

At the Center
May 30, 2010

We had an impressive week this week...

Remember when I said we are disturbed individuals the other Sunday...

That complacency is a weapon of the enemy Satan the destroyer who is real by the way...

And when our complacency is disturbed it is a gift of God and sometimes a wakeup call

God and Satan are troubling the waters around me on every side...

And it's still on...

So if I seem more disturbed than usual count it as a blessing

I feel great about what's been happening recently..no regrets...

My only baggage is lefty here and twitchy over on this side.

By last night I felt I had somewhere between little and nothing left...but God is good...all the time

Pulling together a sermon was not what I felt that I had the oomph to do...

So I thought...

Get somebody else to do it...but alas...too late

Then an idea occurred to me...recycle an old sermon...after all...people forget...most of you who would have heard it before are fairly old and least likely to remember it...me included

But you crossroads deserve better than that.

And then it occurred to me I am pretty much recycling sermons all the time anyway at least bits and pieces.

So if anything sounds familiar just count yourself blessed by a good memory.

I remembered a story about a preacher...who was approached by a deacon...

Not that we have a problem here with that...certainly not...

The verse I used when talking about the disturbed life

And being a disturbed individual...If I become complacent in my life God please disturb me

Matthew 10:34. "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35. For I have come to turn " 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law--

36. a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

37. "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

38. and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

39. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

40. "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.

We so often make the mistake of thinking that what we are looking for in life is level ground, comfort, security, rest...it is a mistake...life is not a waiting room...it is a proving ground.

Life is about stress analysis...It is when we are brought face to face with challenges and sometimes, outright disaster that we find out how much of our lives we give to God and how much we hold back for ourselves.

In the life of the believer the Holy Spirit uses these opportunities to shine light on our sin, and I believe that there is only really one sin... self-centeredness. Every other sin is really just a re-mix of self-centeredness. 'Finding your life' is finding yourself at the center of your life.

The most important desire that God has for us is that we lose our self-centeredness.

I will again as I have for years say that one of the most famous lies of our generation is and I quote “ You can’t love anyone else until you first love yourself”.

Without a doubt this single statement twists God’s word into a narcissistic lie...I gotta’ love me first...me first, me first, ME FIRST! Waaaaaaah!

It sounds like a 5 year old child’s theology.

Have you ever repeated this lie? Do you still?

It’s poison. Slow acting for sure but poison for sure.

Matthew 22

34. Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

35. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

36. "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

And then it says right here

Jesus replied: Love yourself with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...I don’t think it does

37. Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

38. This is the first and greatest commandment.

39. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

You can’t love anyone else until you love God.

Remove yourself from the center and prepare Him room

If it is true as the Bible states that this is the greatest most foundational commandment then conversely self-centeredness is

the worst and most fundamental sin as it fully violates the primary command of God.

It is God's desire that we see and reject our sin by His power

The character of our heart is established by how well we are conformed to God's will in this one thing.

So, how do we know?

It doesn't take the death of a loved one, or cancer, or financial losses to reveal the character of a human heart.

Sometime it just takes the wrong word from someone you say you love, or a car parked across two spaces in a full lot or in front of your driveway, or a cold hamburger, or a forgotten food order, or physical exhaustion.

Are you easily angered or offended, what is the Holy Spirit telling you.

Are you primarily focused on how others make you feel or how you make them feel?

Are you focused on their actions toward you or on how your actions glorify or fail to glorify God?

Are you focused on how their lives, needs and desires affect you or on making your life a lighthouse for Jesus?

Are you focused on the challenges that serving His Kingdom places on you or are you concerned with meeting those challenges in a glorifying and edifying way?

Are you reaching out to generate growth, unity, and peace in the Lord flock or are you warring for your perceived rights?

Behold...all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God...

Are you a life tither...do you give 10 percent of your will to God?

Do you plan to give yourself to God 100 percent this next week
10 % Monday, 15% Tuesday, 20% Wednesday, 15% Thursday...

It's not OK!

What did Matthew 22:37 say:

'Love the Lord your God with some of your heart and with a bit of your soul and with a piece of your mind.' Right?

37. Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

What does all mean?...All

Another great trick/weapon of the enemy...dilution

The idea that some is enough.

Steve Green a Christian song writer wrote a great lyric. It says:

'To love the Lord our God is the heartbeat of our mission.

The spring from which our service overflows

Across the street or around the world

The mission's still the same

Proclaim and live the Truth in Jesus' name'

Every brave, kind, beautiful, generous, loving act we perform without Christ blazing at our core as our prime mover is really just more ego fodder. An attempt to get right with self disguised as getting right with God.

People in and out of the church continue to dress themselves up and perfume themselves with verses, sacrifices, good deeds, and all kinds of 'excellence' to try and attract God to our lives...to no avail.

God is God and will draw all people toward His excellence.

Then He wants to have us arrive poor, naked, humbled so that He can clothe us in His grace, righteousness, and glory.
He needs us out of the way.

Another common mistake is to see Jesus Christ as a marker sign saying this is the way...follow my example...a guidepost on how to live. Jesus did not come to be a road map...He came to be the conductor...

In spite of the bumper sticker Jesus is not my co-pilot
The enemy wants us to look at Jesus and admire Him from afar and try to follow his lead and be nice people.
Because he knows it is not enough.

In 2 Cor. 13:11 Paul writes” Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

12. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

A life surrendered to God releases us from fear, not from strife or proving our hearts or struggling to grow ourselves and His church.
When we leave the center sin loses it's power.

The flesh loses it's power.

The grave loses it's power over us.

God's power when it permeates our lives gives us access to His divine perfection. We then love with a Godly love that surpasses all human understanding and logic...and in this crazy love we share one mind and we live in peace.

Get out of the way

Let God fill you up

Let Jesus take the lead

Help build a united body

Love each other in a godly way