

COME SEE; COME DIE

WILLIS 6/27/10

Mt16:21-27

I have entitled what I want to share today “Come See; Come Die.” It was Rick Warren author of the Purpose Driven Life who aptly pointed out “Christ’s invitation to man began with the words Come See and very quickly transitioned into the words, Come Die.”

- **Discovering who Christ is has to do with the eyes of our heart being enlightened so we can see. Following after who Christ is has to do with the self interests of our soul being crucified so we can live.**
- A message that includes the “come see” but leaves out the “come die” leaves us with a “Christless” Christianity and a “Crossless” religion.

Our focus these past 3-4 weeks has been the absolute wonder of the Covenant Community. More than just a Sunday only meeting, Jesus built the Church to be a Covenant Community where lives are joined together like bones of the body to become a voice for God in this earth.

- As wonderful as the Covenant Community is it doesn’t just happen. **Community develops because there are certain defined principles embraced over a long period of time.**
- Central to these principles is the daily working of the cross. You can’t experience the wonder of community until you eradicate that fundamental curse of “everyone doing that which is right in their own eyes.”
- That’s the only problem with community...it is spelled with a “u” not with a “me.” The Cross is the means of God to transform us as sheep who go their own way into disciples who take up their cross and follow after Christ.

Timothy was a man who experienced the transforming work of the cross. Writing to the Philippians (3:18) Paul said, “I have no one of kindred spirit like Timothy for everyone seeks their own interests not the interests of Jesus Christ.”

- Knowing the generational stronghold of self interest, Jesus ordained “The Way of the Cross” and said each who wishes to follow after Him must take up their own cross. The Cross meaning the daily practice of saying no to self interest and yes to God.
- **Discipleship begins when we find the cross with our name on it.** “If anyone wishes to come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross...” 6 times in the Gospels Jesus makes the same command. To come after Him we must have our own cross.
- **“Come after” means “come to a point of being with me.”** Apparently you can be saved but not fully with Jesus. To be with Jesus you need your cross.

- Apparently there stands the possibility of relationship without proximity. I can be a Christian without the Cross working in my life but I can't come to the point of being with Him unless I have my own cross at work in my life.
- **Without taking up our own cross, we might be counted among the flock but we are not following the Shepherd.**

What exactly is "taking up my own cross?" I am glad you asked that. Jesus explains the cross as the principle of self denial at work in our daily lives. Knowing the fundamental root of sin was "everyone doing that which is right in their own eyes" Jesus said "to come after Him we must deny self."

- **"Deny self" simply means...say no to self.** Sounds easy until you do it. You can read it and still be in pseudo peace but to do it is to declare war on self. That is why Jesus makes it a personal cross. Self is to be crucified not pampered, petted or pacified.
- **To come to a point of being with Jesus everyone must win their own war with self.**
- While everything in our culture (both in the Church and in the world) says "indulge self, please self, focus on self..." Jesus sets the record straight and says, "To be with me you must say no to self and keep saying no on a daily basis."
- If we don't learn to say no to self we end up making peace with our enemies. (Addie Hallstrom to share)

Paul spoke of the war with self in Phil3:18 "For I have told you before and now say again in weeping, many live as enemies or haters of the cross." Context would point out it was not the unsaved Paul was referring to.

- Paul was addressing the reality of being saved but refusing the command to take up your own cross.
- **Apparently you can be self indulgent and still be heaven bound...but you cannot be self indulgent and be a follower of Christ.** To follow after Jesus you must deny yourself and take up your cross daily.
- "That sounds like works" Jesus is not speaking of salvation, He is speaking of discipleship. **Salvation is free whereas discipleship will cost you everything.**
- It doesn't cost you anything to join the Army but to stay in the Army you must be willing to give your very life. **Life with Christ after death is free; proximity to Christ in life will cost you everything.**

Consider these verses:

- Mt10:38-39 "And he who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. He who has found his life shall lose it and he who has lost his life shall find it."
- Lk14:27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."

The root word for disciple is “cross.” It takes the daily working of The Cross in our lives for us to be a disciple. A Crossless Christianity is a discipleless conversion. The Cross is what keeps Christianity about GOD and not about man.

- Mk8:33 “ Jesus rebuked Peter and said, get behind me Satan you do not have in mind the things of God but the things of man.”

Without the daily working of the cross in our lives we can profess a love for Jesus but follow the way of Satan. **The way of the cross is the means of God to take us out of those things that belonged to our former life and bring us into the things that belong to the new.**

- Like Peter, the tendency of our fallen nature is toward self interest...I want my own way, in my own time, according to my own terms. God’s answer is The Cross to deal with my nature and The Blood to deal with my actions.
- The Cross deals with who we are; The Blood deals with what we have done. We need The Blood for forgiveness; we need The Cross for deliverance. We need The Blood for justification; we need The Cross for sanctification.
- It is not just sins that keep us from becoming Christlike, it is our sin nature. It is the sin nature at work that keeps us from growing into the desire of God for Community. **It is my sin nature that keeps me focused on me, unable to get to the “u” of Community.**

So as we are in this focus of “seeing the forest from the trees,” we must never forget the absolute necessity of taking up our own cross so we can show ourselves to be His disciples. As we grow and keep in step with this advancing Kingdom, let’s remember to:

- 1. Come to the Point of Being With Him:** Discipleship is all about proximity, closeness, intimacy with Jesus.
- 2. Deny Self:** Evaluate the motives of your decisions. Are they all about pleasing and pleasuring self or pleasing and pleasuring Christ? You can’t get to the oneness of Community without the denial of self.
- 3. Take Up Your Cross Daily and Follow Jesus:** He must be the source of all we do. Apart from Him we can do nothing so all work must filter through the Cross and be for Him for it to get the passing grade.

Spiritual Intimacy...the Covenant Community...both operate through the working of The Cross. To get close to Him I must learn to say no to me. To become one with you I must learn to say no to me.