



SERMON NOTES

US N°. 94

Date: March 24th, 2013

Title: Wait...

#2 in the Series on the Acts of the Apostles

1. A 3rd Way; Mt. 5:21-22, "*You have heard it said... but I tell you...*"
 - a. Jesus' teaching was not that of other men; Mt. 7:28-29, "*And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*"
 - i. Jesus taught that He was the Way to the Father; not us or the Church.
 1. Act 9:2, "*if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women...*"
 2. Act 16:17, "*These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.*"
 3. Act 19:23, "*And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.*"
 4. Act 24:14, "*according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.*"
 - b. The beginning of the Passion Week
 - i. Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem
 1. The fulfilled prophecy; "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.*" Zech. 9:9 (cf. Mt. 21:4-5)
 2. The welcome; "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" Mt. 21:9
 3. The reproach; "*Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.*" Luke 19:39
 - ii. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem; "*If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!*" Luke 19:42
 - iii. The Temple was meant to be a house of prayer but had become a den of thieves; Mt. 21:13
 1. Violently clears the Temple
 2. The juxtaposition of the lowly entry and the passionate zeal
 - c. KOG: ...Many say, "We have been praying for the restoration of America. Where are the answers?" I wonder if we have been praying in the right direction? Should we not be praying for the church to align to the kingdom? Prayer can't override peoples' free wills, but prayer **can** revive The Church. But what is revival? It is not an outpouring of spiritual power only, but a "return to the pattern". For example, the Greek 'revival' movement in architecture during the early 19th century meant that building styles reflected **that pattern**. That is what we need to think about when we think about revival. The truth-pattern of 'Kingdom Church' will never be affected by the warm and cold of culture. That is how you know that what you are doing **is** kingdom. If American culture – whether it goes liberal or conservative – overly affects The Church, then that shows we are too tied to an American culture, and our vision for America rather than our vision for the Kingdom. So what is the pattern? First it is the upon-falling of the Holy Spirit on believers. Second, it is the radical community among believers. Third, it is the focused disciple making by

believers. Fourth, it is God designed unity with believers. Fifth, it is the passionate rescue of sinners through believers. [Steve Fry]

- d. *"I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. They are so unlike your Christ."* M. Gandhi
 - i. *"Dr. Jones says that the greatest hindrance to the Christian gospel in India is a dislike for western domination, western snobbery, the western theological system, western militarism and western race prejudice. Gandhi, the great prophet of India, said, "I love your Christ, but I dislike your Christianity." The embarrassing fact is that India judges us by our own professed standard. In reply to a question of Dr. Jones as to how it would be possible to bring India to Christ, Gandhi replied: First, I would suggest that all of you Christians live more like Jesus Christ. Second, I would suggest that you practice your Christianity without adulterating it. The anomalous situation is that most of us would be equally shocked to see Christianity doubted or put into practice. Third, I would suggest that you put more emphasis on love, for love is the soul and center of Christianity. Fourth, I would suggest that you study the non-Christian religions more sympathetically in order to find the good that is in them, so that you might have a more sympathetic approach to the people."* [E. Stanley Jones, The Christ of the Indian Road]
- e. People today want and need the 3rd way. Sources
 - i. 2012 Gallup poll finds that those who respond "none" to religious preference was 17.8% in 2012 (~46m), up from 14.6% in 2008 (~35m) (Pew Forum found 19.6% unaffiliated, up from 16% in 2008);
 - ii. a whopping 22 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds claimed no religion, up from 11 percent in 1990;
 - 1. the study also found that 73 percent of "Nones" came from religious homes; 66 percent were described by the study as 'de-converts
 - iii. The Barna Group estimates that 80 percent of those reared in the church will be "disengaged" by the time they are 29;
 - iv. Pew Forum reports that young Americans are dropping out of religion at an alarming rate of five to six times the historic rate (30 to 40 percent have no religion today, versus 5 to 10 percent a generation ago). The problem today isn't those who are *unchristian*, but that so many are *ex-Christian*;
 - 1. Will they come back? At 5-6 times the historic rate of drop out, young adulthood is much longer (marriage, career, children—the primary sociological forces that drive adults back to religious commitment—are now delayed until the late 20s, even into the 30s) and returning to the fold after a 2-3 year hiatus is one thing, coming back after more than a decade is considerably more unlikely, and a tectonic shift has occurred in the broader culture for those reared in pluralistic, post-Christian America, the cultural gravity that has pulled previous generations back to the faith has weakened or dissipated altogether. [Drew Dyck]
 - 2. Why are they leaving?
 - a. Moral compromise – the conflict between belief and behavior becomes unbearable. Tired of dealing with a guilty conscience and unwilling to abandon their sinful lifestyles, they drop their Christian commitment. Many experienced intellectual crises that seemed to conveniently coincide with the adoption of a lifestyle that fell outside the bounds of Christian morality.
 - b. Discouraged – many de-conversions were precipitated by what happened inside rather than outside the church. One Wiccan was quoted as saying, *"It is rare to meet a new Wiccan who wasn't raised in the church."* Dyck's research showed that most leavers had been exposed to a superficial form of Christianity that effectively inoculated them against authentic faith.

Sociologist Christian Smith examined the spiritual lives of American teenagers and found most teens practicing a religion best called "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism," which casts God as a distant Creator who blesses people who are "good, nice, and fair." Its central goal is to help believers "be happy and feel good about oneself."

- c. Disinterest – Dechurched adults cited grievances that gave definition to my own inner struggles: emphasis on morality and voting records to the exclusion of weightier matters like justice and transformation; a suspicious amalgamation of the American Dream and Armed Forces; a me-and-mine stance as opposed to you-and-yours; persistent defensive posture, treating unchurched or dechurched people like enemies instead of future brothers and sisters in Christ; and an arrogance over humility, using the Bible as a bludgeon instead of a balm. [Jen Hatmaker]
- f. The disciples anxiously awaited the institution of God's rule on earth, Acts 1:6, "*...they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'*" What they didn't realize is that the answer was bigger than their question.
 - i. How many of us anxiously await God to intervene, but we've subconsciously (*or maybe not*) determined the answer we expect Him to give.
- g. The Kingdom of Israel pales in comparison to the Kingdom of God. Eph. 3:20, "*[He] is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,*"
 - i. The business of the disciples: beholding, listening with faith and love, obeying promptly, and waiting in patient humility.
- 2. The "*last*" commands of Christ were a challenge to the disciples and remain so to this day. But these commands are the "*key*" to fulfilling the inauguration of the Kingdom of God.
 - a. 40 days of intensive training; Acts 1:3-4, "*...being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them...*"
 - i. The phrase, "*being assembled with them...*" is used to imply eating and fellowshiping with them.
 - ii. Forty days...
 - 1. God filled the world with 40 days of rain; Gen. 7:12
 - 2. It took 40 days to embalm Jacob in Egypt; Gen. 50:3
 - 3. Moses was on the mountain with the Lord for 40 days; Ex. 24:18
 - 4. Goliath challenged the Israelite army for 40 days; 1 Sam. 17:16
 - 5. Elijah was fed by an angel after Jezebel's threat and went 40 days to Mt. Horeb; 1 King 19:8
 - 6. Jonah witnessed in Nineveh for 40 days; Jonah 3:4
 - 7. Jesus was 40 days in the dessert; Mt. 4:2
 - b. The command to wait.
 - i. Waiting implies humility and respect to the importance of the One coming; the trip can't be made without...
 - ii. Waiting is not just about patience, it's about timing. It's not for man to know the times and seasons: there is a sovereign authority at work, which should inspire humility such that some subjects are beyond his ken. We ought to repress curiosity that is prone to overstep the bounds of what is legitimate, trains our faith that God does all things well, and cultivates submission.
 - iii. Jesus is gentle in not correcting the disciples in their misconception between the Kingdoms, He leaves that task to the Holy Spirit.
 - c. The promise of power.

- i. Jesus clearly calls the gift to come the Holy Spirit who will baptize them and that the Holy Spirit will come upon them. This is distinct from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or the seal of the Holy Spirit in all believers.
 - 1. Eph. 1:13, "...in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise..."
 - 2. Jn. 20:22, "And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, *"Receive the Holy Spirit."*
 - ii. Jesus explicitly tells them to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit; Acts 1:4-5, "wait for the Promise of the Father, *"you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*
 - iii. The Holy Spirit brings the necessary power to do the work.
 - 1. Zech. 4:6, "So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts."
 - 2. Jn. 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."
 - 3. Is. 40:31, "But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."
 - iv. The Holy Spirit gives the Words to speak...
 - v. Luke 12:11-12, *"Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."*
 - d. The command to go to the ends of the earth; the news is for all who are afar off (culture, geographically, time, etc.) They had no clue what that would mean.
3. Conclusion
- a. Obedience to the Word and matching deeds to creeds instead of creeds to deeds.
 - b. The people desire a Messiah, they desire that His Kingdom would come.
 - c. We must learn to wait upon the Lord and then act decisively when the command has been given.

To the churches concerning homosexuals and lesbians:

Many of you believe that we do not exist within your walls, your schools, your neighborhoods. You believe that we are few and easily recognized. I tell you we are many. We are your teachers, doctors, accountants, high school athletes. We are all colors, shapes, sizes. We are single, married, mothers, fathers. We are your sons, your daughters, your nieces, your nephews, your grandchildren. We are in your Sunday School classes, pews, choirs, and pulpits. You choose not to see us out of ignorance or because it might upset your congregation. We ARE your congregation. We enter your doors weekly seeking guidance and some glimmer of hope that we can change. Like you, we have invited Jesus into our hearts. Like you, we want to be all that Christ wants us to be. Like you, we pray daily for guidance. Like you, we often fail.

When the word “homosexual” is mentioned in the church, we hold our breaths and sit in fear. Most often this word is followed with condemnation, laughter, hatred, or jokes. Rarely do we hear any words of hope. At least we recognize our sin. Does the church as a whole see theirs? Do you see the sin of pride, that you are better than or more acceptable to Jesus than we are? Have you been Christ-like in your relationships with us? Would you meet us at the well, or restaurant, for a cup of water, or coffee? Would you touch us even if we showed signs of leprosy, or aids? Would you call us down from our trees, as Christ did Zacchaeus, and invite yourself to be our guest? Would you allow us to sit at your table and break bread? Can you love us unconditionally and support us as Christ works in our lives, as He works in yours, to help us all to overcome?

To those of you who would change the church to accept the gay community and its lifestyle: you give us no hope at all. To those of us who know God’s word and will not dilute it to fit our desires, we ask you to read John’s letter to the church in Pergamum. “I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore!” You are willing to compromise the word of God to be politically correct. We are not deceived. If we accept your willingness to compromise, then we must also compromise. We must therefore accept your lying, your adultery, your lust, your idolatry, your addictions, YOUR sins. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

We do not ask for your acceptance of our sins any more than we accept yours. We simply ask for the same support, love, guidance, and most of all hope that is given to the rest of your congregation. We are your brothers and sisters in Christ. We are not what we shall be, but thank God, we are not what we were. Let us work together to see that we all arrive safely home.

A Sister in Christ