

God's Call to His Disciples - Matthew 16:24-27 **May 3, 2009 - Skip MacMillan**

If Jesus came back today what would you bring to the table? What have you done?

Why haven't we done much? Culture and Perspective

1. Current Culture we live in:

Too Busy:

- Examples: Work, vacation, sports, piano lessons, events and on and on!
- Busy leads to tired which leads to little to give (time, energy, money, relationships)--only to wake up the next Monday and do it all again
- Christ calls His Church to slow down (Jesus escapes to pray, meditate, be renewed in Him, quiet times, be still, listen to Jesus, *Selah*) and then to give themselves away!

Bred to Receiving:

- We are BRED to receive and not give
- Entire departments of companies dedicated to you receiving: "Customer Service"
- We are busy receiving everywhere we go
- Christ breeds new creations to give and serve, not to be served--Matt. 20:28

Delegators:

- Schools to educate our children, grocery stores to grow and prepare our food, the church to teach my kids about God
- Christ calls His followers to "go," to "serve," to get their hands dirty, to be a part of what He is doing, to sacrifice themselves, to pour their lives into His mission

We have to challenge the culture we live in, challenge ourselves about our business. Am I receiving rather than giving? Am I delegating when I should take a more active role?

2. Our Perspective

a. My Perspective

In all my business, receiving, and delegating out, my life doesn't look much like Jesus! So begin to develop a perspective of others and myself.

Others: They have it all together, job is overflowing with cash and contentment, marriage is vibrant, children excelling and loving, yard is green and weed-less, they're fit and in shape and on top of all that they really know the Bible.

Me: I on the other hand, know my issues, short comings, and failures.

Peter, Luke 5:8 - "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

Since I believe "they" have it all together and I don't, I think to myself what could I possibly have to offer them?

b. We don't see people as Jesus sees people, Matthew 9:35-38

- Heart of Jesus towards people
- Jesus speaks to the disciples, calls them to:
 - Have compassion on people – to see their needs, not just my own!
 - See as He sees and do what He is doing
- Who are the disciples? You
- As a disciple Jesus calls you to think, see and be as He is

- You must turn your perspective around to see as Jesus sees

You are the Body of Christ - 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 (28-31, Gifts of the Spirit)

- Christ has graciously made you part of His Body, the Church
 - "God has arranged the parts of the body, everyone of them, just as He wanted them to be" (v. 18)
 - Not just Deacons, Staff, Elders, Pastors and Ministry Leaders
- We are in this together, "if one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part is rejoices with it" (v. 26)
- "You are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it" (v. 27)
 - You are Christ's physical manifestation in the world today
 - You are important to the health of His church

Belief and Action

- Belief and obedience/action are one and the same!
 - Belief without action would not be recognized by Christ, John 15:1-17
 - Ephesians 2 says you were saved, shown grace, forgiven "to do good works"
- Examples
 - Woman at the well (John 4); demon-possessed man "begged to go with Him" (Mark 5:18-20); Peter goes from Luke 5:8 to Acts 2 ff
 - Exodus 12 dressed in their PJ's or Adidas?; the entire OT and NT is a call to action
 - James 2:17-26
 - Hebrews 11:7-16

The Problem today is cheap grace vs. costly grace - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

Cheap Grace

- Christ has forgiven her sin but there is no change in the sinner herself
- Grace is a concept, something to be understood but not practiced
- Since there is grace there is no need for repentance, obedience, change, or action
- "Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before" (p. 43)
- "my only duty as a Christian is to leave the world for an hour or so on Sunday morning and go to church to be assured that my sins are all forgiven" (p. 51)
- Cheap Grace, my sins are forgiven but Christ's redemption never touches me as a person

Costly Grace

- Belief and action: grace leads to action, justification leads to action
- Matthew 13:44-46 - "The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."
- Christ's salvation fundamentally changes a person, calls them to follow Him, moves them to action, to live a life of responding to His love and grace.
- "the only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ" (p. 51)

Matthew 25:31-46

- 1. When you go out in action, whom are you serving? Jesus, Matthew 25:37-41**
2. To help others is to help Christ; to neglect others is the neglect Christ
3. Christ doesn't let His followers retreat into a monastery, to escape to an island, to hide out until He returns; Jesus sends His followers out into the lives of others to be a help, to serve and love them.

The Call is for each of us this morning to examine our lives.

1. How much am I abiding in my culture (business, receiving) as opposed to abiding in Christ?

2. Examine your perspective of yourself and others. Do I see myself and others as Jesus sees?
- 3. If the church is the Body of Christ, the manifestation of Christ in the world, and belief in Christ and action are inseparable, what does the world see?**

You need to take seriously that you are a part of the Body of Christ, Christ's physical manifestation in the world today, not offering trinkets but lives given over to Christ: giving, serving, caring, helping

4. Question, is my relationship with Christ moving me into action or apathy?
5. We need you, the church needs you. God has saved you, changed you, empowered you, and gifted you. What God is doing here is of eternal significance. Focus your attention on serving others.

"Love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Peter 1:22-23).

You are loved deeply by God, therefore love one another in action and in truth.

Urgency

James 4:14 - "What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."

Jesus is returning, He will reward you according to what you have done!

What have you done?