



Sermon Series Notes

Communion

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The origination of what we call communion was The Passover. See Exodus 12:1-3, 6-7, 13-15, 17-20; Inseparably linked to Passover was The Feast of Unleavened Bread; Under the New Covenant, we no longer sacrifice a literal lamb, because Jesus is the Lamb that has been sacrificed once for all (Hebrews 10:12). So we now use bread to represent Jesus' body, and for us at CCSP, we use grape juice to represent His blood shed on the cross; These are the symbols Jesus left us during the final Passover he celebrated with His disciples; And the lessons taught in the literal Feast of Unleavened Bread still apply every time we share in communion; See I Cor.5:6-8.

Sharing in communion is a tremendous privilege, and at the same time should never be done without personal examination (See I Cor.11:23-32).

Hebrews 11 is a list of saints in history that have now crossed the finish line of faith. Right after chapter 11 is a specific encouragement to those still in the race – you and me. Read Hebrews 12:1-11.

v.1 Paul loved comparing the Christian life to a race; Gal.5:7; II Tim.4:7.

The Greek word here for discipline has to do with the whole training and education of children - correcting mistakes, curbing passions, developing maturity. Discipline proves you are a legitimate child of God (vv.5-8), discipline is for our good (vv.9-11). Without discipline we would never mature (James 1:2-3).

Even Jesus required discipline to mature as a man

- Hebrews 2: 10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

- Hebrews 5: 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

“God had one Son without sin, but none without suffering.”

C.H. Spurgeon said, “I am afraid that all the grace I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows and pains and griefs is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the hammer and the anvil, the fire and the file? Affliction is the best bit of furniture in my house.

Some discipline is for MISTAKES

God is seeking to correct us; Jonah's storm was meant to correct his waywardness, and even after he went to Nineveh, the Lord had to deal with his awful attitude; I Cor.11:27-32 mentions physical infirmity that God used as a rod of correction, some of whom refused and suffered the ultimate rod – death. Haggai records that God disciplined Israel because their financial priorities did not include Him, so he caused their money to “disappear” (see Haggai 1:5-11). Have you been honoring God with your money? Perhaps that is why you never seem to be able to make ends meet.

Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

The scars on my body; The true child of God cannot get away with anything.

Some discipline is for MATURITY

Education/Revelation/Faith; See Deut.8:2-4

Discipline reveals the true nature of our hearts in order for the Lord to be able to purge our hearts from the impurities that are naturally there (Grumbling, complaining, lack of faith); Discipline is needed to develop a healthy, heavenly appetite, because we naturally crave the foods of Egypt;

Some discipline is for MAINTENANCE

- Paul's thorn in the flesh (II Cor.12:7-10)
- If God had not allowed your thorn in life, you might have ended up a proud, unspiritual person.

An old Quaker who was a farmer once had a weather-vane on the roof of his barn on which was written in clear letters for everyone to see “God Is Love.” One day a preacher came by and this Quaker called the preacher's attention to the weather vane and asked how he liked it. The preacher said he didn't like it at all, that it misrepresented Divine character –God's love is not variable like the wind. But the Quaker explained that the text on the weather vane was to remind him that, no matter which way the wind is blowing, and no matter from which direction the storms may come, still, God Is Love.

God's loving discipline is at work in every believer's life. What wind of discipline is blowing in your life right now? Correction, maturity, or maintenance?

The Lord initiates the disciplines for the above three reasons, but there is discipline in the text that is completely up to us, and it is in verse 1.

Anything hindering you from running the race of faith?

(NLT) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down...

Unnecessary Weights; Greek for weights = 3591. ogkos, ong'-kos; prob. from the same as G43; a mass (as bending or bulging by its load), i.e. burden (hindrance):--weight.

Luke 8:14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

I Cor.7:31 those who use the things of the world, as if not **engrossed** in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

- engrossed = 2710. katachraomai, kat-akh-rah'-om-ahee; from G2596 and G5530; to overuse, i.e. misuse:--abuse.

The weight is not in and of itself sin, but it is simply something that is slowing us down, hindering us from the pace we could be making in the race. It keeps us from accomplishing what we are capable of.

What sin is it that so easily entangles you?

(NLT) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

Note it is a sin that "so easily entangles." The sin that would so easily entangle you may be no real temptation for me, and the sin that would easily entangle me may be no real problem for you (examples: sexual immorality, pornography, anger, greed/materialism, etc.).

What do you need to do, to be rid of the weight that is slowing you down, to be free of the sin that has so easily entangled you?

- Get over your mistakes (Philippians 3:12-14)
 - "Today is the first day of the rest of your life."
- Move forward not backward
 - One thing a runner is never to do, and that is look back.
 - Luke 9: 62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."
 - August 7, 1954, during the British Empire Games in Vancouver, Canada, one of the greatest mile-run match-ups ever took place. It was touted as the "miracle mile" because Roger Bannister and John Landy were the only two sub-four-minute milers in the world. Bannister had been the first man ever to run the mile in four minutes. Both runners were in peak condition. Landy had a substantial lead for much of the race. Bannister's plan was to relax during the third lap and save everything for the finishing drive. But in the third lap Landy poured it on, stretching his already substantial lead. Bannister had to change his strategy and increased his pace. At the bell for the final lap the runners were dead even. At the home stretch the crowd roared. Landy was once again in the lead, but could not hear Bannister's footfall, so he looked back, and that's when Bannister made his move. Roger Bannister won the miracle mile that day by fifteen feet.
 - Eccl.7:10 Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions.
- Adjust priorities (Luke 10:38-42)
- Develop or renew self-discipline (I Cor.9:24-27)
- Repent
 - Matthew 18:8 If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

- If you truly are repenting today, I encourage you to let someone know. Or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.
- Be accountable to others
 - Eccl.4:12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
 - Eccl.4:12 (NLT) A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.
 - John 3:19-20 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.
- Fix Your Eyes on Jesus
 - The Rambo of the race we run is Jesus!
 - In sports, you have to be focused – baseball & football, keep your eye on the ball; golf, keep your head down; running, don't look back, etc. (Jairus' recent message for WED communion, to examine is to "focus").

CONCLUSION

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, 'It might have been.'" (John Greenleaf Whittier, American Quaker poet)