



gracefellowship

Series: What About the Change?
Date: November 5, 2024

Title: A Change of Direction
Passage: Luke 6:46-49

Scripture Reading: Romans 6:15-23

One of the great character flaws I have in life is being terrible with directions. Probably my favorite place to live for the purpose of directions was the DFW Metroplex in TX. The whole area was laid out in a grid, so figuring out North, South, East and West was pretty simple. However, I have some pretty awful stories about my total lack of understanding for how directions work and navigating things here on the East Coast.

- A friend and I drove to a concert in college in Bristol. We went to see DC Talk, my favorite band. We took 11E to get to the concert, so we assumed we should take 11W to go home. That's not how that works! We ended up so far away from home before we realized what we had done.
- Another time when Heather and I were still dating I was invited to speak at a Youth Retreat. Most of my driving experience for road trips on I-40 were to Knoxville and to get home from Knoxville you take I-40 East. So when I was leaving the retreat to head home, I instinctively jumped on I-40 East and began driving. The problem is that the retreat was in North Carolina! If you drive East on I-40 in North Carolina you start seeing signs that say things like, "Beach Access."

In both of those scenarios I had a goal to get home. But I was going in the wrong direction!

I'm telling you this today because I think in our lives as Christians we often do the same things. And the passage we are going to look at today will hopefully either convict us, or reinvigorate us, to pursue Jesus the way He deserves.

We are people who are being changed and made into the image of God. Our lives are a journey toward Christlikeness. But I believe that many of us subscribe to a form of Christianity that never results in actual life change. We are content with the idea that we confessed our sins and invited Jesus into our hearts so we feel safe that we will go to heaven when we die. But is there a change that is taking place in your life which demonstrates your surrender to Jesus as one of His disciples? Disciples dropped everything to center their lives around their Rabbi. We want to

occasionally go to church and claim that a prayer we said as a 10 year old is assurance of our salvation.

With that in mind, let's look at something Jesus said to His disciples about people who had a casual approach to following Him.

:: Luke 6:46-49

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

Jesus keys in on people who seem to be very religious, but they don't have a life that supports what they say they believe. We see this all the time- both throughout history and today- people who say they are doing things in the name of Jesus, but their hearts and actions are really far from God. They think they're going in the right direction, but they're not!

In Matthew's gospel he records Jesus saying this:

:: Matthew 7:21-23

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’

²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

This idea that you simply call Jesus “Lord” doesn't make you a Christian- even the things you say you do in His Name doesn't make you a Christian. Knowing Jesus in a personal relationship is what makes you one of His disciples. He even says, all the activity you do that you claim is in my name, but isn't supported by a heart that is surrendered to me reveals I never knew you.

In fact, going back to Luke's gospel, that's what Jesus addresses next.

:: Luke 6:47-48

⁴⁷ As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like.

⁴⁸ They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.

Jesus tells us that a relationship with Him is built on hearing his words *and* putting them into practice. People who do that base their whole life on Jesus. He compares it to a man who wants to build a house and digs down deep to get to

bedrock, then he lays a foundation on the rock. So when storms come, the house is able to stand!

When we come to faith in Jesus he is looking for a relationship that is founded on Him.

A changed life is an exchanged life.

When Jesus says we hear His words and do what He says, we need to ask what words He is talking about. And we need to honor all the words of Jesus, but many times Jesus was asked what the greatest command was and He gave us two to follow:

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

If we are going to hear Jesus's words and put them into practice, we have to give ourselves fully over to Him. The exchange comes as we let Him take full control of our lives so that we love God and love people like Jesus did.

The message of the world is, "You be you." But the message of Jesus is, "You be like Me."

When Jesus changes us our values change, our beliefs change and our behavior changes.

The changes take time, but they come in a growing, deepening relationship with Jesus. Jesus isn't interested in people who hear His words but don't live in obedience to Him. Look at what He says in verse 49:

⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

(Call Ashley)

Here's what I find interesting about this- both groups hear the words of Jesus. But only one puts those words into practice and lives in relationship with Him. In other words, you can come to church, hear the Bible being taught, know what Jesus desires in relationship with you, and even believe that you're living for Him, but in the end your life isn't built on Him so when the storms of life come everything you think you've built is destroyed.

This is really the problem with cultural Christianity. Cultural Christians attend church and know what the Bible says, they just don't build their lives on Jesus and do what He says. Biblical Christianity obeys the words of Jesus.

Many of us have grown up in the church and know what the Bible says, but we've never fully surrendered our lives to Jesus. Being a disciple of Jesus requires a change of life.

In Matthew 4:19 Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Right in the middle of that invitation we find this idea that God desires to change us. Unfortunately, instead of calling people to follow Jesus, be changed by Him and be on mission with Him, we have boiled Christianity down to this:

"Do you want to go to heaven when you die instead of hell?"

"Yes, heaven sounds far better than hell."

"Say this prayer and confess your sins."

"Okay, I prayed."

"Great! You're in!"

"What next?"

"Just go to church and try to be good."

That doesn't sound anything like the invitation of Jesus! He calls us to a life of self-denial and transformation as we submit to His Lordship. The question is: As we hear that message and that invitation to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus week after week, do we only hear Him, or do we obey Him?

This morning I want you to hear the story of life change that has taken place in Ashley Masten's life. Ashley is our Children's Minister and does a phenomenal job leading our kids and adult leaders. Her story definitely includes this idea of hearing the message but not wanting to obey Jesus. And parents, if you have young kids in the room, you should also know that elements of Ashley's story may raise some difficult questions for your kids, and while she will talk about things she has experienced without getting into gory details, you just need to be aware that parts of her testimony are PG-13. If you feel it's appropriate to take your kids out, that's fine, you can listen to her story later on one of our media outlets and then decide if you want to share that with your kids or not.

Let's pray together and give Ashley a chance to come and share her journey with us.

Ashley Masten Testimony

Wrap Up: No matter what you've done or what has been done to you, God loves you and wants a relationship with you. He wants more than your church attendance. He wants more than your lip service. He wants more for you than a surface level knowledge of who He is. God wants to have a personal relationship with you that will change you deeply. Being a disciple of Jesus means we look more and more like Him and we live in obedience to what He says. If you've never fully followed Jesus today is the day you can make that step of faith and begin the journey that will change your life forever.