

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Unreasonable Faith - Week of March 31

Introduction

We learned last week in our message series that we *can't make anyone happy*. Sometimes we put this agenda on ourselves. Yet living in a repeated state of 'trying to make the people around us happy' is not only a miserable way to spend our energy, it is not only riddled with wrong motives, it is impossible! We are created for God and His Glory – and yes, created to love God and love others, but not *make* people happy. The Lord never gave such a command. However, Jesus did say,

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed?” (Luke 9:23-25).

Alright, so if Jesus did not come to make us happy, why did the Christ of God put on human flesh and dwell among the filth of humanity? The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth to save humankind – each of us (men, women, boys and girls) – from sin. There is no way to save ourselves from sin, let alone someone else. We can never attain heaven in our own strength – no matter how good we think we are. To think we can 'will' ourselves into heaven is like standing outside on a moonlight night and thinking we can jump to the moon. We would need a transport intelligent enough to get us to the moon, correct? Indeed, to get to heaven we need a Divine Transport – someone who has come from heaven and knows the way back to heaven. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Earlier, John the Baptist had said of Jesus –

“He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them!” (John 3:31-32).

The cross is a difficult thing to look at. The cross, in fact, may be offensive to you as it reminds you of your sin and utter need for a Savior. Easter, as miraculous and beautiful as it is, may also be offensive to you if you think an empty tomb is mere myth and fabrication. Death on a cross and

resurrection may not fit your culturally compromised way of life. You may, in fact, believe you are special enough to make it to heaven and make people happy along the way – a spouse, friend, fan club. But what happens when life crumbles around you? The Gospel is not a set of rules; it is not adhering to proper doctrine or religious aspirations. The Gospel (Good News) is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is on every page of Scripture *and* secular history. Jesus Christ is alive! He is God – King above all kings, Lord of lords. He is the Victorious One, whether we believe it or not. When life as we know it is destroyed, Jesus is the only One who can save us from sin and death.

Read Luke 9:44-62

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

It is hard to take up a cross and follow Jesus if we are living a life of compromise. We must choose. Will we be on God's mission like Jesus? Or will we be about our mission? We do not typically like to think in terms of surrendering our lives in humility... yet, humbly laying down his life is exactly what Jesus did. He surrendered his will to the Father (Luke 22:42) and gave up his life for us (John 10:17-18) – not to make us temporarily happy but eternally whole. If Jesus had come to this earth to merely make people happy, the Pharisees and religious leaders would have been happy and never offended. Pilate, the Roman Procurator, would have been happy and thus, never allow Jesus to be handed over for crucifixion. The forces of darkness would have been happy and never exposed; those possessed by evil spirits would still be locked in chains of despair, the blind would still be blind, the lepers would still be lepers, the dead would still be in the grave. Jesus' mission to redeem the world would have been tragically derailed.

2. What are you going to do about it?

A pivotal point in Jesus' ministry (and in the Gospel of Luke) is verse 51 of chapter nine –

“As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” (Luke 9:51)

What are you resolute about? Will you live in alignment with Christ's mission in the world? Now know this, we cannot do this solo; we need one another. It has been said: *disciples are not made in a day, but disciples are made daily*. Discipleship is not static; it is dynamic and ongoing.

How can your Life Group raise the standard for *works of piety* and *works of mercy*, as John Wesley called the fruit of discipleship. Works of piety refer to our worship and prayer (personal and corporate), study of Scripture and devotions; Works of mercy refer to assisting (associating with the poor), feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, helping the sick, visiting those in prison. Wesley said, if you are going to 'err' then err on the side of *works of mercy*. Why... because many of us need to revisit Matthew 25:31-46. It's a big deal to Jesus.

3. How can we help you?

Close by taking time to read **Luke 24:1-12, 13-34, 35-49, 50-53**

In the space below, write down at least one takeaway from each of these segments of Scripture:

What is your Action Step for this week? What will this step look like in the next 40 days? (share with at least one other person)

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

Mar. 31: Deuteronomy 16:1-17:20, Luke 9:7-27, Psalm 72:1-20, Proverbs 12:8-9
Apr. 1: Deuteronomy 18:1-20:20, Luke 9:28-50, Psalm 73:1-28, Proverbs 12:10
Apr. 2: Deuteronomy 21:1-22:30, Luke 9:51-10:12, Psalm 74:1-23, Proverbs 12:11
Apr. 3: Deuteronomy 23:1-25:19, Luke 10:13-37, Psalm 75:1-10, Proverbs 12:12-14
Apr. 4: Deuteronomy 26:1-27:26, Luke 10:38-11:13, Psalm 76:1-12, Prov. 12:15-17
Apr. 5: Deuteronomy 28:1-68, Luke 11:14-36, Psalm 77:1-20, Proverbs 12:18
Apr. 6: Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20, Luke 11:37-12:7, Psalm 78:1-31, Prov. 12:19-20

Unreasonable Faith

Text: Luke 9:18-26, 44-45, 51, Luke 24:1-9

PLAIN TRUTH

**Jesus' obsession was _____ and
not the _____.**

March 31, 2024