

SAY WHAT?!

Monday

Scripture

A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. ~ Luke 18:18-23

Observe

- We don't know his name. Though we often refer to him as the "Rich, Young Ruler," Matthew and Mark only tell us "*a man*." Here in Luke we learn that he was a "*certain ruler*." We don't know what he ruled or his age. The one thing we know from all three accounts is that he had "*great wealth*." Jesus begins the encounter with a debate about what makes a person "*good*."

What are some ways you have been taught to be a "good person"? How did those prove to be incorrect or incomplete?

- After the man brags that he has kept ALL the commandments "*since I was a boy*," Jesus leans into the deeper question. The problem for this guy, just like you and me, wasn't how much wealth he had, but how much wealth had him!

Note the progression—sell, give, follow! What did this reveal about the man's priorities? What did it reveal about the order of his "loves"?

Apply

The obvious question for us is, "What is my ONE THING?" Just a few verses later, Jesus would meet a guy named Zacchaeus. He doesn't give the same command to him. He simply invites Himself to dinner. Jesus' presence in his home spontaneously spins his heart toward repentance and generosity. Take some time to invite Jesus into your living room. Listen for Him to help you see what "*one thing*" keeps you from loving Him more completely.

Pray

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. ~ Psalm 139:23-24

Tuesday

Scripture

*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." ~ **John 21:15-17***

Observe

For three years, Peter followed Jesus. When he first met Jesus the invitation was to leave his boats and become a *"fisher of men."* For Peter, this wasn't just his "day job." This was his way of life. It had been his family's way of life for generations. It was EVERYTHING! In John 6, Jesus asked if Peter was going to leave him, and Peter said, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God"* (John 6:68-69).

But after seeing Jesus arrested, falsely accused, run through a mockery of trials, and then executed on a cross, Peter did all he knew to do. He went back to the Sea of Galilee and jumped in his boat. When Jesus shows up and repeats the miracle of a net-full of fish, Peter recognized Him, but remembered over the three days of the Crucifixion, he had denied Jesus three times. In this moment, Jesus helped Peter sort out the priorities of his loves. Note, the first time He asked the question *"Do you love me,"* He added, *"more than these."* Surrounded by the familiar boats, nets, and fish, Peter has to choose.

Apply

So the question for us to wrestle with today is simply that same question. "Do I love Him more" than all the familiar ways I have lived and on what I have relied?

Pray

Father, show me that in order to love anyone or anything properly I need to learn to love You more.

Wednesday

Scripture

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

~ **Colossians 3:1-4**

Observe

Scottish missionary Dr. David Livingstone spent nearly thirty years in Africa. When he died, his body was laid to rest at Westminster Abbey in London, but his heart was cut out and buried under an mpundu tree in Chitambo's village in Africa. It was said, "His body belongs to England, but his heart belongs to Africa."

Today's text sets up that same question. Where does your heart belong? Watch the progression. Paul gives us a foundation of truth that directs our affection.

- We have been RAISED.
- We have DIED.
- We have been HIDDEN.
- We will APPEAR.

The life-changing truth is verse 4: "*When Christ, WHO IS YOUR LIFE ...*." He doesn't just give me life. He doesn't just change my life. He IS my life! The invitation of the Gospel isn't that I would ask God into my heart. He has invited me into His!

Apply

Today, as you consider the priorities that drive your life, let me ask you the tough question, "What has your heart?" A relationship? Your job? Your finances? What do you think about the most? What are you worried about the most? Remember, that which has your focus has your future!

Pray

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. ~ Ephesians 1:18-19

Thursday

Scripture

Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

~ 1 Peter 1:17-21

Observe

Peter describes what he refers to as the “*empty way of life*.” It is the picture of pursuit. Peter draws a powerful contrast between a life surrendered to God and one controlled by any other thing. The default mode of humanity post-Eden isn't atheism. It is idolatry. We always worship something. We worship success. We worship busyness. We worship entertainment.

1. As you dwell in this text today, what is God revealing in your heart that competes for His affection?
2. What perishable things have you substituted for the life He offers?
3. What does it mean for you to live “*as a foreigner*”?

Apply

Today, I want to encourage you to learn the lost art of rest. It is a great act of faith to pause and let God be God. Take some time to breathe. “Our culture invariably supposes that action and accomplishment are always better than rest, that doing something—anything—is better than doing nothing. Because of our desire to succeed, we do not rest. Because we do not rest, we lose our way” (Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives*).

Pray

Father, free us from the empty ways we have lived. Let our souls find rest in You.

*“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.” ~ Matthew 11:28-30, **The Message***

Friday

Scripture

I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. ~ 1 John 2:12-17

Observe

For some of you, the whole conversation about family can be very painful. Our prayer is that as you have processed the message this week that you know you are deeply loved by your church family. We share the common reality that we were born into a broken world, which includes our very human families.

In today's Bible passage, John writes to encourage us to learn to live in the real world with a hope that brings healing to our wounded souls. He begins by reminding us of the purpose of his letter. Repeatedly, he declares, "*Because you know the Father.*"

Based on that relationship, John challenges us to test our hearts. He lists what the church has identified as the great threats to the soul—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Our flesh knows only two things—the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain.

The call to follow Jesus is to see through the lens of eternity that recognizes the war for our souls is a war of desire. May your desire be for Him, and all other desires follow.

Apply

Of that list, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which do you struggle with the most? Find a friend, or your Life Group, and talk through what God is telling you.

Pray

As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—eternal life.

~ 1 John 2:24-25