?

Answer: Because Jesus cries out, “Open to me my sister”.

Question: Pastor, what’s it a picture of?

Answer: It’s a picture of the desire of Jesus (The Bridegroom) towards you (His bride).

- #1. Jesus desires to be admitted.
- #2. Jesus desires entrance and an open door.
- #3. Jesus desires a hearty welcome with open arms.
- #4. Jesus desires a glad reception on our part.

“Open To Me My Sister”

- ◆ In chapter 4:16 - The Lord was invited to come close.
- ◆ In chapter 5:1 - The Lord came close as requested.
- ◆ In chapter 5:2 - The believer has fallen asleep and barred the door.
(Revealing that Christ’s return was not eagerly expected)

Question: What’s the meaning of V. 2 (that the bride had fallen asleep and closed the door?)

Answer: The meaning is two fold:

- #1...That it’s possible to close the door to Jesus by slipping into an inattentive state.
- (and) #2...That Jesus is resolved to come close even to those who are inattentive, unaware, unsuspecting and undeserving.

Question: How do we know that Jesus wants to reveal Himself, share Himself and pour out of His Spirit in our life?

Answer: Because of what it cost Him:

(V. 2B) “...for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night”

(What’s It All Mean?)

- ◆ It refers to the heart of Jesus, the Great Shepherd who is busy in the night seasons (even while the bride has crawled into bed to sleep).
- ◆ It refers to Jesus out searching at nighttime (in the dark) to find the one sheep who has wandered away.
- ◆ It refers to the painstaking effort of the Lord to restore (at great cost) anyone who is in need to have sins forgiven.
- ◆ It refers to His suffering, the garden, the praying, the betrayal, the arrest, the spitting, the crown of thorns, the cross and the blood spilled to win your heart.
- ◆ It’s a powerful plea that reveals the heart of God (His desire) to come into the sinner’s heart and the believer’s world.

II. The Disappointment Of The Bridegroom (V. 3)

Question: What did Solomon’s bride (the Lord’s church) say when the Bridegroom came calling and knocking?

Answer: Solomon’s bride said what many say today:

(V. 3) “I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?”

(In Other Words She Makes Excuses)

- ◆ She heard his knock, His voice, and saw His hand on the door.
- ◆ But she didn’t yield to the call of her Bridegroom.

(Why Was The Lord Disappointed?)

- #1. The bride doesn’t quickly respond to the King’s call.
- #2. The bride has forgotten what Christ did for Her.
- #3. The bride fails to stir herself to action.
- #4. The bride isn’t willing to deny herself and get up.
- #5. The bride thought she could make it without Jesus.
- #6. The bride was half asleep to spiritual things.
- #7. The bride became careless in the journey.

Why Was Jesus So Disappointed?

- ◆ Because to give no heed when the Lord appeals to you, or to sleep on and ignore His calling - **is to despise and grieve the Holy Spirit.**
- ◆ Also; to resist the calling and the dealing of the Lord, **is to tempt the departure of Jesus.**

(Does Jesus Ever Quit On Us?)

(V. 4) “My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door”

This Refers To The Custom In This Day.

- ◆ When a man was in love with a woman, he would go to her home and leave (not a card, but a fragrance).
- ◆ The doors were made with an opening to reach in and remove the bar unless it was locked and barred.
- ◆ When there was no response from the bride, the bridegroom placed myrrh on the inside handle of the door.
- ◆ When she came to the door, the fragrance was transmitted to her fingers. (v. 5)
- ◆ She received a blessing (but forfeited seeing the blesser and giver of the gifts).

(In Other Words)

- ◆ In V. 5, she knew he had been there, but she grieved him **by her hesitation** to open the door.

(Oh What A Lesson)

- #1. We never need settle for a second hand experience.
 - #2. We never need to stop at the goose bumps, emotions, feelings and (v. 4) “My bowels were moved for him”. (So what?)
 - #3. We never need to forget that obedience is far better than hesitation when God comes to visit us (and rings the door-bell)
- ◆ Goose bumps, feelings and emotions are O.K.,
 - ◆ But feelings, falling and all the emotions are secondary to prompt obedience!!!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ We don't want just the myrrh, We want the myrrh giver!!!

III. The Disappearance Of The Bridegroom (V. 6)

Question: What happened when the bride finally opened the door in (v. 6)?

Answer: “I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone, my soul failed when he spake, I sought him, but I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no answer”.

(What Had Happened?)

- #1. Fellowship with Jesus had been broken.
- #2. Delay resulted in disappointment.
- #3. Indulgence to the flesh bears bitter consequences.
- #4. Disobedience on our part places distance between us and Jesus.

(There Was A Divine Withdrawal - Why?)

(Pg. 3 of 4)

- ◆ To teach us the pain of neglecting His invitation.
- ◆ To help us appreciate him all the more.
- ◆ To make us more careful in the future.
- ◆ To see exactly how much we really love Him.

Question: What was the result of spiritual neglect on the part of the bride?

Answer: (V. 7) “She was smitten, wounded and hurt by those who were to protect her”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ It may be costly and painful to pursue God with all your heart.
- ◆ It may be difficult for some of you to seek first God’s Kingdom.
- ◆ You might through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.
- ◆ You might be betrayed, abused, rejected, put down, let down, pressed down and stomped down.

(But There’s Amazing News)

IV. The Delight Of The Bridegroom (V. 8)

Question: How did the bride respond to her pain and hurt and failure?

Answer: She did what God still wants us to do today.

(She Sings to The Daughters Of Jerusalem In V. 8)

“I charge you, if you find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love” (or)

- #1. Tell him how much I miss him and how much I love Him.
- #3. Tell him how much I’m looking for him. (Just to be in His presence)

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The fragrance has wore off, (the myrrh and frankincense don’t mean much anymore)
- ◆ She cannot be satisfied until she finds Jesus for herself.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ She blew it in (v. 3) with all of her excuses.
- ◆ She neglected to respond when the Lord previously called.

(But A Change Now Occurs)

- ◆ She’s not going to get bitter over her mistreatment, (and stew in her own juice)
- ◆ She’s not going to remain distant from her one true love.

(Instead)

- ◆ She returns with all of her heart, (and knows that her Lord will forgive).
- ◆ She believes in the God of a second chance,
- ◆ She testifies to us all, that when we return to God, God responds to us!

AMEN!
Bill Kirk, Pastor

“Return unto Me and I will return unto you saith the Lord” (Malachi 3:7)

“RAHAB”

Text: Joshua 2:1-24

Subject: (A Harlot That Made Heaven Her Home)

Introduction

1. The Book of Joshua is a book of conflict and conquest.
2. It's a book detailing the possession of the Promise Land.
3. It reveals to us the spirit and the attitude that God will honor.

(God's Word To Joshua Is God's Word To You:)

“Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest”. (1:9)

Question: What was Joshua commissioned to do?

Answer: Three things (and he did them well:)

- #1. Lead the people forward into the Promise Land.
- #2. Defeat every enemy that stood in the way.
- #3. Claim the inheritance that was promised by God.

(Notice The Setting Of Our Text In Verses 1-3)

In (v. 1): Joshua sends out two spies to view Jericho.

In (v. 1): The two spies lodge in the house of Rahab.

In (v. 2): The king of Jericho is told of the spies.

In (v. 3): The angry king sends someone to get the spies.

Question: In (v. 1), how did the two spies (that Joshua sent into Jericho) ever find the house of Rahab (the place of safety)?

Question: How did the two spies travel through Jericho without being overtaken by the enemy?

(Remember)

- #1. Jericho was a city of about 8 to 9 acres of land.
- #2. It was one of the many cities in Canaan, each ruled by a king. (Joshua 12:9-24)
- #3. The double walls around Jericho were 90 feet high and 30 feet wide.
- #4. According to Joshua 2:15, Rahab's house was built into one of the walls.
- #5. And, Rahab was the only believer in Jericho who believed in the God of Israel.

Question: So, how did the spies find Rahab's house in the midst of totally pagan city?

Answer: Only by the providence of God!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Rahab's house was the only safe place in Jericho.
- ◆ Rahab's house was the only protection for the two spies.
- ◆ Rahab's house was the only provision of lodging for the two spies Joshua had sent ahead.

(And We Discover)

- ◆ That in the midst of a crucial, pressing and timely need of the two Israelite spies,
- ◆ God has gone before them (in His providence) to provide for them in Jericho before they ever even arrive in town.

(What's The Big Deal To You And Me?)

- ◆ The “*Big Deal*” is, that the providence of God is at work in every life here today.

Fact: The word providence comes from two words:

“PRO” (which means) “Before” (and) “Video” (which means) “To see”

(It Reveals To You)

- #1. That the Lord is always **going before you**, (and) can **see ahead of you**.
- #2. That the Lord goes before us, sees ahead of us, and causes all things to be in place so that His will can be accomplished in your life!

Question: How many of you know that God is working now (behind the scenes) for what you will face tomorrow?

Question: How many of you can trust the Lord with the things you do not know and cannot understand?

(The Two Spies Teach Us)

- #1. That if we just obey what the Lord tells us to do, the Lord will work out all the details in His perfect timing.
- #2. That if we do the known will of God today, God will reveal His unknown will tomorrow.
- #3. That the God who has been faithful in all of your yesterdays, won't be forgetful in any of your tomorrows!!!

(Now Today)

◆ **“Voices from Rahab that speak to us all”**

#1. **Rahab's Faith**

Question: How do we know that Rahab had faith in God?

Answer: By her works she displayed in saving the spies.

Question: How can God use the worst of sinners?

Answer: Because of their faith in God to change the human heart.

(All Read Matthew 1:5)

- ◆ “And Salmon begat Boaz, (Rahab was his mother), Boaz was the father of Obed (Ruth was his mother), Obed was the father of Jesse”.

Hebrews 11:31

- ◆ “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace”

James 2:25

- ◆ “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way”.

Fact: In James 2:25, Rahab is identified with Abraham because of her faith.

Fact: In Hebrews 11:31, Rahab is identified with Sarah as the only two women listed in the Hall of Fame of Faith.

Fact: In Matthew 1, Rahab is identified as the great grandmother of David, the family line from which Jesus came from.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Rahab went from ill fame, to the Hall of Fame!
- ◆ Rahab went from the Canaanite gods, to the one true and living God!
- ◆ Rahab went from selling her body in prostitution, to offering her body to propagate the gospel!
- ◆ Rahab went from a life of condemnation, to a life of adoration!

(How Can This Be? Romans 5:20)

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”

(In Other Words)

- #1. God will reform anyone who repents!
- #2. Grace is still greater than any sin you have committed!
- #3. When you get saved, the record of your past sin is washed away and removed from the sight of God forever and forever!

Questions: Why is Rahab called “Rahab The Harlot” in the Old and New Testament?

Answer: (Not to bring up her past life again). But, to emphasize the kind of sinner she was and how the **Marvelous Grace of God** saved her because she believed.

(In Other Words)

- #1. There is not one sin, that God is not able to forgive.
- #2. There is not one person, that God does not love.
- #3. There is not one heart, that God cannot change.

(In Other Words)

“There is therefore now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1)

#2. **Rahab’s Fortitude** (vs. 4-7)

(v. 4) “And the woman took the men and hid them”

(v. 6) “But she (Rahab) had brought the men to the roof of the house and hid them”

Fact: Rahab took in the two spies Joshua had sent.

Fact: She hid them under stalks of flax on her roof.

Fact: The king of Jericho sent soldiers to arrest the two Israelites.

Fact: The king was alarmed and nervous over the spies in the city.

(And What Does Rahab Do?)

- #1. She welcomes the spies into her own house.
- #2. She conceals the spies to protect them.
- #3. She risks her very life so that the spies can get back to Joshua.
- #4. She is all alone, the only believer in Jericho of Canaan (a culture of pagan gods).
- #5. And she proves her faith by her works as she is willing to stand alone (regardless of the cost)

(What About You And Me?)

Question: Am I willing to serve God and be in the minority?

Question: Am I willing to do what is right, instead of what is convenient?

Question: Am I willing to lead by example, or do I follow those who pressure me to conform?

Question: Can God count on me to seek first His kingdom in the choices that I make?

- ◆ One of the characteristics of a “Joshua Spirit” is a willingness to stand alone for God, regardless.

#3. **Rahab’s Focus** (vs. 8-11)

Question: What gives us the fortitude to stand alone like Rahab did?

Answer: Knowing what Rahab knew:

(v. 9) “And she said unto the men, I know that **the Lord** has given you the land”.

(v. 10) “For we have heard how **the Lord** dried up the water of the Red Sea”.

(v. 11) “And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: For **the Lord** your God He is God in heaven above, and in earth, beneath”.

Question: Pastor, where do I find courage in times of battle?

Question: What did Rahab do in this emergency crises with the spies and arresting officers at her door in Jericho?

(Answer:)

- ◆ In (v. 9), She focused on the Lord!
- ◆ In (v. 10), She focused on the Lord!
- ◆ In (v. 11), She focused on the Lord!

Fact: The news of the power of God at the Red Sea had traveled to the people of Canaan.

(God Said That It Would) In Exodus 15:14-16

“The people shall hear and be afraid” (v. 14)

“Trembling shall take hold upon them” (v. 15)

(Pg. 3 of 5)

“All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away” (v. 15)

“Fear and dread shall fall upon them” (v. 16)

(In Deuteronomy 2:25)

**“The nations that hear of thee shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee”
(What Was God Saying?)**

- #1. Focus on the Lord and the devil cannot defeat you.
- #2. Focus on the Lord and the devil cannot intimidate you.
- #3. Focus on the Lord and the devil cannot sidetrack you.

(What Is Rahab’s Confession Of Faith In V. 11?)

**“...For the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath”.
(In Other Words)**

- ◆ Rahab recognized the Israelites were under the protection of Jehovah.
- ◆ Rahab knew that God would punish the pagan Canaanites.
- ◆ Rahab knew that resistance was in vain, and she needed to be on the side of the Lord.

(What About You?)

Question: Are you resisting the Lord in any area of your life?

Question: Are you able to say with Rahab, “The Lord is God in heaven above” (as well as “and in the earth beneath”)?

Question: On the earth (or in your life) is Jesus Lord and first place in your plans, your friends, your finances, your habits, your devotions, your T.V. viewing, your future, your dating (or) your whatever?

(If Not, Then Focus In Today And Be Made Strong!!!)

#4. Rahab’s Family (vs. 12-17)

Question: What was Rahab’s one concern?

Answer: (v. 13) She pleads with the two spies in (v. 13)

“Save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death”.

Question: When Israel invades Jericho and the city is destroyed, what is Rahab’s one concern?

Answer: The salvation of her family!

- ◆ Rahab was burdened for her family!
- ◆ Rahab wanted a guarantee that her family would be spared!
- ◆ Rahab had to tell her relatives two things that God wants everybody to know.
 - #1. Judgment is coming to the unsaved.
 - #2. Salvation is available to all who believe.

Question: But how will her family be saved?

Question: How can the heathen Canaanite relatives be spared from judgment?

(Only One Way)

#5. Rahab’s Favor (vs. 18-24)

In (v. 14), The two spies promised they would be gracious when Jericho was invaded.

In (v. 15), The spies were let down to escape by a rope.

In (v. 16), “Go to the mountain and escape” says Rahab.

In (v. 17), The men said, we’ll be back to rescue you.

(But In V. 18 Is The Victory)

“Bind this scarlet rope in the window, and it will identify your house as the house of safety when the army invades the city”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The spies tell Rahab, “If you want to be saved and spared of judgment, hang this scarlet rope out of the window to identify yourself and your family”.

(What Did Rahab Do?)

- ◆ (v. 21) “...She bound the scarlet line in the window of her house”.

(What’s The Significance Of The Rope?)

- #1. The color scarlet (or crimson) is the color of blood!
- #2. As the blood on the doorposts saved the Israelite in Egypt (so the scarlet rope would save the house of Rahab).

(Remember)

- ◆ Rahab was a citizen of Canaan and under condemnation.
- ◆ Rahab was a Gentile outside of the covenant of God.
- ◆ Rahab was destined to die without God’s favor and mercy.

(But The Scarlet Rope Saved The Day)

- #1. The scarlet rope saved the spies in their escape.
- #2. The scarlet rope saved Rahab and her family.
- #3. The scarlet rope (symbolic of the blood of Jesus) saves us and cleanses us from every sin.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The scarlet on the doorposts protected Israel.
- ◆ The scarlet in the window protected Rahab
- ◆ And the scarlet of the cross protects you and me.

Conclusion

Question: Did Rahab deserve to be saved? (No)

Answer: She was a prostitute and sold her body for money.

Question: Did Rahab’s family deserve to be saved? (No)

Answer: They were Canaanites under the judgment of God.

Question: Do we deserve to be saved? (No)

Answer: “For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God”. (Romans 3:23)

(But The Awesome Grace Of God)

- ◆ Takes a harlot to heaven because of her faith in the living God.

(and)

- ◆ She is willing to serve the God of heaven, while she lives on earth.

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

“THE WOMAN AT THE WELL”

Text: John 4:1-30

Subject: The Ministry Of Jesus To The Woman At The Well

“Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did” (v. 29)

“He told me all that ever I did” (v. 39)

Introduction

- ◆ If you’ve ever wondered about the love of God,
- ◆ If you’ve ever wondered how Jesus feels about your story,
- ◆ If you’ve ever doubted whether God’s grace is greater than your past and every sin,
- ◆ If you’ve ever felt ashamed or inferior to get plugged-in to the body of Christ,

(Then John 4 Is A Word For You)

Questions With Answers:

- #1. Why did Jesus go through Samaria, knowing that the Samaritans hated the Jews (v. 4)?
- #2. Why did the woman go to the well the sixth hour (v. 6) (or at 12 noon) when the normal time to draw water was at 6 P.M.?
- #3. What did Jesus mean when He said in (v. 13) “If you drink this water you’ll thirst again”?
- #4. Why did Jesus say in (v. 16) “Go call thy husband”, when He knew she had no husband?
- #5. What changed the woman from low self esteem, wanting to be left alone and haunting bad past memories - to going in to the city to witness to the whole city?
(and what difference does it make in your life and mine today?)

(3 Stages In John 4 That Reveal)

“He Knows Your Story”

I. The Compassion Of Jesus

Notice John 3:25: “Then there arose a question between some of John’s disciples”

Notice John 4:1: “When Jesus knew how the pharisees had heard”

Question: What had the pharisees heard?

Answer: They heard of all the success that Jesus was having in winning disciples.

Question: What happened then?

Answer: Jesus realized that His success created jealousy on the part of John’s followers.

- ◆ So, instead of causing a rift and division among the new believers and potential believers,
- ◆ Jesus withdraws from Judea and heads north for Galilee. (Don’t you love this about Jesus?)

So Jesus Leaves Judea For Galilee

- #1. He can travel along the coast.
- #2. He can cross the Jordan and go up through Perea.
- #3. He can head straight through Samaria.

Fact: Jesus knew that Jews avoided Samaria.

(Pg. 1 of 4)

Fact: Jesus knew that there was long standing hatred between Jew and Samaritans.

(Why Such Hatred?)

- #1. The Samaritans were a mixed race (part Jew and part Gentile).
- #2. The Samaritans grew out of the Assyrian captivity of the 10 northern tribes 727 B.C.
- #3. They were rejected by the Jews because they could not prove their genealogy.
- #4. They established their own temple and worship on Mt. Gerizim.

Question: So why would Jesus go through Samaria?

Question: Why travel to _____?
(your city name here)

Question: Other roads led to Galilee, so why come to _____?
(your city name here)

(One Reason)

- ◆ To minister to one undeserving woman!
- ◆ To do what no one else could do!
- ◆ To reveal the fullness of compassion that resides in the heart of the Savior!

Fact: She was poor, a sinner, looked down upon and groping for help.
(and v. 4 is a revelation to us all)

- ◆ That Jesus must needs go to _____
(your city name here)

*Because Jesus must have something in mind today!

II. The Conviction Of The Spirit

In (v. 5) Jesus comes to a city of Samaria called Sychar.

- A. The place of the interview is Sychar.
- B. Sychar is at a fork in the road.
- C. One branch goes to Capernaum, one goes to Nazareth.
- D. The well of Jacob is located 1/2 mile from the village.

In (v. 6) "Jesus is weary in His journey".

Question: Ever been weary in well doing?

Question: Ever needed some down time to recoup your strength?

(Now Notice A Powerful Truth)

"It was about the sixth hour, and there cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water". (v. 6, 7)

Fact: Clock time in John's Gospel is computed from sunrise to sunset.

Fact: This makes the sixth hour to be 12 o'clock noon.

(And Here's A Revelation Of Human Nature)

- #1. The usual time for women to come for water is at 6:00 P.M. in the evening.
- #2. This woman comes to draw water at noon.

(Why At 12 Noon?)

- ◆ Because she prefers to come for water when she knows that no one else will be there!!

Fact: She knows what's going on in her life.

(Pg. 2 of 4)

Fact: She knows the sins of past and present.

Fact: She knows how other people feel about her.

Fact: She knows how ashamed she should be.

- ◆ So, lest anyone see her, confront her, point out her failures, make her feel crummy or intimidate her...
- ◆ She sneaks out to the well at a time when (to be sure) no one else is there.
- ◆ And guess who just happens to be there?
- ◆ **The One who knows your story!!!**

(Lets Get Down To Brass Tacks)

- #1. Jesus knows what's going on inside of you!
- #2. You may be holding in, what you can't tell anybody else.
- #3. You might rather slip in here, slip out and have nobody notice you are here.
- #4. You may be carrying something upon your heart that no one else would understand.
- #5. You just might rather slip in, slip out and keep your distance from people.

(But Guess What?)

- ◆ You can run, hide and hurry - but wherever you go and whenever you stop,
- ◆ Guess who's already there waiting for your arrival???

(Notice the Interview)

- (v. 7) "Give me a drink"
(v. 10) "If you only knew - I would give you"
(v. 11) "How do you have living water?"
(v. 12) "Are you greater than Jacob", (Who gave us the well in the first place?)
(v. 13) "Whosoever drinks of this water will thirst again."

(What's It Mean?)

- ◆ That whoever drinks of this material water (which represents anything the world has to offer) **will thirst again!!!**

Fact: Nothing material can satisfy spiritual thirst!

Fact: Nothing of this world can quench the deepest need of the soul!

Question: What's the woman's reaction?

Answer: "Sir, give me this water.) (v. 15)

Question: Does Jesus just dish it out upon request?

Answer: No - (why not?)

- ◆ **Because you cannot enjoy spiritual things until your heart is right with God. (Repeat)**

(I Can Prove It) "Go call your husband" Jesus says (v. 16)

Question: Didn't Jesus know she had no husband?

Answer: Yes (then why tell her this?)

- #1. To force her to admit her sin.
- #2. To force her to confess her need.
- #3. To force her to surface what is down deep inside.

(I Discover Here) ♦ That the only way the Lord can **change** a heart, is to first **convict** that heart! (Repeat)

(How Come?) ♦ Because until we admit we have a need, there can be no progress in spiritual things!

(The Woman's Response?) ♦ She tries to detour Jesus by discussing the difference between the Jewish & Samaritan religions.

(How Come?) ♦ Because it's easier to discuss ones own religion, than to face ones own personal sin! (Repeat)

III. **The Change Of The Woman** (v. 39)

Question: What happens when we let God work deep down on the inside?

Answer: Our testimony will flow from a heart that's been changed

Fact: This woman who was sleeping around when Jesus met her,
*Was saved, changed and used of God in a remarkable way.

(And I Discover Here)

#1. That God knows your story!

#2. And, that story doesn't scare him at all!

(Oh What A Change)

- ♦ She goes from a loner, ashamed, inferior plagued person,
- ♦ To a woman who runs in to the city to tell all about this Jesus.

Question: How can God use a sinner like this?

Answer: Because there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus!!!

- ♦ And if the Blood covers at all, it must cover of all!!

Conclusion - Altar Call

Ask: Have you slipped in here today with something down deep, unknown to those around you?

Ask: Are you ashamed of something inside, covered over by a smile?

Ask: Are you willing to come to the well and let Jesus be Jesus one more time?

Ask: Will you be transparent so that Jesus can reverse the course you're on?

Why is it useless to pretend? Because Jesus knows your story!!!

AMEN!
Bill Kirk, Pastor

“THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

Text: John 8:1-11

Subject: (How Jesus Ministers To The Woman Taken In Adultery)

Introduction

1. Jesus had retreated unto the Mount of Olives. (v. 1)
2. Early next morning, Jesus made His way into the temple. (v. 2)

Question: Why did Jesus go to the temple?

Answer: (v. 2) “And all the people came unto Him, and He sat down and taught them”.

◆ Jesus went there to teach the people!

Fact: The Feast of Tabernacles has just ended.

Fact: Jesus uses the opportunity to minister to the pilgrims.

Fact: He teaches in the court of the women where the treasury is located. (8:20)

Fact: He is about to become the target of an evil plot against Him.

Questions With Answers

- #1. Pastor, why did the Scribes & Pharisees really bring the woman to Jesus?
- #2. Pastor, why did they bring her publicly and not privately?
- #3. Pastor, what did Jesus write on the dirt floor in the temple?

I. The Carnal Exploitation (V. 1-6a)

(2 Carnal Acts Are Exposed)

#1. The Scribes and Pharisees Exploit Jesus

In (v.3) the accusers bring in the woman.

In (v.4) “We caught her in the very act Lord”.

In (v.5) “Moses said stone her, what do you say?”

Question: Why did the accusers interrupt Jesus teaching and barge right in with the woman?

Answer: (v.6) “This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him.”

Question: Accuse Jesus of what?

Question: What was their plot?

Question: How were the Jewish leaders planning to sink Jesus?

1. If Jesus says, “Yes, stone the woman”: then He loses His reputation of loving and showing mercy in forgiving sinners.
2. If Jesus says, “No, don’t stone the woman”: then He openly breaks the Law of Moses and is subject to arrest.

Fact: It’s a deliberate plot to trap Jesus.

Fact: It’s a plan (in their minds) that’s a closed case.

(Carnal Act #2)

#2. The Scribes And Pharisees Exploit The Woman

Question: Were the Pharisees grieved over the woman's sin?

(Pg. 1 of 4)

Question: Were they broken over her dilemma?

Question: Were they wanting to restore the woman?

(Not At All)

- A. They were happy to catch her!
- B. They were happy to trap Jesus!
- C. They were happy to expose her before all!

Fact: True spirituality is revealed by how we respond to the failures of other people!

Fact: God gives clear instruction as to our response of another's failure:

(Galatians 6:1) "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"

Fact: The Greek word for "considering" is (SKOPEO).

Fact: It's the word we get our English word microscope from.

Question: What's a microscope for?

Answer: "To examine more closely"

Question: Who do we "microscope" when we see another fall?

Answer: We "consider ourselves" (or) search our own heart in times like these.

(3 Common Responses When Soldiers Fall)

#1. **Anger:** "How could they do this when I trusted them?"

#2. **Pride:** "I'm not so bad after all in comparison to them".

#3. **Grief:** "How sad that the devil has taken ground over that shames the cause of Christ".

II. "The Conviction Experience" (6b-9)

Question: How did Jesus respond to the Pharisee's question of (v. 5) "What sayest thou?"

Question: How did Jesus react to the hypocrites who judged the woman (but not themselves)?

(v.6) "Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not".

(v.7) "So when they continued asking Him"

(Asking Him What?)

- ◆ "What do you think about this Lord?"
- ◆ "What do you say about this Lord?"
- ◆ "What do you feel about this Lord?"
- ◆ "This sinful woman caught in the very act of breaking the Law of Moses (what about it Lord)?"

(What Did Jesus Do?)

#1. He Stooped Over In Silence:

Ask: Why act as though He heard them not?

Ask: Why the period of silence?

- ◆ To allow the Spirit time to work.
- ◆ To allow the Spirit to search my heart today.

(Pg. 2 of 4)

#2. He Scribbled In The Ground:

Ask: What did Jesus write in ground?

- ◆ Was it their names He wrote?
- ◆ Was it their sins He surfaced?
- ◆ Do I see my name there in need of “scoping”?

#3. He Spoke To The Heart In (V.7):

“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Is there anyone here today who has something God needs to address?
- ◆ Anyone here God wants to speak to?

(Oh What A Discovery!)

- A. That Jesus speaks to them again the second time!
- B. That Jesus will deal with us once (and again if need be) to bring about a change in us.
- C. That Jesus doesn't give up on you when others do!

Question: What happened to the accusers?

Answer: “And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one”. (v.9)

Fact: Jewish law (according to Deuteronomy 17:7) required that the accusers cast the first stones.

Questions:

- ◆ What happens when you get a glimpse of the holiness of God?
- ◆ What happens when Jesus gets in our face and we see Him and see ourselves?

(Only One Thing Can Happen)

- ◆ Instead of feeling good about the sins and failures of other people,
- ◆ I see my own sin and am reduced to tears and cry out for mercy.

(I Love Jesus' Response To The Pharisees)

Fact: He could have hung them out to dry!

Fact: He could have exposed them (royally).

Fact: He could have embarrassed them like they did the woman.

(But Instead)

- ◆ Jesus quietly stoops over and writes only to the accusers.

(Why?)

- ◆ Because Jesus wants to **restore** us (not **exploit** us).

III. **“The Crowning Exit”** (v. 9b-11)

“And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst” (v.9)

Fact: It's one on one now (Just you & Jesus).

Fact: The exploiters are out of sight.

(Notice The Accusers)

1. They file out one by one.
2. Filing out they confess their own guilt.
3. Having been exposed, they prove they are in no position to judge another.

(Notice The Woman)

1. She makes no attempt to escape with her accusers.
2. She makes no attempt to deny her guilt.
3. She makes no attempt to delay the needed change of heart.

Question: How do I respond when God convicts me?

Question: How do I respond when the Word gets under my skin?

Question: How do I respond when the preacher gets in my world?

- ◆ Do I huff & puff and choose not to change?
- ◆ Or do I align my heart with God's heart?

(What's The Glory Of V. 11?)

- #1. The Pharisees, condemn the woman (Jesus forgives the woman)
- #2. The Pharisees saw only the woman's past (Jesus saw the woman's redeemed future)
- #3. The Pharisees dragged her in for what she was (Jesus sent her out for what she could become)

(Jesus Knew Some Things)

- #1. He knew that her greatest sin, could become her greatest conviction.
- #2. He knew that her greatest failure, could forever remind her of God's great forgiveness.
- #3. He knows that your greatest past failures, sin and blunders, can be covered and forgiven never to be used against you again!

Question: Do you have any accusers this morning?

Question: Do you carry what Jesus already forgave at Calvary?

(What Does It Mean)

"Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin not more?" (v.11) **(It Doesn't Mean)**

◆ That Jesus is soft with sin (not at all) **(It Does Mean)**

- #1. That Jesus hasn't come to condemn, but to forgive you.
- #2. That Jesus plans for you to leave here with power to go and sin no more.

(Or)

Live above the power of every sin to control your life any longer!!!

AMEN!
Bill Kirk, Pastor

(Pg. 4 of 4)

“MARY OF BETHANY”

Text: Luke 10:38-42

Subject: The Spiritual Power Of Solitude And Silence In Your Life

Introduction

Fact: If the devil can't make you too bad, he will make you too busy.

Fact: If the devil can't keep you from serving God, he will hurry your pace so that you do not enjoy your very service to God.

Fact: If the devil can keep us from solitude and silence, (where we allow God to become the center of our being) we will then become slaves to the expectations of others instead of God.

(Is It That Important?)

“I am sure you sense the desperate need for *Unceasing Prayer* in our day. We pant through an endless series of activities with scattered minds and noisy hearts. We feel strained, hurried, and breathless. Thoughts dart in and out of our minds with no rhyme or reason. Seldom can we focus on a single thing for long. Everything and anything interrupt our sense of concentration. **We are a distracted people**” (Richard Foster, Pg. 121 of, “Prayer Treasury”)

◆ **(Remember Karl Jung's Words) “Hurry is not of the devil, it is the devil”**

The Setting Of Our Text

“Now it came to pass, as they went, that Jesus entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house”. (v. 38)

Question: Where was Jesus going?

Answer: He was entering the village of Bethany.

- ◆ Bethany was a suburb, 2 miles outside of Jerusalem.
- ◆ It was located on the eastern slope of the Mt. of Olives.
- ◆ Bethany was called the “House of Misery” because of the invalids who congregated there.

Question: Who was Martha?

Answer: Martha was a woman Jesus thought much of. (John 11:5)

“Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus”

Question: What was Martha Like?

#1. **She was unselfish:**

- ◆ She owned a large house, big enough to lodge Jesus and His disciples.

#2. **She was fearless:**

- ◆ She associated with Jesus when it was now dangerous and unpopular:
 - #1. The authorities were seeking to kill Jesus. (John 7:25)
 - #2. Disciples had forsaken Jesus. (John 5:66)
 - #3. Others were now speaking against Jesus. (John 7:20; 43-44)
 - #4. His own family rejected Jesus. (John 7:3-5)

(But Martha had the courage to let the world know of her devotion to Jesus)

#3. **She was a giver:**

- ◆ Martha was taking care of her younger sister Mary and her brother, Lazarus.
- ◆ For some unknown reason, Martha was caring for her family members.

Question: Who was this hostess Martha?

(Pg. 1 of 5)

- #1. An **unselfish** woman, hosting Jesus.
- #2. A **fearless** woman, publicly devoted.
- #3. A **giver**, taking care of Mary and Lazarus.

Question: Pastor, why did Jesus go to her house?

Question: And what is the message to my heart today?

(A Message From The Meal In Bethany)

I. The Devotion Of Mary (V. 39)

“And Martha had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word”

Question: Who was Martha’s sister?

Answer: Mary

Question: What was Mary doing?

Answer: (v. 39) “Which sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His Word”

- #1. She was **sitting** (and) #2. She was **listening**

Fact: 3 times, Mary of Bethany is seen in Scriptures:

- #1. In John 11:32 (Sharing her burden **at the feet of Jesus**)
- #2. In John 12:3 (Pouring out her worship **at the feet of Jesus**)
- #3. In Luke 10:39 (Listening to the Word **at the feet of Jesus**)

Question: Where was Mary living?

Answer: “At the feet of Jesus”

Question: What’s the big deal here?

Answer: The big deal is:

- ◆ In First Century Judaism, it was highly unusual for a woman to be accepted by a teacher as a disciple.
- ◆ But Jesus overcomes every objection and obstacle, (and swings the door wide open, as He invites you and me to come in and sit down).

Question: Why was Mary so devoted and so received by Jesus?

(2 Reasons)

#1. She was **humble** (she sat at Jesus’ feet)

- ◆ The room was large enough for a crowd.
- ◆ She could have chosen to sit in the back, off to the side, or in a high seat somewhere.
- ◆ But Mary’s devotion and humility ran deep enough to take the low road.
- ◆ It is the only way I can make progress with God (To humble myself before His Lordship and Authority).

#2. She was **hungry** (she wanted to hear Jesus’ Words)

- ◆ The phrase “And heard His Word” (Means:)
 - #1. She was attentive
 - #2. She was listening
 - #3. She was concentrating
 - #4. She was hungering for more of the Word
- ◆ Spiritual hunger always includes 3 things:
 - #1. And eagerness to **hear** the Word of God!
 - #2. A desire to **surrender** to the Word we hear!
 - #3. An obedience to **do** (live) the Word of God!

II. The Distraction Of Martha (Vs. 40-41)

(V. 40) “But Martha was **cumbered** about much serving”

Question: Pastor, what does it mean to be “**cumbered**” about much serving?

Answer: The Greek word for “**cumbered**” is (PERIESPATO). (Which means:)

- #1. To draw around
- #2. To twist

- #3. To be drawn here and there
- #4. To be distracted

(The Idea Here Is:)

- ◆ That Martha was drawn around and twisted up inside with anxiousness and worry.
- ◆ She was running here and running there.
- ◆ She was drawn away by this person and that person.
- ◆ She was distracted from her first priority in life, ministry to Jesus (not for Jesus).

#1. Martha was **distracted** and #2. Martha was **disappointed**

(V. 40) “Lord, don’t you even care that Mary has left me alone; tell her to get over here right now to help me” (Resentment creeps in)

- #1. She gets **distracted** (and the result is),
- #2. She gets **disappointed** and aggravated and critical of someone else. (Mary)

Question: What happens whenever we get out of order on the inside?

Answer: We lose our sweetness on the outside. (Remember:)

- ◆ It is injured people who injure others!

Question: What does Jesus say to Martha in (v. 41)?

Answer: “Martha, Martha”

- ◆ “Martha, Martha” here is a tender reply despite Martha’s failure.

Question: What happens whenever we get distracted from the feet of Jesus?

(V. 41) (Two things, says Jesus) #1. “Thou are **careful**” (and) #2. Thou art “**troubled**”

#1. The word “**Careful**” is the Greek word (MERIMNAO) which means: **anxious**.

(It Means:)

- #1. To worry,
- #2. To be anxious,
- #3. To be inwardly torn and divided in two,
- #4. To be distracted from what your mind should be focused upon.

#2. The word “**troubled**” is the Greek word (TURBAZO) which means:

- #1. To be disturbed
- #2. To be agitated
- #3. To be in turmoil
- #4. To be stirred up
- #5. To be ruffled

Question: What was the root cause of Martha’s anxiousness and disturbance?

Answer: She was distracted from what Mary was doing.

Question: What was Mary doing?

Answer: Sitting at the feet of Jesus!!!

- ◆ Drinking more
- ◆ Filling up
- ◆ Soaking in
- ◆ Coming close

III. The Directions Of Jesus

Question: What did Jesus say to Martha and you and me? (3 things in v. 42)

- #1. “One thing is needful”
- #2. “Mary has chosen that good part”
- #3. “I’m not telling her to move”

Fact: The problem was not that Martha had too much work to do.

Fact: The problem was that she allowed her work to **interfere** with her worship.

(The Result Was)

(Pg. 3 of 5)

- ◆ She was “**distracted**” on the outside (and) ◆ She was “**pulled apart**” on the inside.

Question: What is Jesus saying to us all?

Answer: “**One thing is needful**” above every other thing in your life and mine. (What is it?)

- ◆ **Remove** what interferes with your ministry at the feet of Jesus.
- ◆ **Renew** the altar that will leave you with a peaceful calm.
- ◆ **Return** again to your highest priority (of solitude and silence before God).
- ◆ **Resolve** (that from now on) nothing and no one will rob you of God’s intention for a healthy, spirit-filled, non-disturbed, rested soul. (Obtained at Jesus’ feet)

The Journey Inward and the Journey Outward Is Biblical (For a balanced life)

#1. **The Pentateuch** (Genesis-Deuteronomy)

- ◆ **Israel:** “Hear O Israel, love the Lord with all your heart, soul and might” (Deut 6:4)
(Inward) “And Love Your Neighbor As Yourself” (Lev. 19:18) (Outward)
- ◆ **Levites:** “Chosen by God for Himself” (Private) and given by God for service.
(Public)

#2. **Historical Books** (Joshua- Esther)

- ◆ **Samuel:** “And the child ministered unto the Lord” (I Samuel 3:1) (Private)
“And Samuel grew and the Lord let none of his words fall to the ground”
(I Samuel 3:19) (Public)
- ◆ **David:** “So David shepherded Israel according to the integrity of his heart” (Inward)
“And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands (Psalm 78:72) (Outward)”
- ◆ **Elijah:** “Go hide yourself” (I Kings 17) - private
“Go shew yourself” (I Kings 18) – public

#3. **Poetical Books** (Job – Song of Solomon)

- ◆ **Job** (How to suffer)
- ◆ **Psalms** (How to worship)
- ◆ **Proverbs** (How to think)
- ◆ **Ecclesiastes** (How to live)
- ◆ **Song of Solomon** (How to love)

#4. **Major Prophets** (Isaiah – Daniel)

- ◆ **Isaiah** “Take root downward (private) and bear fruit upward (public)”. (Isaiah 37:31)
- ◆ **Jeremiah:** “I search the heart and try the reins (inward) to give every man according to the fruit of his doings (outward). (Jeremiah 17:10)

#5. **Minor Prophets** (Hosea – Malachi)

- ◆ **Joel:** “Rend your heart (private) and not your garments (public). (Joel 2:13)

(New Testament)

#1. **Jesus:**

- ◆ “In the solitary place of prayer” (private) Mark 1:35.
- ◆ “Gathering with the apostles” (public) Mark 6:30

#2. **Acts:** “Ye shall receive power (internal) and be my witnesses (external)” Acts 1:8

#3. **Epistles:**

- ◆ **Ephesians** – Chapters 1-3 doctrine (internal)
Chapters 4-6 practice (external)

◆ **Timothy:**

“Take heed to yourself (private) for in doing this you will save yourself and them that hear thee” (Public) I Timothy 4:16

We Just Can't Escape It

(That God Wants To Grow Our Souls First)

- ◆ “Sanctify yourselves today (private) and tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you (public)”. Joshua 3:5
- ◆ “Moses, be to the people Godward first (private) then go out and train the leaders, (public)”. Exodus 18:18
- ◆ “Wait on the Lord (private) then run and not be weary (public)”. Isaiah 40:31
- ◆ “Uzziah sought the Lord, (private) and God helped him against the Philistines (public)”. II Chronicles 26:5

Lord Teach Us This...

- #1... That solitude shows us how to let our behavior be shaped (not by the compulsions of the world) but by our new mind of Christ.
- #2... That silence prevents us from being suffocated by the noisy world and prepares us to inwardly hear what God is saying to us.

Let's Journey Inward And Possess...

- #1... That inner calm that frees us from all push and shove to get ahead.
- #2... That inner discipline which brings heavenly manna that nourishes the soul.
- #3... That inner contentment which frees us from all insecurity, competition and, intimidation.
- #4... That inner discernment that allows us to eliminate excessive clutter from our lives.
- #5... That inner strength which frees us from having to be first, be big, be known and controlling.
- #6... That inner rest that allows God to defend what's worth defending.
- #7... That inner ability to enjoy a quiet life in the midst of a hurried world.

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

P.S. “The less we are manipulated by the expectations of others, the more we are open to the expectations of God”. (Richard Foster)

“MARY”

(THE MOTHER OF JESUS)

Text: Luke 1:5 – 13; 26-38

Subject: “Voices From The Mother Of Jesus That Speak To Us All”

Introduction

- ◆ Luke (chapter 1) is an amazing revelation (of the visitation of an angel).
- ◆ How Gabriel visited both Zacharias and Mary.
- ◆ How God has a plan that includes ordinary people.
- ◆ How you and I can be used of the Lord if we are willing to cooperate.

(Mary’s Visitation From God Has An Awesome Setting:) (Vs. 26 & 27)

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin named Mary”.

Question: Who sent the angel to Mary?

Answer: God did!

Question: Where did Gabriel just come from?

Answer: He just came from delivering a message to Zacharias. (v. 11)

Question: What’s the big deal about Gabriel visiting Zacharias before he visits Mary?

Answer: Because God wants to encourage Mary with the first miracle of Elizabeth and Zacharias having a child in old age.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ God wants to prepare Mary (and you and me).
- ◆ God wants to use Mary (and you and me).
- ◆ God wants to encourage Mary (and you and me).

(So God visits Zacharias and Elizabeth and teaches us something)

Question: Who were Zacharias and Elizabeth?

Answer: A godly couple with a broken heart?

#1. They were spiritual (v. 6)

- ◆ They were righteous before God (or they sought the Lord and lived to please Him).
- ◆ They were obedient before God (or they walked in submission to His will).
- ◆ They were “blameless” (which means: not that they were perfect, but that they lived in such a way that no one could charge them with open sin).

#2. They were broken hearted (v. 7) (Why?)

- ◆ They were childless (which was like a curse in that day).

In Fact: A Jew whose wife could not bear children was thought to be cut off from God.

- ◆ They were elderly (and all hope of having children was behind them).

#3. They were faithful (vs. 8-10)

Question: What is Zacharias doing in v. 8?

Answer: He is being faithful to God in his ministry.

- ◆ He’s not pouting, sour and grumbling.
- ◆ He’s not mad at God because of unanswered prayer.
- ◆ He’s not “holding out” or “on strike” until God does what he wants.

(Instead, He’s Serving God)

(Pg. 1 of 5)

- ◆ He was a priest and served in the temple.
- ◆ He was burning incense upon the altar (which symbolized that the sacrifices and prayers were being received by God).
- ◆ He was faithful in his worship and service (despite the problems of his age and his unfulfilled expectations of no children).

#4. They were rewarded (vs. 11-13)

Question: What's the reward?

Answer: Prayers answered by God.

Question: What was Zacharias doing?

Answer: (V. 10) He was praying as any other day.

Question: What's the big deal of verse 11?

Answer: The angel of the Lord, appeared, standing, (notice) "On the right side of the altar of incense".

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Zacharias is pouring out his heart to God.
- ◆ Zacharias has been praying for years and years.
- ◆ Zacharias has refused to resent God's wisdom.
- ◆ Zacharias stayed sweet regardless of the wait.
- ◆ And, it was while he was praying, that God met the need and sent the answer.

(Does God Find You Like Zacharias And Elizabeth?)

#1. Are you a man or woman that is *spiritual*?

- ◆ Are you walking righteous, obedient and blameless before God?
- ◆ Is Jesus Lord in every area of your life?

#2. Are you *broken hearted*?

- ◆ Have you been saddened because of some unfulfilled expectation?
- ◆ Have things not worked out as you had planned (or God's timing differs from yours?)

#3. Are you *faithful in your service*?

- ◆ Even though you've been disappointed (you still serve)?
- ◆ You're not "holding out" "on strike", sour or mad at God (no grumbles or murmurs).

#4. Are you *praying*?

- ◆ Ready for the Lord to send the answer at the incense altar of prayer?
- ◆ Willing to pray and pray and pray (knowing that God is working even when you cannot see Him?)
- ◆ Are you willing to pray and seek the Lord, based on God's credibility instead of your visibility?

(Now, An Encouraging Word)

Question: Why are Zacharias and Elizabeth in Luke chapter 1?

Question: Why did God record their miracle of conception of John the Baptist?

Question: Why did God wait so many years to answer their prayer?

Question: Why open Elizabeth's womb at the same time her cousin Mary would conceive?

(Discover God's Perfect Timing)

- ◆ In v. 26, God sent the Angel Gabriel to Mary.
- ◆ In v. 28, the angel declared to Mary "Thou art highly favored".
- ◆ In v. 29, Mary was stricken with fear and shock.
- ◆ In v. 30, "Mary, you have found favor with God".
- ◆ In v. 31, "You're going to have a boy called Jesus".
- ◆ In v. 32, "He'll be called the Son of the Highest".

- ◆ In v. 33, “Of His kingdom there shall be no end”.

(And How Does Mary Respond In Verse 34?)

“Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man”?

Question: How did Mary respond to the angel’s words?

- Answer:**
- ◆ She was puzzled and needed more information.
 - ◆ She was single and not sexually active. (A virgin)

Question: And how does God answer Mary’s troubled heart in verse 34?

Answer: With an encouraging word in verses 35-37:

Verse 35, “The Holy Spirit will conduct the immaculate conception and oversee the process Mary”.

Verse 36, “I’ve got an encouraging word that will help you to believe Mary”.

(What Is It?)

- ◆ “Your cousin Elizabeth (who is beyond childbearing age) is now six months pregnant”.
- ◆ “And, if God can do a miracle for Elizabeth, then God can do a miracle for you”.
- ◆ “Mary, go see your cousin and remember this, (v. 37) “For with God, nothing shall be impossible”.

(But Pastor)

- ◆ That was Mary, what about me?
- ◆ How can God use me in His plan today?
- ◆ What is it that enables God to work out His plan in my life like Mary?

(3 Trademarks Of A Real Disciple)

Quality #1. “A Surrendered Will”

Question: What did Mary say after the angel told her two things?

- #1. “You will birth the Son of God”. (and) #2. “You need to go see your cousin”.

Question: How did Mary respond?

(V. 38) “And Mary said, behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy Word, and the angel departed from her”. (Mission accomplished)

Question: What was Mary’s response to the will of God?

Answer: “Be it unto me according to Thy word”.

- ◆ Even though she was young and would have to be in secret.
- ◆ Even though the espousal period was one year, and adultery resulted in stoning.
- ◆ Even though people would criticize her for being pregnant (while still engaged).

#1. Mary surrendered her will to God’s will (and gave up her rights).

#2. Mary was willing to die to herself and do what was right (instead of what was convenient).

(What’s The Application?)

- ◆ Am I willing to absolutely surrender myself to God?
- ◆ Am I willing to obey God, even without answers to all of my questions?
- ◆ Is there any part of my life that I have yet to surrender to God?

(But what about my life, and my plans and my goals?) (v. 38) “Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord”

Fact: The word “handmaid” (DOULE) means: “Slave girl”.

Fact: Mary was saying that she was a bond slave, or a servant of God.

Fact: A servant is one who advances others at the expense of themselves without complaint, doesn’t need to be “thanked” for their service and cares less who gets the credit.

Quality #2. “An Obedient Heart”

Question: “What happened after Mary said “Yes Lord”?”

Answer: She took the next step in the process:

(V. 39), “And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah, and entered into the house of Zacharias”.

Fact: Mary obeyed God when 3 things were against her:

- #1. She was an unwed mother and who would believe her story? (Luke 1:26; Matt. 1:18)
- #2. She would have to face Joseph and chance his rejection and shock of a broken trust. (Matthew 1:19, 20)
- #3. She faced the threat of being condemned to death for adultery. (Deuteronomy 22:23)

(Yet In The Face Of Adversity)

- ◆ She is willing to obey God, and add works to her faith!
- ◆ She is willing to please God above all others.
- ◆ She is willing to trust God to work out all of the details outside of her control.

(What’s The Application?)

- ◆ Am I willing to obey God, and then trust the Lord with the consequences to follow?
- ◆ Am I willing to give up my present plans, for a future reward?
- ◆ Am I willing to lay aside every weight and sin, to experience the joy of a clear conscience?
- ◆ Am I willing to obey God and do what He’s been telling me to do?

(By The Way)

Verse 39 says, “Mary arose and went into Judah with haste”

- ◆ Eager to follow the angels directions.
- ◆ Eager to see the miracle for herself.
- ◆ Eager to meet Elizabeth face to face.

(With Haste Means:)

- ◆ Don’t put off till tomorrow what God had told you to do today. (repeat)

(With Haste Means:)

- ◆ “My progress in God tomorrow will go no further than my obedience takes me today”.

Quality #3. A “Grateful Spirit”

(Vs. 46-55) Is known as Mary’s song”

- ◆ In (v. 46), She “magnifies the Lord”.
- ◆ The word “Magnify” (MEGALUNEI) means: “To declare the greatness of”.
- ◆ The idea is habitual, or, Mary continued on to magnify the Lord (it was her constant practice).
- ◆ In (v. 47) She “rejoices in God my Savior” (which means:)
- ◆ Mary praised God with all of her heart!
- ◆ Mary believed that God was in control!
- ◆ Mary trusted God with what she couldn’t see!

(What Did She Praise God For?)

Why Was She So Grateful?

#1. She was grateful for God’s Salvation (v. 47)

- ◆ She calls God “My Savior”.
- ◆ She was a sinner saved by grace and needed to trust the Lord for her salvation.
- ◆ She rejoices that God saw her need and saved her.

(What’s The Application?)

- ◆ There is not a sinner alive that God will not save if they will only ask Him to save them.

#2. She was grateful for *God's Compassion* (v. 48)

- ◆ "For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden".
- ◆ Mary recognized where she came from (to the world she was poor, obscure, unknown, insignificant and without value).
- ◆ The words "low estate" mean that Mary was considered the least within her own household.

(What's The Application?)

- ◆ That no matter how low you might be (and),
- ◆ No matter how nothing you may feel,
- ◆ God cares enough to reach down to us, take us by the hand, lift us up where we belong, and give us purpose and meaning in life.

#3. She was grateful for *God's Power* (vs. 49-52)

- (V. 40) He is "mighty" (a miracle worker).
- (V. 50) He is "merciful" (in sending us a Savior).
- (V. 51) He is "strong" (able to do great things).
- (V. 52) He is "still in charge" (over all those who are proud and humble).

#4. She was grateful for *God's Deliverance* (vs. 53, 54)

- ◆ (In v. 53), God fills those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.
- ◆ In (v. 54), God remembers His mercy, as Israel was desperate for mercy and deliverance. (Why?)
- ◆ Because Israel was enslaved by the Romans.
- ◆ God's people were frantic in their search for a deliverer.
- ◆ And Mary proclaims, Jesus is the answer to deliver you from the tyranny of satan, sin, and self destruction!

Conclusion

Ask: Like Mary, are you finding it difficult to understand all that God is doing in your life?

Ask: Like Zacharias and Elizabeth, are you praying for something and the answer has yet to come?

Ask: Like Israel, are you under the power of some sin, and need to be delivered from it?

Ask: Do you want to grow and make progress with God (and not waste your time?)

(The Key?)

#1. A Surrendered Will #2. An Obedient Heart #3. A Grateful Spirit

AMEN!
Bill Kirk, Pastor

(Pg. 5 of 5)

“LYDIA’S PROVOCATION”

Text: Acts 15:36 – Acts 16:15, 40

Subject: How Lydia Provokes Us To Spirituality (Or) “Grace Revealed Down By The River”

Introduction

1. Acts 15:36 – 18:22, is the account of Paul’s second missionary journey.
2. It is a journey that takes Paul from Antioch through Syria, through Asia Minor and into Europe.
3. He ministers in the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Caesarea, Jerusalem and Antioch.

Question: How does Paul’s second missionary journey begin? (In an unusual way)

#1. There was contention (Acts 15:36-41)

- ◆ Paul and Barnabas agreed on the mission. (But disagreed on the personnel)
 - ◆ Paul felt that Mark wasn’t ready to go to Europe.
 - ◆ Barnabas felt that Mark was ready to go to Europe.
 - ◆ So holy conflict arose, and the sharp contention caused Paul to take Silas and Barnabas to take Mark.
 - ◆ The results from the division were redeemed, (as God still rules and overrules).
1. A former deserter (Mark) was reclaimed and set aflame for ministry by Barnabas.
 2. A new disciple was born (Silas) as Paul’s new companion in mission.
 3. A new missions team was founded.
 - ◆ Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus.
 - ◆ Paul took Silas and went into Syria and Alicia.
 4. Two cities would now be reached instead of one, as the gospel was spread a little farther.

Question: What’s the lesson?

Answer: ◆ That God rules and overrules, and differences of opinions are okay.
◆ That God can use conflict to accomplish His will when both parties want God’s will above everything else.

#2. There was strengthening (Acts 16:1-5)

- ◆ (V. 3) Paul took young Timothy as his helper.
- ◆ At Lystra, Paul took Timothy, ordained him to the ministry and then placed him as the pastor in Ephesus.
- ◆ It was a time (v. 5) when the churches were strengthened and increasing under Paul’s ministry, a time when God provided just what was needed.

#3. There was disappointment (Acts 16:6-11)

- ◆ In v. 6, Paul was kept from going where he intended to go (Asia Minor)- Westward.
- ◆ In v. 7, Paul was forbidden to go into Bithynia (which was Northward).
- ◆ In vs. 8 & 9, while journeying to Troas, the Spirit gave a vision of the man in Macedonia crying out, “Come over into Macedonia and help us”

(In Other Words)

- #1. God changed Paul’s plans and closed the door Westward.
- #2. God changed Paul’s plans (again) and closed the door Northward.
- #3. So, while Paul turns and goes in the only direction he can go (toward Troas close to the sea), he receives the call to Macedonia.

(What’s The Lesson Pastor?)

- #1. God will use the very things that disappoint us to increase His work within us. (Pg. 1 of 4)

- #2. God will close doors that we might want open, without giving us all the reasons behind it.
- #3. God's timing is just as important as God's will (Paul would later go to Asia, but not now).
- #4. God will close immediate doors before us, to open greater doors we cannot see.
- #5. God will break your heart temporarily, to protect you and shelter you permanently.

(How Does Paul's Journey Begin?)

- #1. There was **contention** (that God used for His ultimate glory).
- #2. There was **strengthening** (as Timothy was added to the team in Lystra).
- #3. There was **disappointment** (as doors were closed because God can see things ahead).
- #4. There was **victory** (vs. 6-40) in 3 ways:
 1. God saved a woman named Lydia.
 2. God saved a woman full of evil.
 3. God saved a jailor that was suicidal.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ God had a purpose for every discouraging closed door (to get Paul to Philippi so that God could go to work).

Fact: God used division for His ultimate glory.

Fact: God used young Timothy for His ultimate glory.

Fact: God used closed doors for His ultimate glory.

Fact: God used evil and prisoners for His ultimate glory.

Question: In fact, why did God allow Paul and Silas to be put in jail and inconvenienced?

Answer: To lead the Philippian jailor to the Lord and save His whole family!!!

(Now To Our Text Vs. 12-15)

(V. 12) "Finally from Troas into Philippi of Macedonia.

(V. 13) "On the Sabbath we went down by a river and spoke to a group of women".

(V. 14) "There was a woman named Lydia whose heart the Lord had opened".

(V. 15) "She was baptized and her household".

(Seems Strange Again Here)

Question: Who did Paul receive a vision about?

Answer: (V. 9) There stood a man in Macedonia saying "Come over here and help us".

Question: Who does Paul meet while looking for a man?

Answer: A woman instead, named Lydia.

Question: What does Lydia teach about our own relatives?

Question: Why such a coincidence that Paul runs into a woman in Philippi who is from Thyatira?

("Secrets From The Riverbank")

Fact: From Troas to Neapolis the Port of Philippi, it is 150 miles.

Fact: It takes Paul 2 days to make the journey.

Fact: Notice chapter 20:6, the same trip in the opposite directions takes 5 days later on.

Fact: But (in God's timing) it takes two days to encounter the first conversion in Europe.

Question: Where does the conversion take place?

Answer: In Philippi (a Roman Colony)

Question: Why Philippi?

Answer: It was the gateway to Europe!

- ◆ Located on the great Roman road known as the Egnatian Way.

- ◆ Named after Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander The Great.

- ◆ A Roman Colony, filled with businessmen and salesmen, who traveled all over the world.
- ◆ A place where God (in His wisdom) gives entrance of the gospel into Europe.

Question: What is it about Lydia, that provokes all of us to spirituality?

(Secrets From The Riverbank)

I. God Honors A Praying Spirit (V. 13)

- ◆ Paul and his friends rested a few days to prepare for ministry in (v. 12).
- ◆ Paul was patient and praying in his preparation.
- ◆ Then, on the Sabbath, Paul went out of the city by a river, where he attended a prayer service.

Question: Why women and not men?

Answer: The Jewish Law required ten men for the founding of a synagogue.

- ◆ Too small to establish a synagogue, there was a place of prayer out of town by the Gangites River.
- ◆ The river provided the water necessary for the ceremonial washings.
- ◆ Here, a group of women were gathered to pray.
- ◆ And God leads Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke out to group of praying women.

Question: Why send the gospel and surprise these women?

Answer: Because God sees the heart that is seeking in prayer. (Even down by the river)

Question: What is prayer?

Answer: It is communion of my soul with God. It is connecting with God's storehouse.
It is desire of intimacy with Jesus. It is fellowship from heart to heart.
It is union of my heart with God's heart.

- ◆ Lydia was a prayer!

II. God Honors A Worshipping Spirit (V. 14)

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, from Thyatira, which worshipped God"

- ◆ Lydia was a professional woman. (A seller of purple fabric).
- ◆ Purple fabrics were in great demand in Rome. (Purple was a sign of royalty).
- ◆ And Lydia, had a business establishment in Thyatira (but was selling her product in Philippi)
- ◆ She was wealthy, had a large home to accommodate the church people, but was focused.

Question: What did this seller of purple do?

Answer: (V. 14) "Worshipped God"

- ◆ The Jews believed that God was alive.
- ◆ They Believed that God was actively involved in the lives of people.
- ◆ They worshipped God as pure and holy.

Question: What is worship?

Answer: It is the act of ascribing worthiness to God for who He is. (Psalm 95:6)

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Worship is my response to the Lord!
- ◆ Worship is my expression for His goodness!
- ◆ Worship is my gratefulness and thankfulness!
- ◆ Worship is my servanthood poured out!
- ◆ Worship is my life placed on the altar!

(Lydia Was A Worshipper)

III. God Honors A Receptive Spirit (V. 14)

(V. 14) "...which worshipped God, heard us"

- ◆ The word “Heard” (EKOUEEN) means:
 1. “To perk up and pay attention”
 2. “To listen and keep on listening”
 3. “To give utmost attention to the gospel”

It Means:

- ◆ To continue to keep on listening to the gospel being taught.
- ◆ It is a continuing on (without ceasing) to receive.
- ◆ It is a hearing of the gospel with the intent to do what it says.
- ◆ I call this a receptive spirit to the Lord’s Word.
- ◆ Wanting to learn and grow and change into the likeness of Jesus.

IV. God Honors An Obedient Spirit (V. 14)

(V. 14) “... she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul”

(V. 15) “And when she was baptized, and her household” **(In other words)**

- ◆ Lydia led her whole household to the Lord.
- ◆ Family members and relatives joined in.
- ◆ Lydia witnessed to and influenced all those related to her.
- ◆ She obeyed the Lord at Paul’s preaching without hesitation or reservation.

Question: Have you hesitated to obey the Lord in any area of your life?

Remember:

- ◆ “Obedience is the certificate of Christian character”. (A.W. Tozer)

V. God Honors A Servant’s Spirit (Vs. 15 & 40)

- ◆ In (v. 15), Lydia opens her home and uses her wealth for the Lord.
- ◆ In (v. 40), Lydia opens her home to the believers and Paul and Silas just released from prison.

Question: What is a servant?

Answer: The biblical word “Servant” means:

- ◆ One who advances others at the expense of themselves.
- ◆ One who cares less who gets the credit.
- ◆ One who doesn’t need to be thanked for their service.

Conclusion

Question: Who is it that opens the heart of every one of your friends and relatives?

Answer: (V. 14) “Whose heart the Lord opened” (Which Means:)

- ◆ **Only God** (by His Spirit) can open the heart of a person.
- ◆ **Only God** can get deep into the heart.
- ◆ **Only God** can bring heart change.
- ◆ **Only God** can deliver us from ourselves!

Altar Call!

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

“ZACCHEUS”

Text: Luke 19:1-10
Subject: How Grace Is Undeserved And Unexpected

Introduction

1. Luke alone records this meeting of Jesus and Zaccheus.
2. Jesus was passing through Jericho on His way to Jerusalem (“to be put to death and rise again” Luke 18:33)
3. Many onlookers “understood none of the things Jesus said” concerning His suffering, death and resurrection. (Luke 18:34)
4. And on this day, one man would get more than he bargained for.

Questions:

- #1. Ever feel undeserving of the grace of God?
- #2. Ever feel that God cannot forgive you of every sin?
- #3. Ever feel that your past sins will haunt you throughout your lifetime?
- #4. Ever wonder if Jesus knows who you are, where you are and what you need?
- #5. Ever doubt that Jesus has the power to change what needs to be changed in you?

(Some Absolutes That Stand Out)

◆ For Someone Undeserving And Unexpected

I. The Character Of Zaccheus (v. 1,2)

“And, behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the Publicans, and he was rich.” (v.2)

Fact: The name “Zaccheus” in Hebrew means (“pure” or righteous one”).

Fact: Zaccheus presided over other tax-gatherers (he was supervisor of the tax collectors).

Fact: No one admired Zaccheus the Publican.

(Why Not?)

- #1. He was collecting taxes of his own people and transmitting them to the Roman Government.
- #2. The Jews hated to be taxed by Rome (they were looking for a messiah to deliver them from the power of Rome.)
- #3. Zaccheus was looked upon as a traitor to his own people.
- #4. The position of tax collector was sold to the person who offered the most money for it.
- #5. The chief tax collector would often impose heavy taxes to reimburse himself for what he had paid for his position.
- #6. Publicans were notorious for collecting more taxes than were required.
- #7. Zaccheus had become wealthy by oppressing his own people.

(Think Of It)

1. He is despised and rejected by his own Jewish people.
2. He is wealthy (but avoided) because of his tax occupation.
3. He is an outcast to many, but an object of love and grace in the eyes of Jesus. (Pg. 1 of 3)

Fact: Zaccheus was O.K. on the outside, but hurting on the inside. (are you?)

Fact: Zaccheus was O.K. in the material world, but lacking in spiritual things. (are you?)

Fact: Zaccheus was seemingly O.K. (but something was missing).

II. The Curiosity Of Zaccheus (v. 3,4)

“And he sought to see Jesus, who he was but could not for the press”. (v.3)

“And he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree”. (v.4)

Fact: Jesus is passing this way for the final time.

Fact: The crowd is pressing upon this Jesus.

Fact: Zaccheus is too small to press through.

(And Zaccheus Has A Choice)

#1. Allow his obstacles to be a tomb stone (or)

#2. Allow his obstacles to be a stepping stone.

(And We All Have The Same Choice)

#1. Allow our obstacles and pain to dig our grave (or)

#2. Allow our obstacles and pain to build a ladder to God.

(Zaccheus Could Have Said:)

“My past history of stealing tax money is too much for Jesus to forgive”

“My past neglect of spiritual things is too much for Jesus to deal with”

“My past pain, rejection and abuse is too much for Jesus to overcome”

(What Am I Saying?)

#1. That everybody has obstacles to overcome!

#2. That each of us have a choice in our response!

#3. That the choice we make will determine our outcome!

Question: What did Zaccheus do?

Answer: He ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree.

Question: What was the sycamore tree?

Answer: A wild fig tree. (that was very leafy)

Question: Why this tree?

Answer: Because Zaccheus thought that he could see Jesus (without himself being seen)

Fact: Zaccheus thought he could escape the sight of Jesus. (but he couldn't)

Fact: And you cannot escape the sight, the love and the attention of this Jesus!!!

III. The Calling Of Zaccheus (v.5)

“Jesus came to the place, looked up, saw him and said, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at thy house”. (v.5)

(What A Call From God)

#1. It Was A Personal Call

Fact: Jesus knew Zaccheus by name.

Fact: And Jesus knows you by name.

#2. It Was An Urgent Call

“Make haste” means: come down now!

Fact: There was no halting between 2 opinions.

Fact: Zaccheus responded quickly to the call of Jesus.

#3. It Was A Humbling Call

“Come down” Means: come down!

“Down” from high thoughts of self importance!

“Down” from fear of what others might think!

“Down” from all doubt that Jesus can change me!

“Down” from the snare of remaining unchanged!

#4. It Was An Affectionate Call

“I must abide at your house”. (v.5)

Fact: Jericho was one of the cities of the priests.

Fact: And Jesus is willing to bypass all the righteous looking religious people (just to spend time with a man so undeserving).

#5. It Was An Accepted Call

“And he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully” (v.6)

Fact: Jesus didn’t have to wait for Zaccheus!

◆ Don’t make Jesus wait for you!!!

◆ Obey the call of God.....

#1....To receive this Divine Compassion of Jesus.

#2....To abandon every sin that is a wall between you and Jesus.

IV. The Changing Of Zaccheus (v.8-10)

(v.8) “I will restore him fourfold”

(v.9) “This day is salvation come to this house”

(v.10) “For the Son of Man is come, to do again what He did then”

(Oh What A Change)

◆ In (v.4) Zaccheus runs from this Jesus

◆ In (v.6) Zaccheus runs into the arms of Jesus

Totally Undeserved!

Totally Unexpected!!

Totally Transforming!!!

AMEN!

Pastor Bill Kirk

(Pg. 3 of 3)

"PETER"

Text: Matthew 14:23-33

Subject: How Jesus saves Peter From Sinking

Introduction

Fact: Matthew (chapter 14) begins the isolation season of Jesus' life and ministry.

Fact: It's the time when Jesus withdraws from the crowds to spend time alone with His disciples.

Fact: Jesus wants to prepare the disciples for the upcoming and impending crucifixion.

In (chapter 14:13) Jesus withdraws into a desert place.

In (chapter. 15:21) Jesus withdraws into the coasts of Tyre & Sidon.

In (chapter 16:13) Jesus withdraws into Caesarea Philippi.

In (chapter 17:1) Jesus withdraws into the mountain.

Our Setting Before Us

1. Jesus constrains the disciples to get into a ship.
2. Jesus commands the disciples to cross over the lake.
3. Jesus goes up into the mountain to pray alone.
4. It's evening time soon, and time to teach the disciples (and you & me) a marvelous lesson.

What's The Lesson?

◆ How to be encouraged through every storm you'll ever face in the journey

Questions With Answers:

- #1. Pastor, how does this passage encourage my heart?
- #2. Pastor, why did Jesus send the disciples out alone?
- #3. Pastor, why the storm in the perfect will of God?
- #4. Pastor, why did Peter start sinking in the water?
- #5. Pastor, why did Jesus help the one who would deny Him?
- #6. Pastor, what's the lesson of this account?
- #7. And what difference does it make in your life & mine today?

(4 Storm Secrets That Crucify the Lies Of The Evil One)

I. In Every Storm There Is "Divine Permission"

Question: Who was it that told the disciples to hop on board the boat and go before Him across the lake?

Answer: It was Jesus (Mark 6 :45) "And straightaway He constrained his disciples to get into the ship and go to the other side unto Bethsaida".

Question: Why did Jesus send the disciples across the lake into negative circumstances?

- A. Late at night (It was dark)
- B. All alone (Jesus stays on shore)
- C. Contrary wind (There's trouble on the water)

(Why Send Them Over Alone Through High Winds?)

Answer: Because the crowd wanted to make Jesus king after the miracle of the loaves, fishes and feeding of 5,000.

“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make Him king, he departed again into a mountain Himself alone” (John 6:14,15)

Fact: The multitudes now believes that Jesus is Messiah.

Fact: They think He is come to deliver the people from Herod’s authority and Roman oppression.

Fact: Thus, if the disciples remain on shore, they will be destroyed by missing the true purpose of Jesus coming.

(So Lest The Disciples...)

#1...Be blinded by the frenzy of the moment (or)

#2...Be swept in by popular excitement (or)

#3...And miss the cross and ultimate plan of God,

(Jesus Says)

“Go out and cross over the lake right through the storm in the nighttime”.

(How Come?)

#1. Because Jesus could see some things that the disciples couldn’t see!

#2. Because Jesus knew some things that the disciples didn’t know!

(What Am I Saying?)

#1. That the disciples encountered contrary winds by “Divine Permission”

#2. That it was the Lord who sent them over.

#3. That it was the Lord who saw down the road.

#4. That it was the Lord who allowed the wind & waves.

(Why?)

◆ To spare them from something greater that they didn’t even know about!

(Let’s Give God The Credit)

◆ That He knows a little more than we do about our tomorrows and what surrounds your life!!!

II. In Every Storm There Is “Divine Presence”

“Jesus went unto them walking on the sea” (Matthew 14:25)

(Pg. 2 of 4)

Fact: In (v.22) Jesus is sending.
Fact: In (v. 23) Jesus is praying.
Fact: In (v. 24) Jesus is waiting.
Fact: But in (v. 25) Jesus is walking to His own!

Question: Ever feel like Jesus is unaware of your life's circumstances?
Question: Ever feel like Jesus isn't answering your prayers?
Question: Ever feel like Jesus has you "on hold"?
Question: Ever feel like Jesus will be late in arriving?

(Remember This In Contrary Winds)

- ◆ The Lord may not show up at the time that you think He should,
- ◆ But He will always show up at God's appointed time!!!

Question: Where was the ship at storm time?
Answer: (v. 24) "In the midst of the sea" (or half way across the 7 mile Sea of Galilee)
Fact: As far from shore as you can be on both sides (in winds & waves)

Question: Doesn't Jesus see what's going on?
Answer: "Jesus saw them toiling in rowing" (Mark 6:48)
Fact: Not only did Jesus see them ("He went unto them") Matthew 14:25)

(Notice 3 Characteristics Of Jesus' Arrival)

- #1. The Lord takes the initiative to come to them.
- #2. The Lord arrives at the darkest time of night.
- #3. The Lord's avenue of approach is to walk on top of the very thing that threatens the disciples.

(And I Discover Here)

- #1. That your dark night circumstances are never too dark where Jesus can't find you.
- #2. The Lord takes the initiative (He is bent on revealing Himself to you).
- #3. The waves (or whatever frightens you) is the Lord's opportunity to walk right in to your view!

III. In Every Storm There Is "Divine Perspective"

In (v. 26), the disciples couldn't see that it was Jesus!
In (v. 28), Peter said, "If it's you Lord, bid me to come out on the water".
In (v. 29), Peter jumped out of the boat and walked on the water.
In (v. 30), Peter lived what we all live at some time:
"But when he saw the strong wind blowing"

(What Happened?)

Question: What happens when you take your eyes off of Jesus?
Question: What happens when we get out of focus?
Question: What happens when we lose perspective?
Question: What happens when we become distracted by all that is around us?

(The Answer?)

“He was afraid and began to sink” (v. 30)

Fact: Peter thought of the wind (instead of Jesus)

Question: What are you thinking of this morning?

Question: What consumes your mind & thought life?

Question: Which direction are you looking in?

(Is It That Important?)

“O thou of little faith, why did you doubt?” (v. 31)

(In Other Words) ◆ Jesus reproves Peter for looking in the wrong direction!
◆ Fear was the symptom or byproduct; Jesus deals with the source.
◆ And the source is one of “Divine Perspective”.

(Which Is) Keeping our eyes on Jesus in the midst of the winds and waves of life!!!

IV. In Every Storm There Is “Divine Perfection”

“And when they were gone over” (Matthew 14:34)

Question: What was the purpose of the storm?

Answer: To grow the faith of the disciples!

Question: What did Peter do when sinking?

Answer: He prayed, “Lord, save me” (v. 30)

Question: How did Jesus respond to simple prayer?

Answer: “And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him”. (v. 31)

**(“But, Pastor, I Don’t Deserve It”)
Neither Did Peter**

#1. Peter would flee from Jesus!

#2. Peter would deny he knew Jesus!

#3. But grace is undeserved favor from God!!!

(Give Peter Credit) 1. That when he was sinking, he did what we can do,
2. He prayed expecting the Lord to answer prayer!!!

(How Did Jesus Respond?) “Jesus stretched forth His hand” (v. 31)
“And caught him” (v. 31)

(But Pastor) “I’m too far under, too distant, too distracted from Jesus”
“I don’t deserve this lifting ministry of Jesus”
“I’ve been sinking in sin too deep too long”

(Forget All The Excuses)

“Lord Save Me” (v. 30) Prayers Still Work!

AMEN!
Pastor Bill Kirk

“THE PRODIGAL”

Text: Luke 15:11-24

Subject: How God Restores Those Who Wander And Return

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to keep His final Passover.
2. A group of Publicans (tax collectors) and sinners gather around Him. (v. 2)
3. Upon seeing this take place, the pharisees and scribes murmur saying:
“This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them” (v. 2)
4. The pharisees and scribes (filled with pride and self-righteousness) looked with contempt upon sinners.
 - A. They avoid the sinner!
 - B. They wouldn't even shake hands with sinners!
 - C. They rebuked Jesus for joining with sinners!

(And The Pharisees And Scribes Tell On Themselves)

(What a revelation...)

...That when you come to the place where you reject people because you feel that they are less righteous than you.

...Pride has so swallowed us up, that we are blinded to our own moral corruption (Repeat)

(Remember This)

- ◆ By eating with sinners - Jesus reveals how much He loves us and longs to restore us to Himself!

(Questions With Answers)

- #1. What causes a prodigal to journey into a far country?
- #2. What steps lead to the pigpen?
- #3. What leads a person to “come to himself” ?
- #4. How does our Father respond to “deep repentance”?
- #5. And what difference does it make in your life and mine?

I. The Road Of The Prodigal

“He took his journey into a far country” (V. 13)

Question: What traps does the enemy set to lead you down the wrong road and steal your inheritance?

Question: Exactly why did the son become a prodigal?

(4 Traps For Saint & Sinner)

Trap # 1: An “Impatient” Spirit

“Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me” (v. 12)

Fact: The younger son is not content to wait.

Fact: He won't wait for the time when father dies.

Fact: He wants his part of the estate now. (why?)

- ◆ So he might enjoy it before his time!!

(What A Trap Of Satan)

- ◆ To get you to trade in your long term reward - for a short term fling, good feeling and immediate gratification!

Fact: Impatient saints become prodigal saints.

Fact: Those who lose perspective of “down the road”.

Fact: Those not willing to dig deep, take time and discipline day after day.

Trap # 2: An “Independent” Spirit

Notice (v. 13) “A far country”

Question: Why journey into a far country?

Answer: So he can live independent of father’s will (and) out from under father’s authority.

(A Popular Song) “I Did It My Way”)

- ◆ He wants to be his own boss!
- ◆ He wants to bypass all the fences & guardrails!
- ◆ He wants to live life foot lose & fancy free!

(So He Rebels Against Authority)

- ◆ And rebellion always leads to ruin when the bills come due!!!

Question: Why doesn’t the father beg, resist and make the boy stay at home?

Answer: Because it does me no good to sit in God’s House, if on the inside I am estranged from God’s Heart. (Repeat)

Trap # 3 An “Indifferent” Spirit

- ◆ “The younger son gathered all together” (v. 13)

Question: How could the son go to his room, pack all of his belongings, take his nintendo, saga, computer games, sports equipment, clothes, C.D. player - and just walk out?

Answer: Because he became indifferent to the love of his father!
Indifferent to the prayers of dad!
Indifferent to the prayers of Father!

(Trap #3 Is)

...To get you to (not care) how Jesus feels about what you’re doing!

Trap #4: “An Indulgent Spirit”

(v. 13) “He wasted his substance with riotous living!”

(v. 14) “He spent it all”

Fact: Wandering always leads to wasting.

Fact: Resources run out and friends run off.

Fact: Life away from Father was not what he expected.

Fact: The devil has lied again (saying) “You can indulge yourself now without any long term consequences.”

II. The Ruin Of The Prodigal

(v. 14) “He spent it all”

(v. 14) “He began to be in want”

(v. 15) “He ended up in the pigpen”

(v. 16) “No man gave unto him”

(Not Even Food to Eat)

Question: Why didn't the father chase down the son in the pigpen (and beg him to come home?)

Answer: Because until we are in touch with the pain our sin has caused Father (we are destined to repeat it.) (Repeat)

(And)

If you remove the pain too quickly, you remove the motivation to repent and be free from it happening again. (Repeat)

Fact: God used the "famine" to get his attention.

Fact: God used the "pigpen" to get his attention.

Fact: God used the "spent it all" to get his attention.

(Discover The State Of Ruin Of A Prodigal)

- #1. The prodigal is in a state of **deception** (thinking that something apart from God can satisfy his thirst).
- #2. The prodigal is in a state of **distance** (because he travels away from God to do his own thing)
- #3. The prodigal is in a state of **wasting** (as his substance runs out in time).
- #4. The prodigal is in a state of **slavery** (when what he wanted now controls his life).
- #5. The prodigal is in a state of **wanting** (as what he had to have takes wings and flies away).

III. The Return Of The Prodigal

(v. 17) "And when he came to himself"

Fact: His sin was made bitter so he would leave it!

(v. 17) "Father is feeding everyone else and I perish with hunger"

Question: What do you do when the Spirit awakens your conscience?

Answer: "I will arise and go to my Father" (v. 18)

"And he arose and came to his Father" (v.20)

(Father Has Been Praying All The While)

"Return unto thy rest" (Psalm 116:7)

"Return, Return, Return" (Song of Solomon 6:13)

"Return O Israel" (Jeremiah 3:12)

"I will go and return" (Hosea 2:7)

"In return and rest shall ye be saved" (Isaiah 30:15)

(Oh How We Object)

- #1. "But pastor, I've been away too long"
- #2. "But pastor, I've offended Father too much"
- #3. "But pastor, I've dishonored God real bad"
- #4. "But pastor, I've sinned too deep"
- #5. "But pastor, I feel like running from God"
- #6. "But pastor, I've been living two lives"
- #7. "But pastor, How will Father respond to me?"

(Here's Your Answer)

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him".

Question: Why does Father see?

Question: Why does Father feel?

Question: Why does Father run?

(One Reason)

◆ To reveal to us that God is more willing to forgive, than we are to ask Him. (Repeat)

Fact: The son was never too far to be reached.

Fact: And you are never too far to be reached.

IV. **The Reunion Of The Prodigal**

Fact: "I'm not worthy to be called your son"

Fact: But God responds to all of your excuses:

(In Verses 22 & 23)

#1. **The Robe**

A. The boy comes in rags and gets a robe.

B. The robe signifies release from all condemnation, and imputation of the righteousness of Jesus.

#2. **The Ring**

A. The ring was a mark of dignity and often used as a seal.

B. God's Spirit will seal you (or confirm in your heart that you belong to Jesus today).

#3. **The Shoes**

A. Those taken captive had their shoes taken off (when they were restored to liberty, their shoes were given back).

B. The shoes are a sign of freedom, how Jesus will free you from the power of sin and satan today.

#4. **The Calf**

A. The calf was sacrificed at public feasts, on occasions of great joy.

B. So there is joy unspeakable for those who return to the Lord and are fully restored!!!

Conclusion

Question: Why did the father run, when in the east old men do not run?

#1. Because there was joy in Father's heart to restore His son.

(But More Than That)

#2. According to Deut. 21: 18-21 the rebellious son should have been stoned to death upon returning.

◆ So, if the villagers stone the son, they will have to stone the father who is embracing the son!!!

(Oh What A Picture Of Jesus)

At the cross to take your punishment and mine!!!

AMEN!

Pastor Bill Kirk
(Pg. 4 of 4)