

neglected. Simon had neglected to provide a means for Jesus to wash his feet, but the woman washed his feet with her tears. Simon had failed to greet Jesus with a kiss, but the woman kissed his feet over and over. The woman revealed how much Jesus had done for her and so she gave much; Simon did not. To his disciples Jesus said that there is no greater love than for a man to lay down his life for his friends. When we give what we have for Jesus, we demonstrate and offer proof that we belong to him. A father who fails to commit to and provide for his children is considered negligent, not a loving father. He is called loving only when he makes himself and what he has available to his children. In the same way, we will know that we belong to Jesus when we can see in our lives that we have made commitments of ourselves in order to know him and honor him. How has your love for Jesus motivated you to give of yourself for Jesus?

Saturday, March 13, 2010

Daily theme: Before following Jesus, we are to consider what it will cost us.

Questions

Read Luke 14:31-35

1. What point was Jesus making in this parable?
2. What are the costs of following Jesus?

Consider

Previous to this parable Jesus had instructed his disciples regarding what it meant to be his disciple. He had told them that they were to pick up their cross and follow him (Luke 14:27). Then he told two parables, one about a man building a tower and the second about a king contemplating battle. In each case, Jesus' point was that we are to consider the consequences of our actions. We should not start down a path without reflection on where that path will lead us. In other words, if we start down a life path with Jesus, we should also consider where that path will take us. Jesus told his disciples that following him will cost them their life. He told his disciples that they would experience the same things that he experienced. That would mean ridicule, disrespect, disregard, loss of opportunities, prison and ultimately life itself. Beginning in the first century, Christians have laid down their life for Jesus. In each subsequent century Christians have also laid down their lives because of their love for Jesus and refusal to deny him in order to be accepted in the world. If we are to follow Jesus, these things are what Jesus calls us to consider as well.

Profile of the Lukewarm

Luke 9:57-62

Sermon Series: Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a relentless God
Devotional Notes March 8-13, 2010

Monday, March 8, 2010

Daily theme: There is a cost to consider before following Jesus.

Questions

Read Luke 9:57-58

1. What attracts people to Jesus?
2. What was Jesus' point in his response?

Consider

Initially when we think of Jesus, we think of all the benefits. Jesus forgives our sin and restores our relationship with God the Father; he gives us purpose in this life; he gives us hope for the future. These things are very attractive. So much so that we may not consider the impact on our life of following Jesus. The man who told Jesus that he would follow him wherever Jesus went, probably didn't understand what was involved. Perhaps he thought that his life would remain pretty much the same and he would just add Jesus' teaching to his life. He probably assumed that what Jesus taught would require some additional habits to be added onto his life, but not a significant change. However, that is not what Jesus meant at all. Jesus leads us to a completely new life. We don't add Jesus to our schedule or commitments; Jesus becomes the focus and foundation of our entire life. Jesus completely reorders our life. When Jesus told the man that foxes have holes and birds have nests, but that he didn't have any place of his own, he was informing the man that following Jesus meant embarking on a life journey completely different from the way he had been living. Consider your view of being a Christian. How has Jesus redefined your life and become the focus and foundation? How do you prevent Jesus from being merely the "religious" or "church" part of your life?

Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Daily theme: Following Jesus means letting go of what was behind.

Questions

Read Luke 9:59-62

1. What caused these two men to hesitate in following Jesus?
2. What expectations of his followers did Jesus reveal?

Consider

Both of these men were connected to things in this world. The first wanted to go bury his father. This response probably meant more that he wanted to wait until his father passed away before he left home and followed Jesus. From Jesus' response to the third man, there might have been something at home that still held him from that which Jesus desired him to be free. Jesus' comment about the plow indicated that the man was double-minded. He desired to follow Jesus, but

he still wanted to maintain all that which was back home. In other words he wanted his cake and eat it too. Anyone guiding a plow needs to stay focused on what is ahead and not keep looking backwards. If he doesn't he will constantly need to make corrections that would have been unnecessary if he had been continually looking forward. Jesus expects his followers to be fully devoted to him and not lamenting over what they left to follow him. Imagine a marriage in which the husband or wife was constantly looking back and melancholy over the loss of a former relationship. The constant focus backward over what was lost or sacrificed blinds the person to all the joys and blessings that he currently enjoys. The person who continually looks backward is hindered from seeing all that Jesus has for him. The point is that Jesus is better than anything any of us has left to follow him. That means there is no point in looking backward.

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Daily theme: Following Jesus is the most valuable way we can spend our life.

Questions

Read Matthew 13:44-46

1. What was Jesus trying to communicate with these two parables?
2. Why is the kingdom of heaven so valuable?

Consider

In the first century banks were not available to the average person. In order to protect their valuables during times of war or from burglars, the people would bury their valuables in a field. Furthermore, one of the most treasured items of the first century was a pearl. Both of these parables make the same point; the kingdom of heaven is valuable beyond measure. In both cases, the man in the parable did whatever was necessary to acquire the treasure or the pearl. It didn't matter what the cost was, they pursued their dream until they obtained it. Their actions remind us of Olympic athletes who structure their entire lives, what they eat, their relationships and their time around the goal of competing and winning a medal in the Olympics. Some will spend years training to compete during a two week period of time. This is the picture that Jesus gives, not for winning a medal at the Olympics, but for entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus' parables lead us to ask the question of what is so valuable about the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus tells us to leave everything to enter? While an Olympic medal, a promotion, a career, wealth, fame and power are wonderful for a time, they do not last. Today we remember a few of the athletes that won medals in the recent Olympics, but who won medals four years ago, or eight years ago, or twenty years ago. Many of these names we would not even recognize, even though for a brief moment they were honored. Whatever we do on this earth will not last long, but the Kingdom of Heaven lasts forever. What we contribute to the Kingdom of Heaven will never be forgotten, but will endure forever. As wonderful honors that we receive now are, they cannot compare with what we will enjoy in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thursday, March 11, 2010

Daily theme: Nothing can compare to knowing Jesus.

Questions

Read Philippians 3:7-10

1. What things did Paul consider a loss and rubbish?
2. What type of righteousness did Paul desire?

Consider

In Philippians 3:1-6 Paul gave a bit of his life resume. For a first century person, Paul's life had been impressive. He had been well-educated and enjoyed power and influence within the Jewish Community. Today he might have been the equivalent of someone who had received a first-rate education where graduates are pursued by those asking them to join their organization. Paul enjoyed power as well. He associated with the most powerful men in the Jewish community and at times represented them on special missions. Today that would be similar to someone who was on staff of someone of influence in Washington D.C. That all changed on one of Paul's missions; Jesus met him and changed his life forever. After that encounter all that Paul had accomplished or possessed up to that moment in his life lost all value. Actually he viewed it negatively. Previously Paul had assumed that all that he had done contributed to his standing before God. After meeting Jesus he saw that all that past life was actually a hindrance and a distraction to his relationship with Jesus. After meeting Jesus, nothing else matter, only knowing Jesus better. The righteous life that Paul yearned for was the one received through Jesus, and not earned through his efforts. Paul lived a life of trusting Jesus to fulfill the promise that Jesus had made to him. Paul threw away the life that lived for impressing God through his religious fervor. Jesus had become so important to him, that Paul desired to suffer in ways similar to the ways Jesus suffered. Paul was willing to lay down his life for Jesus. He was willing to be ridiculed for Jesus. He was willing to suffer economic hardship for Jesus. Paul's words become a challenge to us. How much are we willing to enter into the life that Jesus lived?

Friday, March 12, 2010

Daily theme: As we can test our love for family members, we can also test our love for Jesus.

Questions

Read 2 Corinthians 13:5

1. How do you know when you love someone?
2. If we have ways of communicating our love for others, how do we demonstrate love for Jesus?

Consider

There seems to be one universal demonstration of love, commitment and giving. To the extent that we commit and give to the person we love, we reveal the depth of our love. Jesus indicated this to Simon the Pharisee when a woman came and washed Jesus' feet with her tears. Jesus indicated that this woman, sinner though she was, demonstrated her love for Jesus by doing that which Simon had