

GIVING UP...

Giving Up Our Life

Matt 10:28-39

We've had a crazy last couple weeks with people scrambling grabbing every loaf of bread, chicken flavored Ramen noodles, and every package of toilet paper on the market. While this has instigated a sense of panic and anxiety in a lot of people I think our series has been very timely. We've talked about giving up control, giving up our own understanding, and even fear and all of these have probably been put to the test over the last few weeks. This week, I want to bring to the attention of our minds and hearts the posture of giving up how we may even view our own lives. All of the things we've talked about "giving up" can be found in our passage today.

28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.[a] **29** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?[b] And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. - Matt 10:28-29

In Matthew 10 we find that Jesus is speaking about what it means to be a disciple. In verse 28 he gives an instruction not to be afraid or bring reverent attention to what can harm the body but rather be more concerned about the one who has the authority to destroy the body and the soul. A good reminder that we aren't to fear things that threaten our bodies, namely the Coronavirus currently, any other sickness, or any threats but we should revere the one who gives us access to true life that is not destroyed or threatened by illness, harm, or even death. Even in spite of that truth, Jesus goes on and tells us, in verse 29, that we are valuable to God and no one dies or falls to the ground, outside of God's will. In other words, God is ultimately in control.

The next few verses speak of the priority of God and our reverence and love for him. He goes on to say that believing in him and loving him will bring about divisions even in households. Verse 37, He says that we are to love him more than our own family. Definitely a hard passage to understand. This is because our love for God and our perception of his love for us informs us how to love our families and the people around us correctly. God is love and without him all attempts at love are counterfeit to the one he prescribes for us. Counterfeit's can be gratifying but they never are fully fulfilling.

38 And whoever 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.

These verses are very jarring. Jesus says that if we don't take our cross up, expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come, and believe and follow him and conform to his way of living, suffering, and even dying that we are not worthy of him. He says whoever finds his life's value in this world will lose it and whoever loses the value of his life in this world for his sake will find it.

I realize that survival is a primal instinct of all of us and our brains often function under the goal of just staying alive and preserving and valuing this life and we should value it, it's God's. However, considering this along with other passages of scripture, it seems to me that a disciple of Jesus is often told to give up his or her life, to suffer, and even die at times. The ultimate value doesn't seem to be in preserving this life or even to primarily be concerned with it, but rather setting our hearts and minds higher and beyond the world we see. This isn't to say that we shouldn't take precautions and measures to stay safe and alive, but it is to say this chaos, anxiety, and worry around us shouldn't ignite chaos, anxiety, and worry in us. That our lives are valuable to God and he, ultimately, is in control. That we should practice dying to ourselves and try to serve others. The only way we do that is by loving God with all our hearts and receiving his love back which informs how we love each other. No disciple of Jesus follows him without a cross and a burden to carry. In this time let's make sure that we don't give in to the fear, anxiety, and chaos around us and go into pure survival mode but that we maintain a posture in our hearts of losing ourselves, in the sense of self gratification of what this life has to offer and practice giving up our lives for our neighbors.

So with that make sure you are checking on your neighbors. We've made an attempt to check in with each other within our church but what about the elderly and vulnerable around you? Not everyone attends church reach out to them too and make sure they are fine. Make some phone calls, volunteer, and get creative ways to still serve each other in this time.