



Peninsula City Church

Reset

My Affections

Michael Podhaczky

20th November 2016 the PM Service

Contents

Reset My Affections	3
An Introduction	3
1. My Stuff.....	3
2. The rest of the story.....	4
3. Reset, the great reversal in daily life.....	5
Some concluding thoughts	6

Reset My Affections

An Introduction

Q. What consumes your affections?

Picture this, a nine year old that you know has to do a school project on someone in their life and what consumes their affections. They have asked you if they can do the project on you and you agree. Stop and think for a moment, what would you say to them regarding what consumes your affections? You ask them if they even know what affections are and they say of course. Then they continue to say, "To have affections is to have "a gentle feeling of fondness or liking,"¹ for a person or a place. Wow, you're blown away; they know what they're looking for an answer. So, now, what would you say to them regarding what consumes your affections? So, what does really consume your affections?

1. My Stuff

Q. Why don't I want you to mess with my stuff?

If we are really honest, for many of us when we talk about our affections, it is really all about our stuff. Namely, this has to do with our money, electronics, food, entertainment, TV programs, travel, clothes, beauty, sports, those in our life, our own point of view, our past or future etc. We don't want others to mess with our stuff. We would say, yes, we are a Christ-follower and that it is OK to have stuff. In fact, we like our stuff and others just need to leave it alone. Let me say that, it is OK to have stuff, but should it be the main focus of our affection.

So, what did Jesus have to say regarding our affection and our stuff? In dealing with a kingdom perspective on this issue He asked the disciple who people say that He is and Peter said that,

²⁷ "And Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way He asked His disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?'" ²⁸ And they told Him, 'John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.' ²⁹ And He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered Him, 'You are the Christ.' ³⁰ And He strictly charged them to tell no one about Him" (Mk 8:27-30 ESV).

This sets the context, for what Jesus is about to say regarding a kingdom perspective. That is, He foretells His coming death and resurrection.

^{8:31} "And Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And He said this plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'

³⁴ And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, 'If anyone would come after Me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. ³⁵ For whoever would save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their soul? ³⁷ For what can a person give in return for their soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. ^{9:1} And He said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power'" (Mark 8:34-9:1 ESV).

¹ "Affection." <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/affection> (16th November 2016).

This is then followed by transfiguration of Jesus on a mountain, where Peter, James and John see Jesus and His clothes became radiant, intensely white, like no one on earth could bleach them. They also saw Elijah and Moses standing with Jesus the Christ. So, Jesus pointed out that just as He would die to the world, so too we need to die to the affections of the world. That is, “let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me,” (v34). He went on to say, “For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their soul?” (v36). This is not saying that we cannot have stuff, but that our priorities need to be in order.

That is, deny selfish affections and die to them. Put God first and everything (that is everything) else in its right place.

2. The rest of the story

Q. But, what is the rest of the story?

For many a Christ-follower the focus on stuff is the real story in our materialistic world and lifestyle. You may be thinking, not me; I have got everything under control. I do not need stuff, I am not affected by materialism, and I have my affections under control. Let me read you something and then come back to this matter. A good example of this is the rich young man mentioned in Mark 10:17-31.

“This guy had it all: money, good looks, a winning smile, and the relational and emotional deference reserved for people who are rich, handsome, charming, and strong. This guy went down in history as the ‘rich young ruler,’ which pretty well sums up what we are all after, doesn’t it? Who wouldn’t want to be young, affluent, attractive, and in charge?”²

¹⁷ “And as Jesus was setting out on His journey, a young man ran up and knelt before Him and asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: “Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.”’ ²⁰ And he said to Him, ‘Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.’ ²¹ And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ ²² Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Billy Graham has called this kind of lifestyle mentioned by Jesus’ the “high cost of low living.”³ Hall has said that,

“We look at his life of possessions, wealth, and power and think, ‘Is there anything so wrong with that? We read about his good behaviour, the rules he kept, the dos and don’ts he obeyed, the stars dotting his chore chart,’ and something in us says, ‘Doesn’t he deserve it? Didn’t he earn it? Isn’t it okay to have some fun and enjoy life?’ We think about how easy it would have been for Jesus to let the guy off a little easier.”⁴

Then the followers of Jesus began to ask Him about the implications for their own lives when the said,

^{10:23} And Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, ‘How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!’ ²⁴ And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said to them again, ‘Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.’ ²⁶ And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to Him, ‘Then who can

² Hall, Nick. *Reset: Jesus Changes Everything*. (Kindle Locations 2465-2468). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

³ Graham, Billy. “High Cost of Low Living.” <https://billygraham.org/audio/high-cost-of-low-living-2/> (17th November 2016).

⁴ Hall, *Reset*, (Kindle Locations 2500-2503).

be saved?’²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With people it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.’²⁸ Peter began to say to Him, ‘See, we have left everything and followed You.’²⁹ Jesus said, ‘Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.’³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first” (Mark 10:17-31 ESV).

Well it has been pointed out that for this rich young man,

“Jesus’ instructions are there in plain language for all to read: “Sell everything you own. Give to the poor. And then come, follow me.” Is this what’s required of us too? Sometimes I fear we are a generation of rich young rulers, people who want Jesus as long as it doesn’t cost us any of our stuff.”⁵

So, what is it that consumes your affections? Is it money, electronics, food, entertainment, TV programs, travel, clothes, beauty, sports, those in our life, our own point of view, our past or future etc.?⁶ In his book Paul Davis say that,

“It may feel as if it is going to kill you to let go of that thing that grips you within and consumes your affections... But build a place in your heart where nothing can arrest your affections or distract your pursuit of God.”⁷

3. Reset, the great reversal in daily life

Q. Why is the great reversal needed?

Well what now,

“And yet that’s not at all what Jesus was saying when He told Rich to go sell his stuff. Or at least, it wasn’t all He was saying. It pays to read the rest of the tale.”⁸

It was more about the reset of the young man’s affections. Reset, the great reversal in daily life, i.e. value Jesus more. For all of us as Christ-followers, we just need to value Jesus more than our stuff. Or affections for Him need to be higher than for the stuff.

“In response, Jesus dropped a bomb. The rest of the rich young ruler’s story is this: to everyone who follows Jesus with a full heart, on that day when Jesus takes complete control over the universe—the new heaven and the new earth— those people who have sacrificed home and family and material possessions and every other temporarily awesome thing will get it all back a hundred times over. We will recoup everything we gave up, to the tune of one hundred times our initial investment. And on top of that return we will net eternal life. We will have our minds blown with excessive blessing, and we will live forever at Jesus’ side. The last verse of Mark 10 calls this the ‘Great Reversal: many of the first ending up last, and the last first’” (verse 31).⁹

You know, in the end, we really know what is true and what we need to do, and which way to go. However, may times we are looking for the loopholes, the easy way out, the excuses, the ones that we can blame or use as an example not to really hear God’s voice.

⁵ Hall, *Reset*, (Kindle Locations 2505-2507).

⁶ “What it Really Means to Set your Affection on Things Above.” <http://herchristianhome.com/what-is-really-means-to-set-your-affection-on-things-above/> (16th November 2016).

⁷ Davis, Paul. *Supernatural Fire: Igniting a Generation to Set the World Ablaze*. (Orlando, FL: Dream-Maker Ministries, 2007), 190

⁸ Hall, *Reset*, (Kindle Locations 2512-2513).

⁹ Hall, *Reset*, (Kindle Locations 2520-2525).

“God is always looking for those who will listen to his voice above anyone else’s. In a thousand ways, every day of every week, we all fight for comfort over responding to Jesus’ invitation for us to give everything. We tell Jesus that we don’t have time for Him this morning because we have to get to school or work or the gym. We tell Him that we can’t reach out to that person because our friends will think we’re uncool. We tell Him we can’t let go of our need for comfort, or our need for sleep, or our need to be needed, or our sports-team fanaticism, or our car, or the boat, or the golf addiction, or movies, or drinking, or drugs, or overeating, or overspending, or the risk-seeking that tends to take us too close to the edge, because without that thing, whatever that thing is, we... just... might... die. Or worse yet, we never talk to Jesus at all, imagining that he doesn’t want anything to do with such petty details of life. All the while, our actions tell Him these things are true, that our treasure is found somewhere else. We gather up all our affections, conveniently leaving Jesus totally off of the list, and then we miss out on the stuff of real living, all because we’re too busy trying to live large.”¹⁰

Then we wonder why our family and friends don’t what anything to with Christianity. Maybe they are reading our lives and see no difference to theirs. Maybe they hear us talk the same language as them and think there is no difference between us. So, they think, “Why should I become a Christ-follower, you are exactly the same as I am.” They see that their affections are exactly the same as ours, so, they think “What’s the big problem?” Stop and think about it can they see the effects of the reset, the great reversal in our daily lives? Well, we need to remember that we cannot change in our own strength; it is only through the work of Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. It is as we submit to His sanctifying work in our life by His Holy Spirit that our affections fall into place. Otherwise, we will fall into the trap of self-works and begin to feel guilty and ashamed.

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. What consumes your affections?

Have other things crept into your heart, taking up your thoughts and affections? Do you need to get back to your affection for Him? So, maybe you need a reset, but don’t know how to go about it. Are you really ready for a reset? As Christ-followers we need to stop trying to work it out ourselves. Stop trying to live white knuckle Christianity. We need to open our hands and let Him put in or take out of our hands what He chooses. It is only through the work of Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, as we submit to Him and let Him do His work in our lives. Maybe we need to ask Him to help us to have a passion, and that that would be Jesus Himself. It would not be family, not friends, not even church or church friend. But firstly, our affection would be Jesus Christ.

My encouragement to you is to go ahead and ask the Holy Spirit to give help you to give up whatever is standing between you and Jesus. Just give it to Him. Now don’t do this with some expectation that it will trigger a magic-genie moment in your life. Only surrender it if you want to see God’s faithfulness in your life. God is not after your favourite thing; He wants to be your favourite thing. Today is a day of reset of your affections to get back to your affection for Him today. You can ask Him for the grace and strength to begin again to guard your affection for Christ.

“The reality for you and me both is that on that day when we inhale our final breath, only one thing will fit in our grip, and that one thing is our soul’s allegiance to Jesus, or to nothing at all. ‘What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you?’ Jesus asks in

¹⁰ Hall, *Reset*, (Kindle Locations 2589-2597).

Mark 8:37. 'What could you ever trade your soul for?' Which is exactly the point I'm making: at all costs, tend to your soul."¹¹

Or as the Message translation puts it,

34-37 "Calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, "Anyone who intends to come with Me has to let Me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow Me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, My way, to saving yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? What could you ever trade your soul for?" (Mk 8:34-37 The Message).

Paul in his letter to the Colossians said, "Set your affection on things above and not on things of the earth" (Col 3:2 KJV). This basically means that we need to place our mind and thoughts in the heavens on God, to show favour towards them, and to be affectionately desirous of them.

In the song by Mark Altrogge "One Pure and Holy Passion," the lyrics say, "Give me one pure and holy passion. Give me one magnificent obsession..."

One Pure and Holy Passion

Give me one pure and holy passion
Give me one magnificent obsession
Give me one glorious ambition for my life
To know and follow hard after You.

Give me one pure and holy passion
Give me one magnificent obsession
Give me one glorious ambition for my life
To know and follow hard after You.

To know and follow hard after you
To grow as your disciple in your truth
This world is empty, pale, and poor
Compared to knowing you, my Lord
Lead me on and I will run after you
Lead me on and I will run after you.

Give me one pure and holy passion
Give me one magnificent obsession
Give me one glorious ambition for my life
To know and follow hard after you
To know and follow hard after you
To grow as your disciple in the truth
This world is empty, pale, and poor
Compared to knowing you my Lord
Lead me on and I will run after you."¹²

¹¹ Hall, Reset, (Kindle Locations 2651-2655).

¹² "One Pure and Holy Passion Lyrics." <http://www.metrolyrics.com/one-pure-and-holy-passion-lyrics-passion.html> (17th November 2016).