



Sermon Series Notes

“Christian or Disciple?” (Hebrews 12:1, Selected Scriptures)

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Eccl.3:11

Why is it that, even though we have been given this inner knowledge that we are going to live for eternity, we can so easily get caught up in living for only this present world?

See Romans 7:14-8:8

I hate the fact that I still struggle with sin. Hit my big toe on left foot this past Thursday evening, and what I said was not Christian. I still at times struggle with other drivers on the highway, etc. Overall my mindset is on the things of heaven, and I am committed to Christ, my wife and family, the church, the ministry, etc. But still I struggle with sin that dwells in the members of this body. Can I get a witness?

The challenge in the daily struggle it to not allow myself to be pulled away so that sin ends up winning an overall victory in my life.

Philippians 2:1-2; Col.3:1-4

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Philippians 3:18-19

See Luke 14:25-33

The Christian life is very simply a life of the cross. My friend Peter Lord said to me a few weeks ago, “If one is going to live the Christian life, they must write an obituary to the self-life.”

Note: The cross life does not at all mean we are to all join a monastery, or live in such a way that we never enjoy certain blessings God may grant us in this present world. For example, my wife and I are planning a trip next month to drive up a portion of the Pacific Coast Highway. If this trip somehow compromised my commitment to Christ, it would be wrong. Let’s remember that Abraham was a very rich man, as was Job. King David enjoyed living in a palace as king. Joseph of Aramathea was a rich man, and it was he who used

his own personal tomb to bury Jesus. In Romans 16:23 Paul mentions a man of means by the name of Gaius, whose hospitality he and the whole church enjoyed.

The challenge is living in the world without the world living in us. The challenge is having possessions that do not possess us. See I John 2:15-17.

Our battle is against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our challenge is to live with our focus upon another world, a very real one.

See Hebrews 11:8-10, 24-26

Scripture records for us those who did not remain focused, and as a result failed. May we learn from their example.

I Cor.10:1-11; Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, Achan, Samson, Asa, Uzziah, David, Solomon.

Ananias & Sapphira

II Timothy 4:10...Demas, **because he loved this world**, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...

One can abandon the cross life in any number of ways. It can be a moment in time when you completely change course, like Peter going from boldly declaring that he would die with Christ if necessary, then hours later cursing and denying he even knew Him. Or it can be gradual, like Solomon, who little by little allowed romantic relationships to pull him away from his devotion to the Lord (I Kings 11:4a As Solomon grew old, his wives led him astray).

Hebrews 2:1 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not **drift away**.

In the parable of the seed and the sower, some are choked of fruitfulness over time by life's worries, riches, and pleasures.

The challenge we face in being disciples of Jesus is a **daily** challenge. Daniel Henderson says "The great challenge of the Christian life is that it is so daily."

Luke 9:23...If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross **daily** and follow me."

Paul the apostle said "I die every day" (I Cor.15:31). Jen Barrick, the first thing every morning, plops down on her knees in a fresh surrender of her life to Jesus.

See Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Entangle: Snare, trap.

God said to Cain (Gen.4:7)...**"sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must master it."**

The sin that might so easily entangle you is perhaps different than the one that might so easily entangle me.

In light of the above truth, look with me at the context of Jesus' words in Luke 14. It will help us to gain an understanding of just how easily someone can be deterred from being a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ. Read Luke 14:16-17; The banquet represents a future day when all saints will be gathered at what is called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev). It is when our life and work here is over, and we enter into the joy of our Lord, a world so amazing we cannot even begin to comprehend. It is when every sacrifice, every denial of self, every cross we have carried for the Savior's sake will be worth it all.

The invitation to this banquet is for everyone, "Whosoever will, let him come!" (Rev.22:17). Although everyone is invited, some make excuses as to why they cannot come. Read Luke 14:18-20. The excuses are very interesting to me. I suggest the first has to do with a personal venture. What were they going to do with the field? Build a second house in the country? Go camping? Play their favorite sport? The second excuse represents business success. Often the greatest test of life is success. Every time I drive into a Chic-Filet on a Sunday I am initially disappointed, then impressed by a company that will put God first, and trust Him for the success of the business. And the third excuse, a romantic relationship. The suggestion in the text is not a relationship out of the will of God, just a relationship that keeps me from the banquet. Daniel Henderson says that the devil does not need to destroy us, just to distract us. Distract = To sidetrack.

Church of Laodicea, no specific sin is mentioned, they are simply lukewarm.

CONCLUSION

Remember the little children's rhyme "Finders keepers, losers weepers?" In the kingdom of God, it's just the opposite: "Finders weepers, losers keepers." Jesus said, "Whoever would seek to save his life will lose it..."

Most people in most churches think they are following Jesus, but I'm not so sure. They may think they are following Jesus, but the reality is they've invited Jesus to follow them. I'm afraid we've cheapened the gospel by allowing people to buy in without selling out.

"...any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

"The spiritual turning point is when the pain of staying the same becomes greater than the pain of change. Sadly, too many of us get comfortable with comfort." (All In, p.57). "One of our fundamental spiritual problems is this: We want God to do something new while we keep doing the same old thing." "A fool is one who keeps doing the same things expecting different results."

On Feb.19, 1519 the Spanish explorer Hernan Cortez set sail for Mexico with an entourage of 11 ships, 13 horses, 110 sailors, & 553 soldiers. Two previous expeditions had failed to even establish a settlement in the new world, yet Cortez conquered much of the South American continent. Someone estimated that the odds were against Cortez by a ratio of 7,541 to 1. So what made the difference in his success? After landing, he issued an order that turned his mission into an all or nothing proposition: **Burn the ships!** As his crew watched their fleet of ships burn and sink, they came to terms with the fact that retreat was not an option.

Someone has said, "A statement of faith must make a statement. It's a defining decision accompanied by a dramatic action that symbolizes your absolute commitment to Jesus Christ and His cause."

The inseparable link between Passover and The Feast of Unleavened Bread. See I Cor.11:23-32.

