

3-6-22

Matthew 6:16-24; 10:38-39; Exodus 35, 36.

We are starting a series call Witness His Resurrection. Today we will be talking about the Woodworker.

Jimmy DeYoung will be with us next week, March 13th, in both the 10am service and 6pm service. He will be with us Monday 14th through Wednesday 16th @6:30p.m. (It will be live streamed on Facebook. We will be taking up an offering for him also at these services)

March 19th funeral 2pm-4pm if you can help see Mark or Gretchen Nimey.

Paul Marshall (Executive Director of Care Net) will be with us on March 20th.

On March 27th we will be looking at Mary of Magdalene. (Baptism service following the AM service)

April 3rd we be on Simon the Zealot one of the disciples of Christ.

April 17th on Easter, we will be looking at the Sealer.

We will be able to witness His Resurrection in the lives of each of these individuals. How what Jesus did on the cross changed everything.

Play video: Woodworker

The Woodworker got his priorities mixed up and out of alignment. He thought he could monetize the cross by selling out to the Romans, while using his skillset to refurbish them for crucifixions rather than doing what Jesus taught about crosses. Jesus said,

“And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Matthew 10:38-39.

Each of us must decide once and for all, love Christ supremely and take up his cross and follow Him. **Or deny Him and live for self** and in this world. To carry the cross means to confess, obey and follow Jesus in spite of shame and suffering. **It means to die too self-daily. Spare your life or sacrifice your life.** There is no middle ground.

While there is no mention of an actual woodworker who was paid by the Romans to restore used crosses for the next crucifixion as depicted in the video, plenty of people have/had challenges when it came to proper positioning of priorities.

The reason Jesus went to the cross was because of **His priority** to make a way for people to come back into a right relationship with God the Father. (**Romans 5:10** reminds us that without Jesus we are enemies with God) Jesus **prioritized Himself** to be the sinless sacrifice who willingly would lay down His life for the salvation of all who would put their faith, hope, and trust in Him for the forgiveness of sin and new life in His name. **Humanity’s salvation was a priority for Jesus** and the mission He came from heaven to earth to accomplish.

Priority: *the fact or condition of being regarded or treated as more important:*

If you have ever heard a person, say, “You need to get your priorities straight,” (Parents of teenagers) that individual is saying that you need to rank or position in order what is superior in your life. Determine what is most important. Set in place what is most valuable. Identify what will have the highest privilege and what will have a lower privilege.

For this Jewish woodworker that we just met in the video, his priority seemed to be making money rather than serving God. He sold out his woodworking skills to acquire more cash, even if it meant the result of his handiwork would be used to execute people of his own kind who were being unnecessarily persecuted at the hands of the oppressive Roman empire. **This was a misplaced priority.**

Something must have happened in the woodworker's heart to allow such assistance to the oppressors of the Jewish people to occur for mere money. The video depicts this woodworker recognizing that he had his priorities out of alignment when his life was impacted by what Jesus, a fellow Jew, went through on the cross.

And if this Jew named Jesus was who some of the Jews were saying He was, the woodworker just aided and abetted in murdering the Messiah on a cross that had his fingerprints all over it.

Prior to Jesus experiencing the atrocities that accompanied Him on Good Friday at the cross, Jesus gained great popularity via His teaching ministry throughout Israel. When Jesus taught the masses one day on the hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee, one of the many things he spoke about was a person's priorities.

Within the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus insists that a **priority of outward obedience to God and the law of God isn't enough**. Instead, God wants a revolution of everything, including **the true priority of people giving God their heart!**

In the Sermon on the Mount, the **priority Jesus is talking about begins in a person's heart!** In other words, it's not about solely what is on the outside that matters. Rather, what's on the inside of a person counts in God's economy!

Matthew 6:16-24 is where we see Jesus' teaching about a person's priorities. As we examine this part of Jesus' sermon, pay attention to how He redirects people's priorities from what they do on the outside that everybody around them can see to the priority of what's coming from the inside of a person that only our Heavenly Father truly can see. **Jesus is talking about the priority of our hearts being right with God.**

Read Matthew 6:16-18.

- Jesus is confirming that **it's not about what is seen on the outside that should be prioritized**. Rather, **it's about what God the Father sees on the inside of a person's heart**.
- Two times in these verses we read Jesus say, **"when you fast"**. Fasting is a spiritual discipline that can help a person keep the main thing the main thing. It helps keep our priorities in the correct order.
- Jesus fasted and taught his disciples to fast. Fasting means to go without something for a while, and in the Bible they would fast eating. They would go for a period without taking in any nourishment. It was used to **remind them that God was priority number #1**. Feeling hunger pains, while they are important, God is more important.
- In these verses, Jesus is not rejecting fasting. **He is rejecting the fact that they are doing it for outward appearance**. A person who was fasting for the accolades of others seeing how devoted they were was a **misplaced priority** that meant something on the inside of that person was out of alignment.

- The Mosaic Law did not explicitly require fasting except for one day of the year known as the **Day of Atonement**. However, in Jesus' day, the religious leaders known as the Pharisees fasted twice a week. They made sure everybody saw them do it as an outward display of how holy and righteous they were trying to appear to everybody around them.
- The Pharisees of Jesus' day wanted to make a big deal of it and made sure everybody knew they were fasting. **In their misplaced priorities, if everybody didn't see them fasting, then why do it?**
- It's like when we post vacation photos, most people do this to share pictures with family and friends, while also having documented memories. But there are some people that post vacation photos and life events because they are trying to sell a false narrative, "Everybody needs to see me living my best life so they can see how great my life is."
- The **"religious"** people Jesus is speaking about weren't displaying joy, that wasn't what they were interested in showing. **Read verse 16 again. "... with a sad countenance... they disfigure their faces that they APPEAR to men to be fasting."**
- They thought this **misplaced priority** would somehow **make other people be impressed** by how much these Pharisees must really love God if they were willing to go through all that difficulty to impress God.
- These fasting hypocrites were purposely drawing attention to themselves so they could get thousands of "likes" by everybody viewing their social media account, rather than prioritizing getting one "like" by God who was looking at their heart.
- Jesus is saying in His Sermon on the Mount: there can be **no right fasting apart from a right heart**. And a right heart leads to right living and a right attitude. Jesus is talking about making our heart a priority before God because Jesus knows a profound truth.

I. **Spiritual problems are heart problems.**

- **Read verses 19-20.**
- In these verses, Jesus is talking about spiritual problems; **spiritual problems always are heart problems**. These spiritual problems stem back to the issue of priorities in our lives.
- In **verses 19-20**, Jesus is not prohibiting making sensible provisions for the future. Instead, Jesus is calling out a **misplaced priority that leads to greed**. Jesus is not calling people to live in poverty; Jesus is trying to deliver people from a **false sense of security in their wealth** and possessions.
- Notice that **"moth, rust and thieves"** are all things that are out of our control. We can do our best to keep things looking nice and lasting, but we are working against things out of our control.
- The word for **"rust"** is the word 'brosis' in the Greek and can be translated as "eating." Everyday our earthly treasures are being eaten away.
- Some questions worth thinking about from this part of Jesus' teaching might be:
- What's eating away at you at this season of life?

- What's eating away at your peace?
- What's eating away at your joy?
- What's eating away at your hope?
- Could it be that what's eating away at you stems back to a misplaced priority?
- Could it be what is eating away at you as a spiritual problem rather than a money problem?
- Perhaps the woodworker did not have money problems; he may have just had some heart problems of misplaced priorities.
- Jesus was (and is) deeply concerned that people have the material necessities of life. Nevertheless, Jesus desires for people to be free from the tyranny of things, free from materialism, and free from the misplaced priority leading to greed.
- Many of us would love to serve and help others but our priorities are so out of whack that we are unable to.

II. Our hearts passions direct us.

Biblical scholar D.A. Carson says, "The things most highly treasured (prioritized) occupy the 'heart,' the center of the personality, embracing mind, emotions and will; and thus, the most cherished treasure (priority) subtly but infallibly controls the whole person's direction and values."

- Do you like the direction of your life?
- If the direction you are headed is going to determine where you ultimately end up, does that mean **you are on a track that is moving closer towards God and the person He wants you to be or farther away from that priority?**
- If there are areas in your life that need to be reprioritized, then make decisions today that will change the direction in which you are headed. **If you don't do it today, those misplaced priorities will continue to eat away at you as you keep drifting further and further away in a direction you do not want to go.**
- Those spiritual problems of misplaced priorities will continue to haunt your life. And as we have identified from Jesus' teachings: Spiritual problems are heart problems. And the heart's passion directs where we do and go.
- **Read verse 21.**
- **Read verse 24.**
- Jesus categorizes God and money as two different masters, and **a person can't serve them both.**
- You can't keep one eye on God and one eye on money. It will divide your focus, your loyalty, and your heart.
- **You and I must prioritize who "own's" you, whom you bow to, and who you follow.** Otherwise, you will end up cross-eyed, out of focus, and with a massive headache that stems from a massive

heart problem. And that heart problem is a spiritual problem because spiritual problems always are heart problems.

- Perhaps Jesus wants us all to consider:
- What is your priority?
- Who is your priority?
- Where are your eyes focused?
- It's interesting to notice that in **verses 22-23** of this passage from **Matthew 6**, Jesus says something about our eyes. He says, ***"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness."***
- Some biblical scholars make the point that the eye of a person investigates the heart of that person.
- Some suggest the eye can be the equivalent to the heart. The "healthy eye" or "good eye" Jesus mentions in those verses stems back to a definition concerning generosity. The "unhealthy eye" or "bad eye" or the "evil eye" as some refer to it that Jesus mentions stems back to a definition concerning living life in a stingy, miserly, and greedy manner.
- It's the difference between living open-handed and freely, knowing that everything you have comes from your Father in heaven versus living close-fisted trying to hold on to everything you can get your hands on for fear of losing any of it.
- This is how the woodworker in the video was living, close-fisted with unhealthy eyes and misplaced priorities. His eyes were on the money rather than the Messiah.
- What would it be like to be found like the Jews in **Exodus 35-36**? Forever they will be known for their faithfulness to God, and how they made God their number 1 priority. (Talk about it if there is time left)

Conclusion

Know this:

You are a priority to God. You are not a coincidence, an after-thought, a surprise, a mistake, a nuisance, or just another mouth to feed. You were made on purpose for a purpose for such a time as this.

How can we respond to being a priority of the God who says the following through the sending of His one and only Son, Jesus?

God says... "I love you! I created you! I have plans for you! I love you from the inside out! And to show how much I love you; I chose to go all the way to the cross to die in your place that you might know that you are a priority to Me."

We can respond to that by **living lives that prioritize showing and telling** God that we love Him too! And we choose to set our eyes and our hearts on Him.

We choose each day to reprioritize everything in our lives and set it on you! We choose to live for you and point other people to you in our actions and with our words.

A man once asked Jesus, ***“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”*** Jesus said, **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. And love your neighbor as yourself.”** Jesus was talking about an inside priority of the heart that leads to an outside blessing of others as a side benefit.

If the heart is prioritized rightly, everything else in life falls into its proper place.

A final question we can respond to from our time today could be this one:

Where is one area of life that needs to be reprioritized today?