

Consecration Sunday – January 1, 2023

I. Introduction

a. Joshua 3:5

- i. "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you." (SLIDE)
- ii. In the Bible, the word consecration means "the separation of oneself from things that are unclean, especially anything that would contaminate one's relationship with a perfect God.
- iii. Consecration is emphasized and important in relation to a story in the book of Joshua.
 1. After forty years in the wilderness, the children of Israel were about to cross over the Jordan River into the Promised Land.
 2. Joshua issued this command and promise.
 - a. This consecration, this separation of oneself from things that are unclean, symbolized a new beginning with the Lord.
 - b. The picture here is that sin is defilement and that we must be cleansed before we can truly follow God
 - i. In Psalm 51:1-18, we have a Psalm of David, who was a king, but had sinned before the Lord.
 - ii. This is a man who knew what was separating him from the Lord and this Psalm is a cry out to the Lord to be made clean so that he could experience the presence of the Lord
- iii. Read Psalm 51:1-18 (SLIDE)
- iv. This is the posture of Consecration, an awareness of what is keeping us from the Lord and a willingness to do whatever it takes to create space to be with the Lord.

II. Welcome and Greeting

- a. Thank you so much for being with here this morning in person or online. This is a great day to be together because it is the start of a new year.
- b. In this new year, we have an opportunity to look back and reflect, and look forward.
- c. As we step into this Consecration Sunday, my prayer is that we will embrace the invitation and challenge of what it means to be set apart from things that are holding us back and into practices and rhythms that draw us closer to the Lord and make us look and act more like Jesus.

III. Prayer

IV. Consecration at Fellowship in 2023

- a. This year, we are calling this body, together, to consecrate ourselves, to set ourselves apart, to . . .
 - i. MAKE ROOM FOR CHRIST TO CAPTIVATE OUR HEARTS AS WE ABIDE IN HIM (SLIDE)
- b. So, I'd like to start practicing right now –
 - i. We are going to teach you a new song
 1. I'd like to invite you to not just listen and receive, but to engage and sing
 2. To use this song to posture your heart toward the Lord to declare our intentions
 3. After we sing, take inventory (Guide the Church through this exercise)
 - ii. Consecration Cards
 1. **Remember**
 - a. I Corinthians 1:9 - "God will do this, for He is faithful to do what He says, and he has invited you into partnership with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - i. Take time to reflect on God's character and what He has done. How have you seen His faithfulness in your life this past year?

2. Repent

- a. Psalm 139:23-24 – “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”
 - i. Take time to evaluate yourself. Are there things keeping you from fully abiding in Christ? In what ways do you need to confess and repent? What areas of your life need to change as you live more devoted to Christ?

3. Respond

- a. Based on the reflections, what spiritual practice or rhythm is Jesus inviting you into that will help you abide in Him this next year?

V. Prayer

VI. Challenges to being set apart and “making room” and “abiding”

- a. If we accept this invitation and challenge, there will be setbacks
- b. What gets in our way of “making room” and “abiding?”
 - i. Our pace and schedules
 1. We will have to gently give ourselves permission to shift and train toward the new
 - ii. Our intentionality
 1. Some of us are so intentional that we have no room for the Spirit to move in us
 - iii. Our lack of intentionality
 1. Some of us are so spontaneous that our lives do not have a foundation to operate from
- c. How do we contend against these obstacles (no matter what your personality is, we all have to do these things)
 - i. We root ourselves in God’s truth
 1. We root ourselves in God’s word
 - ii. We Practice Abiding
 1. We create rhythms and habits that help reorient us to Jesus
 - a. These intentional practices form us from the inside out
 - iii. We embrace Community
 1. Transformation doesn’t take place in isolation
 2. We need each other to reflect to us and help us see what we can’t see

VII. Want to build a Discipling Culture and live into Jesus final words of challenge and invitation

a. Read Matthew 28: 16-20 (SLIDE)

- i. We want to be a culture of people who are being transformed, who with the power of the Holy Spirit in us invite others to go on this same journey of transformation
- ii. In his book, Building a Discipling Culture, Mike Breen outlines the components necessary for a discipling culture.

1. (Slide with Matrix)

- a. Cozy Culture = Low Challenge, Low Truth and High Invitation, High Grace
 - i. Produces Consumers
- b. Bored Culture = Low Challenge, Low Truth, and Low Invitation, Low Grace
 - i. Produces Apathetic people
- c. Stressed Culture = High Challenge, High Truth and Low Invitation, Low Grace
 - i. Produces Overworked people not giving leadership away
- d. Goal!
 - i. Discipling Culture = High Invitation, High Grace and High Challenge, High Truth
 1. Produces Empowered people
 - a. People who live out their God-given purpose in Christ every day and call others to do the same

VIII. Roadmap for the next year and next few months – How are we going to Consecrate ourselves and “Make Room” and “Abide”

- a. Family Meeting (January 8, 2023 with Bob Gray)
- b. Life Group Leader Training
 - i. Important because of community
- c. Make Room for Christ to Captivate our Hearts
 - i. Sabbath Teaching and Practice in Community
 - ii. Prayer Teaching and Practice in Community
 - 1. 40 Days of Prayer
 - a. Palm Sunday
 - b. Easter
- d. Abide Series out of book of John

IX. Expand the Vision for Transformation (Invite band back to stage)

- a. As we consecrate ourselves this year, this is an opportunity to grow
 - i. Transformation as individuals
 - ii. Transformation as a community
- b. I wonder . . .
 - i. What this transformation in us will inspire in others.
 - ii. Can you imagine how going on this journey of discipleship that produces transformation will change
 - 1. Your home
 - 2. Your work
 - 3. Every space you step into
 - iii. This is what is possible if we “make room for Christ to captivate our hearts as we abide in Him.”
- c. Reminder of who we are in Christ
 - i. I Peter 2:9 (SLIDE)
 - 1. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood . . .
 - ii. This status allows us to see a picture of who we are (saved) and who we are continuing to become (formed).
 - iii. As we consecrate ourselves to the Lord this year, may we embrace this reality and grow together.
 - 1. Joshua 3:5
 - a. “Consecrate yourselves (Fellowship Dallas), for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.”