

New Year's 2020

12/29/19

Sunday Morning

1. I have spent the last 30 plus years w/ one overriding question – Why do some people live for Christ while other believers don't?
 - a. This made me think of New Year resolutions & how seldom we keep them
 - b. Most believers want to live for Christ, have a hard time doing so
 2. We're physical people living in a physical world and it is hard focusing on the spiritual things
 - a. But the spiritual is what is important
- 2 Corinthians 4:18** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
3. Why do some not succeed in the Christian life?
 4. I'm sure the answer is complex but I believe I've found part that I hadn't seen before – a lack of love for God
 - a. It's so simple that I've overlooked it – it's love for God
 - b. The complicated part is the definition of love
 5. You can love what He has done for you – but that isn't the same as loving Christ
 6. You can love the fact that God isn't mad at you – that's not loving Him
 7. You can love the fact that you aren't going to hell
 8. You may love that God has given your life meaning
 9. You may love that you can serve God
 10. You may love the fellowship of other believers
 - a. You may love being accepted – some folks are never accepted by others until they find acceptance w/ believers
 - b. You may love belonging to a group
 11. You may love having old sins forgiven – that helps forgive ourselves
 12. Some love that life seems to run smoother, in general
 13. Some people are able to break free from old lifestyles that haunted them
 14. All of that is important and creates a good & wholesome lifestyle
 15. But in truth none of those things represent loving God
 - a. Those things are loving what God has done for you
 16. I don't mean loving God as much as I mean: "being in love with God"

17. Loving someone is not the same as being in love w/ someone
18. We are to love God & people as an act of our will
 - a. Love is not saying – “I love God” – we all do that!
 - i. Talk is cheap!

1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.

- b. Love produces actions – not necessarily emotions

John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

- c. Love is definable – it is a decision

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,
⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,
⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

19. But being in love is not a decision
 - a. Being in love is an unrestrained, unconscious, uninhibited, driving force that causes you to dedicate them self to another
20. When a person falls in love – they start by being drawn to a person b/c of their physical characteristics or personality or some unseen pheromonal connection or some trait that sets that person apart from others
 - a. But if the relationship is built on those things alone, it is doomed
 - i. It takes more than that to make a relationship last a lifetime – it takes love!
 - b. A person will give their life to protect their spouse & children b/c of love
21. So what about your relationship w/ Christ? What does it look like?
 - a. Are you in love w/ Christ?
 - b. Are you satisfied w/ your love for God – well you should be!
 - c. No one can totally gauge where they are in their walk w/ Christ

- i. Paul said that

1 Corinthians 4:3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.

⁴ For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

- d. Peter learned the hard way not to trust his own judgement but so far

- i. When Christ ask Peter if he loved him – Peter was vague

John 21:15(after denying Christ) So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs."

¹⁶ He *said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."

¹⁷ He *said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus *said to him, "Tend My sheep."

- e. But you should basically know about your relationship to God

- f. Are you more in love w/ Christ than w/ anyone else on earth?

- g. What does this verse mean to you?

Matthew 10:37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

- 22. Few things will make someone forfeit them self for another like love

- a. Paul was that in love w/ Christ!

Acts 20:24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 21:13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

- b. The paradox is – only by giving up your own life for Christ can you actually find your life

Luke 9:24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

Matthew 10:39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

- c. Does God really expect that kind of reckless love – where we abandon ourselves to Him?

Matthew 10:38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Philippians 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

- 23. How do we come to love God like that?

- a. We have get to know Him

1 John 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- 24. When you learn Who God is – you can't help but fall in love w/ Him

- a. We learn that God's love is off the scale of human thinking

25. I'm not going to spend any time God showing that His love is expressed on the cross – that is true!
- But no one grows up staying at the foot of the Cross – that is elementary Christianity

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,
 2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

26. One of the places His love is revealed is **John 14**

John 14:1 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

Jn.14:2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

- "I go to prepare a place **for you**"
 - First you have to quit looking at this world as being our home
 - He is making a place for us
 - This is more than just taking us to be where He is
 - We're not inheriting heaven as it was before Christ came to earth – it's a new place
 - Christ is investing Himself in something there – for us
 - We can't begin to imagine what is waiting for us
- He has been gone for 2000 years – preparing a place

Psalm 16:11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Jn.14:3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

- "I will come again and receive you to Myself"
 - Christ loves us so He is coming for us
 - We are told to focus on that promise **Colossians 3:1**

Colossians 3:1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

1. "if you have been raised up with Christ"
 - a. First class condition meaning "it is so" – (saved)
2. "keep seeking the things above"
 - a. Command – be intentional to keep seeking things above

Col.3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

1. "Set your mind on the things above"
 - a. Paul had just finished saying that Christianity is not separating yourself from things of the world (**chapter 2**)

Colossians 2:16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—

V.20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,
²¹ "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"
²² (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?
²³ These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

- b. True Christianity is – setting your affection on things above

Col.3:3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

1. "your life is hidden with Christ"
 - a. Who you are isn't known at the moment
 - b. But in the future a glory will be given to you that even you don't know about

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

C.

Col.3:4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

1. "you also will be revealed with Him in glory"

- a. The most exciting thing in our future is when Christ comes for us
 - i. We are to be eagerly watching for His return

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

b. There is a great reward for those who live expectantly for His return

2 Timothy 4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

c. I want to go back to the verses we were on earlier

John 14:1 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

V.2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

V.3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

1. "that where I am, there you may be also"

a. Christ loves us so much that He wants us to be in His company forever

b. This causes 2 things to happen:

- i. **#1.** Causes us to look w/ great anticipation to His return
- ii. **#2.** This shows us how much He loves us

1. He loves us so much that He prayed about our being w/ Him

John 17:24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

- d. When He comes for us – He will save us to the uttermost
 - i. That includes redeeming our bodies

Romans 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Philippians 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

- 2. Being in love with Christ is the key to remaining faithful to Him
 - a. The more you know Him the more in love w/ Him you become
- 3. There is one more thing you can do to love Him more
 - a. **#2.** You can ask Him to help you fall in love w/ Him
 - i. Then what is written in 1 Peter will apply to you also
1 Peter 1:8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
 - b. God wants to have an intimate relationship w/ you
 - c. It will change your life forever

John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

V.23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

- d. There is a day of great celebration coming for those who live for Him

1 Peter 1:7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in **praise** and **glory** and **honor** at the revelation of Jesus Christ;