

Reboot

3. Reorder from Self-led to Spirit-led

June 20, 2021

Welcome to Crossroads! My name is Christy Gibas, one of the pastors on staff.

Happy Father's Day! We are so glad you are here this weekend! If you are a dad...we have a little putting green set up out there to try out courtesy team Gibas. We are a golfing family...so my husband's Father's Day gift usually involves something golf!

I'm not a great golfer, but I do have a few pros I like to follow. One of the best golf moves I ever saw happened in April of 2014. Picture it, TPC Louisiana (The Players Club): Keegan Bradley did this dance out of the sand shot and was about 3 feet from the pin for his almost second albatross. For those of you who don't speak golf...that was really good. It didn't stink.

I was mesmerized by his pre shot routine. The ball was in the bunker; he looked like he was sneaking up on it. He got in position, twirled his club around, did this dance in the sand and hit it. It was the most artful shot I think I had ever watched.

And from that point forward, whenever I get in the bunker...I do a Keegan Bradley imitation. And only one time...has it ever produced good results for me! Seven years later...I STILL don't play like Keegan Bradley.

Why? Because it's not how you imitate one shot during the game that makes you like the player. Keegan Bradley has a whole life that is dedicated to his craft. He has a practice schedule. He has a coach. He has a special diet and exercise routine. What he does during the match is the culmination of what he has done before the match. I am only imitating a small portion of what he does. There is a private life of Keegan Bradley, that makes the public life happen. You can't live the lifestyle of a pro golfer and only imitate what pro golfers do in one match you watch on television. In order to play like a pro, you have to imitate the whole lifestyle!

Being a disciple of Jesus is very similar. We are called to be imitators of Jesus. Jesus lived in a way that that brought glory to God. And we are called to do the same.

We can't pick and choose what parts to imitate; we need to imitate all of what Jesus did. I can't have a life in the spirit without having a lifestyle that imitates the ways of Jesus. Jesus had both a private and public life that we are called to imitate. That's how we become like Jesus. But I can't do this on my own; I need His Spirit.

A life that reflects Jesus is one that is led by the Spirit. It means I have made Jesus Lord; He is in charge; I will live to serve God. A private life that is self-led won't give us a public life that is spirit-led.

Turn with me to: Galatians 5:13-18, **You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

This passage speaks to us about this turmoil we feel as we imitate Jesus. We are called to be free but this text reminds us to use discretion. Freedom doesn't mean that I can do what I want. When we become a follower of Jesus, we don't live for ourselves anymore. We live for Christ. We live to know Him and make Him known. And it's through a Spirit filled life that we are able to accomplish that!

Life by the Spirit begins by making Jesus Lord.

We live in a self-society. Surrendering our will is probably the most counter-cultural thing we can do today. We hear axioms like, “follow your heart.” Or, “you do you.” But here's what the scriptures tell me: that I can't imitate Jesus and follow my heart. My heart or flesh is in conflict with what the Spirit wants for me.

And while the phrase, “you do you” sounds really good, what it translates to is “go ahead and remain status quo.” Remain stuck in thought patterns that don't line up with the mind of Christ, or operate in a way that values selfishness above all else.

A life of imitating Jesus is not stuck or self-centered! Jesus' life was one of hope, love, and freedom. Jesus' life and purpose was to do the will of the Father. Jesus said in John 6:38, **“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.”**

When you study the life of Jesus, everything He did was by the Spirit. He was led into the wilderness to fast and pray by the Spirit. He overcame temptation by the Spirit. He healed people by the Spirit. And when He defeated death and was raised again, it was by the Spirit! The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is available to us to enable us to live the life that Christ lived.

To make Jesus Lord means I am no longer leading myself. I will surrender to Jesus and allow Him to lead me. We can be educated about Christ, but never make Him Lord. Living life in the Spirit means that my days belong to him. My money belongs to him. My possessions belong to Him. It means I am no longer my own. I live to serve Him.

A call to make Jesus Lord is the same call today that it was 2000 years ago when Jesus called the disciples to follow Him. He called the disciples to give up their very lives and follow after Him.

Sometimes we candy coat the gospel to protect people or to try to make it more palatable because we want people to say yes to Jesus. But we do a disservice when we don't share the hard stuff that Jesus said. People need to know what they are saying when they answer yes to the gospel.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:38-39, **“Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.”** Another version says, if you try to hold on to your life, you will lose it. Saying yes to the gospel, means I am making Jesus Lord. I am no longer my own god, leading myself. I will live by the Spirit.

The Spirit of God leading us is necessary if we want to fulfil the command of Christ. Jesus had these guys who were following him 2000 years ago, the first disciples. They had Jesus there with them in the flesh. A tangible, Jesus right in front of them. They could talk with Him, ask Him questions, hang out with Him, eat a meal with Him. These guys had first-hand experience and knowledge of Jesus.

But Jesus tells them, I am going away...in fact, He said, “it is better for you if I go away.” He tells them in John 16, when He goes away, He will send the Holy Spirit. It was better for these guys who had Jesus right in front of them to have the Holy Spirit come and fill them.

In fact, after Jesus is raised from the dead, and appears to people many times, He gives them instructions in the book of Acts to go and wait for Holy Spirit to come. Being led by the Spirit would give them the power to fulfill the great commission.

A major reboot was about to happen. Not only were people about to get the power to imitate Jesus, but they were about to gain the perspective of heaven. What a life! What an adventure! To live in such a way that you can have access to the ONE who created it all, who knows all, who is for us, who loves us deeply, who freely offers us freedom and power and authority! And just as it was available then, it is available today.

Choosing to live by the spirit and dying to self brings life to those around us.

I had a great conversation with a young lady last week that I have known casually for about a month. I don't know her very well, but she seemed open to spiritual conversation. I am not a question kind of person other than the usual polite conversation questions, so I have developed some questions to help me get to the point when I want to have a spiritual conversation with someone. And my question to her was, “what's your faith background?” And with that, we were off and running with

a spiritual conversation. Her answer was that she didn't really classify herself as an atheist, but she wasn't sure about God either.

I shared with her how Jesus had changed my life. The interesting thing I have noticed over the years is that when I share about Jesus, people seem to be open to Him. It's His followers they are unsure of! They like Him! It's us they don't know what to do with.

The cure for that is a commitment to crucify our preferences, our desires, our opinions, our arguments, our squabbles, and live to make Him known. There is an important rational and instruction given in Galatians for living according to the Spirit. The author says, **You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."** If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

A changed world around us begins by allowing God's Spirit to change us. When we allow self to take over it repels the world; when we allow God's spirit to take over, the world can't help but take notice.

Surrendering to the Spirit means we gain the perspective of heaven.

We can operate with wisdom and insight we didn't have on our own. We can hear from God. Our decision-making process should get better! When I make a decision, I am going with historical data. (Except during Covid, there was no historical data for that.)

My decisions I make are based on what I know from the past and what I know in the present to be true. But life in the spirit means that we have access to the ONE who knows all things! He knows the beginning from the end. And we can pray and ask Him to guide us and lead us!

Some folks are not sure the Holy Spirit speaks, but Jesus himself told us He does! In John 16:13 Jesus said, **"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."** We can and should hear His voice!

In fact, the voices that we allow to speak to us in our lives, are the ones we most reflect! If it's the news, that's what we reflect. If it's God's voice, that's what we reflect. Not only do we hear His voice, we begin to speak His language. His love language to others. His language of hope. His language of forgiveness. His language of healing.

We repeat the voices we listen to. Ask people who hang around me! I know you are properly disciplined when you use one of my phrases like, "Don't dork it up." If you

hear a 20 something around here say, “oh my golly,” there is a pretty good chance they picked up my lingo!

Being able to hear His voice is important. It’s so important to me, that I realized if I were to die tomorrow, that is the one thing I would want to make sure that my daughter knows. I want her to be able to hear the voice of the Lord. I know that if she can hear from Him, she can gain the perspective of heaven; she will have a guide that loves her even more than I do.

Here at Crossroads, we want to help people gain the perspective of heaven. We want people to live lives that are fully given to Jesus. Lives that reflect the way the early church advanced the Kingdom of God. We are committed to helping people be set free, transformed, and operate in their lives as Jesus did, living life by the spirit.

Movement Makers Night of Vision: June 22, 6:30pm/Pittsburgh West

One of the ways the ways we are doing that is by launching a Disciple-making community in the fall called Movement Makers. This is a year-long experience, where you can become certified as a Disciple-Maker. You will gain practiced skills, be transformed in character, and activated in call. We are hosting a night of vision for this on Tuesday, June 22 at Pittsburgh West in the chapel at 6:30pm. I invite you to come to see what God might be saying to you.

When we allow God’s spirit to lead us, we make a daily choice that invites God’s goodness into our lives. It doesn’t mean we won’t face trials. It means we will have a Leader who knows more than we do. It doesn’t mean we won’t make mistakes, but it means we will hear His voice and He is able to quickly get us back on track if we will surrender self.

Pastor Steve shared with us last week what God was speaking to him about our church in the future. If you didn’t catch last week, I encourage you to check it out online. I was filled with so much hope because God is showing Pastor Steve that we will see greater things in the future than we have already seen in the past here at Crossroads.

God is building something among us here. And we get to be a part of it! God is building a community of people who willingly lay down their lives and will take up their crosses to show the world what Jesus is truly like. We will be a people who will put aside ourselves for the sake of the gospel. A movement is starting right here. As we choose to lay down self and live by His Spirit we will walk in God’s goodness.