



Calvary of Albuquerque

Living the Right Life - John 12:20-26

From the Series, Believe:879

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

If this sermon was a book and I wanted to sell lots of copies, the title would cause it to fail. Now if it were entitled "Living the High Life" or "Living the Successful Life," then I may have a winner. But many have lived with both success and riches who didn't live right! So what is the right life? Or to frame it with a better question: What kind of life is most pleasing to God? Through a series of paradoxes, John gives us the answer--it wasn't the answer most people are looking for!

OUTLINE

- I. The Right Pursuit (vv. 20-22)
- II. The Right Provision (vv. 23-24)
- III. The Right Priority (vv. 25-26)
 - A. Eternal Life not Earthly Life
 - B. Serving Christ not Serving Self



Meditations for Living the Right Life:

1. What's the difference between a kernel of wheat in the storage bin and a kernel of wheat in the ground? How does this relate to Jesus? To you?
2. To what area of your life is God calling you to die? Why this area? How would you benefit by obedience? What is the hardest thing about giving up this area of your life?
3. Why is right better than rich or success or even comfort?

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. Doing the right thing doesn't come easy
 - B. Most gauge goodness by their feelings
 1. According to research by Dennis Pragger, when asked "In an emergency, would you save the life of your dog or a stranger first?" most answered, "The dog," because they love the dog, not the stranger.
 2. No higher standard of measure for most than their feelings
 - C. What is right?
 1. According to dictionary.com: "What is in accordance with what is good and proper; in conformity with fact and reason"
 2. According to 1865 Webster's Dictionary: "Accordant to the standard of truth and justice or the will of God. That alone is right in the will of God that is consonant to His will or law, this being the only standard of truth and justice."
 - D. Doing right is not always easy or comfortable.
- II. The Right Pursuit (vv. 20-22)
 - A. Greeks want to see Jesus
 1. Possible spiritual Greeks, who have turned from paganism and are interested in the God of Israel (a Gentile group of God fearers).
 2. Perhaps secular Greeks curious about the philosophy Jesus espoused.
 - a. At this time, Greeks were wanderers who would go anywhere to pick up the latest philosophy.
 - b. "You men of Athens have no rest, give yourselves no rest, and you don't give anybody else any rest!"
 - c. Searching for some "new philosophy" from Jesus
 - d. "(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)" (Acts 17:21)
 - B. Came to Philip first
 1. Philip was a Greek name (means lover of horses)
 2. Philip from Bethsaida of Galilee
 - a. Near a Greek colonized area: the Decapolis
 - b. These Greeks may have already known Philip

- C. John is the only one to include the story of the seeking Greeks
 - 1. Central message John is trying to get across
 - 2. Jesus Christ is not only the Redeemer for Israel and the Jews, but the entire world
 - a. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)
 - b. "Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.'" (John 4:42)
- D. The doors of formal Judaism are closing to Jesus; the door of Gentile opportunity are opening to Jesus
 - 1. This continues through Acts, as the gospel is taken to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. (See Acts 1:8)
 - 2. Gentiles seeking Jesus are bookends to His life
 - a. Wise men from the east seek Him at the beginning of earthly life
 - b. Wise men from West seek Him at the end of His life
 - 3. Jews wanted to see a sign; Greeks wanted to see Jesus
- E. To live right, you need the right pursuit: What is your master passion? It needs to be Jesus Christ.
 - 1. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)
 - 2. "One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple." (Psalm 27:4)

III. The Right Provision (vv. 23-24)

- A. Jesus response is astonishing and unexpected
- B. Setting: He has presented Himself as the Messiah (Zechariah 9; Daniel 9)
- C. The Jews fixed understanding of the coming of Messiah
 - 1. Preceded by horrible turmoil in their land: the Jews believed the Roman occupation fulfilled that
 - 2. In the midst of turmoil, an Elijah-like forerunner would come, pointing the way to Messiah: John the Baptist
 - 3. Messiah would show up, defeat their enemies and bring in the kingdom
 - 4. Jews scattered throughout the world would return to Jerusalem, the center of world peace
 - 5. Jesus referred to Himself as the "Son of Man"
 - a. A Messianic term
 - b. "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)
 - 6. They anticipate the kingdom will be set up, they will be let down.
- D. Jesus is a different kind of King
 - 1. Rules not by conquest, but by his own death and resurrection
 - 2. He makes a simple analogy
 - a. I've come to die
 - b. Illustration: grain of wheat (planted in cold dark earth [tomb] as it rots and decays out comes the plant and bears much fruit)
- E. Jesus is pursuing the provision
- F. First pursue Jesus as your Savior. Confront you sin and transfer it to Him by faith, trusting that His finished work on the cross is enough before God.
- G. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)

IV. The Right Priorities (vv. 25-26)

- A. Eternal Life not Earthly Life
 - 1. The principle of self sacrifice and death to self is now transferred to us
 - 2. "Hate your life": A Hebrew idiom, prefer one thing over something else so distinctly it is like comparing love to hatred
 - 3. "He who loves his life" life - ψυχή- psuché mental life, ego, self-focused life
 - 4. "He who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" eternal life - zoe aionion- age-abiding life; not just quantity, quality; focused on God and His will
 - 5. When you live for self will and your life is all-consumed with your won will, your own comfort, your own physical temporary life, you are going to lose it all; however, when you prefer what is right, even if you lose temporary pleasure, you get life
 - 6. "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. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 10:37-39)
 - 7. Paradoxes of Christian living
 - a. God's power is made perfect in our weakness (See 2 Corinthians 12:9)
 - b. To be rich, we must become poor in spirit (See Matthew 5:3)
 - c. If you want to be first, you must be last (See vMark 9:35)
 - d. If you want to rule, you must serve (See Mark 9:35)
 - e. When you humble yourself before god, He will exalt you (See James 4:10)
 - f. The Christian life is in direct antithesis of how the world lives: We live by dying: our potential will not be reached unless we die to certain things.
 - 8. Most people consumed by food, fashion, and pleasure
 - a. They value the body more than the soul
 - b. When you value the soul more than the body, different choices are made
 - 9. "There was a day when I died, utterly died: died to George Muller, his opinions, preferences, tastes and will- died to the world, its approval or censure, died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends - and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God." -George Muller
 - 10. "When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die"-Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- B. Serving Christ not Serving Self

1. If Jesus Christ is just your Savior and not your Lord and Master, don't expect to have a full and satisfying life.
2. Joy in knowing your life is honoring and pleasing to God
3. "Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!" (Matthew 5:6 GNT)
4. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1)
5. "Well done, good and faithful servant;" (Matthew 25:21)

Greek Terms: ψυχή- psuché mental life, ego, self-focused life; zoe aionion- age-abiding life; not just quantity, quality; focused on God and His will

Figures Referenced: Dennis Pragger; George Muller; Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Publications Referenced: *Webster's Dictionary* 1865

Cross References: Psalm 27:4; Daniel 7:13-14; Daniel 9; Zechariah 9; Matthew 1:21; Matthew 5:3; Matthew 5:6; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 10:37-39; Matthew 25:21; Mark 9:35; John 3:16; John 4:42; Acts 1:8; Acts 17:21; Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 12:9; James 4:10