

JUST BE

Bible Reading. Galatians 5:13-26
Ezekiel 36: 22-27

Initially I was going to title this, Radical Christianity because today I want to take a look at what Christianity actually is, and should actually look like. I have been joking that I was going to write a book in response of the christian society today, always seeking a new, perspective, or guide to our lives. My book would probably be a very short, only a few pages and it would be entitled Just Be. It would be inspired by a Madd Tv skit that starred had Bob Newhart as a psychologist. A women comes in, explains that she is afraid of being buried alive in a box. The psychologist response to her was to JUST STOP IT! Many times I have felt like that, the christian book store is full of books telling you how to live your best life now, how to be a great husband or wife...and my answer to this is.. are you in Christ? If So, then JUST BE in him, focus your life, your thought patterns, and your love on him and all of these other parts naturally will fall into place.

Last time a few months ago we went over something fairly easy, trying to show how Christ is the meaning of life the universe and everything and that all of creation exists for the Glory of God through his Son Jesus Christ. If you remember we talked about how God is glorified both by the believer through his son's work on the cross and Christs work in their lives, and likewise how God is glorified by the punishment of sin on the unbeliever, through his righteous judgment. Today I want to talk on something that is probably a little more controversial. I have been giving it some more thought for a long time and I think that there is more that we can expound upon under this idea that Christ is the reason for everything and what it actually means to us, as adopted children and how we should respond to it.

It seems this world today is identified by extremes. Even if something in and of itself is not extreme, those of the opposing side label it as such. All those who hold to Calvinism are always criticized to be hyper Calvinists by those who are not. Or if you look at the political realm today, it seems that there is no such thing as moderation as both of our parties are controlled by what seems to be the furthest reaches of either side. Almost daily now we hear about religious extremists, people who strap bombs to themselves in the name of their god, and reversely we hear Christianity likened to the same extremes because of the catholic church during the crusades, or Christianity being likened to those who protest abortion clinics, or homosexual parades shouting how God hates them and will kill them. The growing view today seems to be that all religions are the same, and the world would be better, and have less violence without them, as if there would somehow be peace if everyone just put aside their god, then we could just accept and love everyone without religions telling people how to live, what to like, what to dislike and causing all of our problems. The problem is not Christianity, it is the the wrong view of Christianity, and Christians today are not helping themselves much by matching anger with anger, and hatred with hatred. This is not who we are called to be. If we turn to Galatians 5:22-26 Paul lays out what a Christian's life should look like.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Paul is pretty plain here what Christianity should look like. Reverse 2 Timothy 3 tells of those who are outside of Christ.

3 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

If we are to take an honest look at what is being called Christianity today, I am sad to say I think you will find peoples attitudes aligned more with the 2nd list in Timothy, then the 1st list in Galatians. This ought NOT to be. Let us think on this a minute, please do not misunderstand, I do not mean to write off all peoples as non-christians, but rather warn those who practice such ungodly things in the church to examine themselves to see if any of these things maybe in their lives, to take a good honest look at themselves and ask, do I really love the brotherhood? Do I have a tendency to gossip, backbite, and slander? We have all been in the church long enough to know that sadly there seems to be a lot of that within the church. These things are no born out of a spirit of Love toward the brotherhood, if your life truly is in Christ, then stop it, love your brothers and sisters as Christ loves the church.

Romans 5: 6-8 tells us, For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7, for scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die, but God demonstrates his own love toward us, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God's love for his people, is so profound, so gracious that he gave his only son to die, for those who hate him. We are to imitate Christ and oh how we fall short in every aspect of our lives!! As Paul says, we are to be like Christ, meek, long suffering, humble, wise, instead of gossiping, backbiting and slandering, we should be laying our lives down for one another, preferring one another over ourselves. Our lives have been changed, and we should be seeking God's glory, not our own selfish wants and desires.

Then we have those who truly are not believers, but are like the pharisees, they have an appearance of righteousness but inside are full of dead mans bones. Who come in, deceiving themselves, convincing themselves to be christian despite their lives bearing no real fruit unto Christ. And we go around patting them on the back saying that's ok, you responded to that alter call, you said the sinners prayer, even though there has been no real change in your life, you're just a carnal christian, its ok...No, no it is not. Christianity is a life changing event, the bible calls it a new birth for a reason. Christ removes your heart of stone and gives you a heart of flesh! That is thee point of this study today and why I titled it Just Be. People need to be honest with themselves, stop trying to be what they are not and be what they are. Let me put it this way, stop trying to be a christian, you either are, our you are not. This is probably quite controversial in the church today because as I said we spend a lot of effort trying to convince people they are saved when in fact they are not. This is something that we must stop doing. Rather we need to point people to Christ, show them in scripture what a life in Christ actually looks like, and push toward that mark and not make excuses for people who claim Christ, but

bear not fruit thereof.

So then the question arises what does the life of a christian look like. If we take a look again at the list in Galatians it lists what should be the characteristics of the christian life. love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

All of these things are not of ourselves. It is against our nature. To truly love, have joy and peace, to be long-suffering, kind, and faithful it is the working of the spirit in us. You can easily reverse what Paul says in Galatians, and create a list of what man is without the new birth. Selfish, depressed, quick to anger, untrusting. A life of a Christian is a living sacrifice to our Father. We are to be like him, we are to put aside our selves, repent of our sins and walk in truth. Christ is our goal post. Obviously we can not reach sinless perfection in this life but through the holy spirit's conviction we should be on an upward trend. If there does not seem to be a working of conviction of sin in your life and you are more worried about being caught by your peers and suffering embarrassment, and that is the only thing that keeps you from it, and you are less worried about your sin as a rebellion against God you may want to rethink your confession of faith. The Holy Spirit will convict, God the father will chastise his children, and it is that which should drive you to repentance and faith, a true inward work of Christ, and not an outward work of yourself, you should worry less of what others will find in your life, and worry more about your disobedience to God.

So in conclusion. We need to focus our lives on Christ, and his work in us. Let's turn to him more, and lean on human advice and psychology for our lives less. Just Be who you are, if Christs, walk in newness of spirit and life, loving your neighbor as yourself, and do all things in grace and love to the Glory of your father. Examine yourself, Do not harden your heart, fooling yourself that you are ok but honestly ask yourself is my life in line with Christs? Do I love as I should? Am I seeking God's will in my life, or my own selfish desires? Honestly ask yourself, do I truly follow Christ? and instead of seeking reassurance from your friends, and family turn to God, only He can take your heart of stone full of selfish desires, hated, and lusts, and give you a heart of flesh, willing to repent. turn from your sin, repent and believe. Rest in Christ, and Just Be.