

Cost of Discipleship - Part 11

by Paris Reidhead

In this sermon, Paris Reidhead emphasizes the importance of loving God and others, the nature of true faith, and the necessity of self-examination in the life of a disciple.

Duration: 23:19

Scripture: Matthew 22:37, Matthew 25:34

Topics: "Cost Of Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and self-improvement before the final judgment. He reads from Matthew Chapter 25, highlighting the criteria for judgment based on how individuals have treated others. The speaker emphasizes the need to love and care for our neighbors as ourselves, as this will be a determining factor in the judgment. He also mentions the Apostle Paul's exhortation to examine ourselves and ensure that we are in the faith. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the triune nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Transcript

We've been seeing this, this portion, and I hope it's so indelibly riveted to your mind that long after you've forgotten me, this portion will be marked and underlined, and when you go back to it in your reading, you'll be reminded of some of the things that have been said about it. Listen carefully. Master, which is the great commandment of the law? And Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. We've seen the great commandment as it related to loving God. We've understood that to love in this context means to commit our wills, to seek the blessedness and joy and happiness and satisfaction of God.

We've seen the great commandment as it relates to a proper love of self and of our neighbors. We've considered something of the implications of this when we heard Christ say, He that heareth my words and doeth them, he it is that loveth me. If you keep my commandments, then you are my disciples indeed.

And we've considered the great call. We've also considered something of the fact that he has made a commitment to us. If you keep my commandments, then you are my disciples indeed.

And we've considered the great call. We've also considered something of the fact that he has made a commitment to us. The call was to follow Christ, and in the following of him, as we went into all the world, or as we go into all the world, we are to preach the gospel, and Christ has committed himself to us.

Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Last evening we considered the great confirmation. By what evidence are you, can you satisfy your own heart that you do love God as he has set forth? And we saw in 1 John that if we love his commandments, if we obey his commandments, then we are indeed in love with him.

Thus we come tonight to what would logically be the last aspect of this, and that's the great judgment. Certainly we would expect that if this is such an important commandment, that he could say that on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets, that we can fully expect that he would have something to say about the time, the occasion, when we are going to be judged as to whether or not we have loved him with all of our hearts, all of our souls, all of our minds, and we have loved our neighbors as ourselves. In order to get the biblical setting, or at least to understand the principles that are going to be applied in that judgment, turn, if you will, to Matthew chapter 25.

I think it's just so gracious of the Lord to give to us a preview of that judgment. When Tom Hare, who had been ministering in our churches for several months, in fact two or three years, was getting ready to go back to Ireland, Dr. Tilzer said, well, Tom, are you going to be doing a lot of preaching when you get home to Ireland? He said, no, I'm going back to my little village home, and I'm going to shut the door. And he said, I'm going to have a preview of the judgment seat of Christ.

I want to find out the worst about myself while there's still time enough to do something about it. Well, I think that's excellent. And I think that it's so gracious of God to give us a preview of the judgment so that we can find out the worst about ourselves while we still have time enough to do something about it.

Now, you listen carefully as I read from Matthew 25, beginning with the 34th verse. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was in hunger, and you gave me meat.

I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. Naked, and you clothed me.

I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee unhungered, and fed thee, or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in, or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was in hunger, and you gave me no meat. I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink.

I was a stranger, and you took me not in. Naked, and you clothed me not. Sick, and in prison, and you visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee unhungered, or a thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in his second letter and the thirteenth chapter and the fifth verse, saying, Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.

Prove your own selves. Know you not your own selves, how that Christ be in you, except you be reprobate. You see, the Apostle taught, and the word of God clearly teaches, that salvation is not a decision, though it involves a decision.

Salvation is not a system of truth, though it is certainly systematic and true. It is not a selection of Scripture verses, though undoubtedly Scripture verses set forth the plan of salvation. Salvation is not a decision, it's not a system, it's not Scripture verses, it's not a ritual, it's not a rite.

Salvation is a person. Now, I want to repeat that. Salvation is a person.

A person. Now, years ago, when I was studying Bible school, studying the Word, I came in my course assignment to Psalm 27, and I was a little bit disturbed by the fact that David seemed to be somewhat ignorant of what correct theology would have made clear, had he had the benefit of my training. For instance, there in Psalm 27 you read, Jehovah is my light and my salvation.

Now, we all know that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament. But we could have helped David, couldn't we? We could have said, now David, let's get this straight. Jehovah is your light, and he leads you to the gift of salvation.

But salvation is pardon from past sins. Salvation is the gift of eternal life. Salvation is being justified by faith.

David would have come back to us and said, please, don't disturb me. Don't disturb me. Jehovah is my light and my salvation.

He is my salvation. Now, the Apostle Paul put it in just a little different way. He said, when Christ, who is our light, shall appear, then we shall be like him.

When Christ, who is our light, he indicated, therefore, that eternal life is a person. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. And John said, he that hath the Son hath life.

But why? Because life is in the Son. Life is the Son. And again, we have it that examine yourself, whether you be in the faith.

Prove your own self. Know you, not your own self. How that Christ be in you, except you be reprobate.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Not Christ in a plan, though a plan is helpful. Not Christ in scripture, though it's by the word that we're brought savingly to him.

Not Christ in heaven, though he is there at the right hand of the Father. It's Christ in you, the hope of glory. Why? Because salvation is a person.

Now, in the course of my peregrinations, I've discovered that there are several different kinds of faith. I've located them and shared them. I think I alluded to them earlier.

I have found, for instance, that there are those who have what I would call, in respect to this most important subject in all the world, a head faith. By that I refer to an intellectual ascent to the historicity of the gospel, to the facts of the life of Christ, to his virgin birth, his sinless life, his atoning death, his bodily resurrection, his ascension, his return. And they are intellectually convinced that these things are so, and they are thus saying, I believe that these facts are so, and are inferring from their belief that they're saved.

And yet, they would have merely, as important as it is, an intellectual response to the gospel. Now, I think that there may be far more than we realize in that category. Then there's a second company of people, and I would say that these have what you might call a dead faith.

Namely, they have appropriated all the doctrines I've just spoken about, but in addition to that, they have perhaps been baptized, they may have been catechized, they may have been taken into the membership of the Church, they may abstain from eating, drinking certain things, they may abstain from going certain places and doing certain things, and they may do certain prescribed things. In other words, there are rituals and taboos, rites and ceremonies, that they observe. And they would infer from their diligence in these things that they are Christian.

But, of course, we have to look back at a couple of different groups that did this perhaps with even greater excellence. For instance, the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 5.20, said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven. Well, now that isn't hard to understand, is it? Because he called the scribes and Pharisees whited sepulchres, wolves in cheap clothing, and perhaps they were, but they also had some things on the positive side, and we ought to observe those things.

And, for instance, the Pharisees were fundamental in their theology, as in contrast to the Sadducees. You see, the Pharisees believed in the inspiration of the Torah, the Old Testament. That's what they had.

They believed in life after death. They believed in the existence of angels and angelic visitation. They believed in the necessity of observing the law of sacrifices and blood sacrifice.

They believed in abstaining from the things God had prohibited in terms of diet. So, we would have to say that is in contrast to the Sadducees, who didn't believe in inspiration, didn't believe in life after death, didn't believe in the necessity of blood sacrifice, didn't believe in the existence of angels, that the Pharisees were fundamental and orthodox in their theology. And there was something else.

They were evangelistic in their zeal, because they were convinced that the only ones that had eternal life were Jews, and therefore they did their best to get Gentiles to convert to Judaism. And they used the ceremony of introduction into Judaism by the way of water baptism, of immersion. And so it was that they would talk with the Gentiles that came into their area, and they were successful, so successful that when Herod drew up the plans for the rebuilt temple, he had to put in an enlarged court of the proselytes to take care of the products of the evangelistic zeal of the Pharisees.

And there was something else about the Pharisees. They were missionary in their fervor. It was said of them that the Pharisees would encircle the globe to make one proselyte.

Wasn't too long a trip anywhere if at the end there was somebody they could get to convert to Judaism. Well, we've got three things. Is anything wrong with that? Orthodox, fundamental in theology, evangelistic in zeal, missionary in fervor? Well, let's say something else.

They were premillennial in their hope. That's right. They were looking for the personal bodily return of Messiah to set up the throne of David and give back to Israel the glory she'd had under David.

They were anticipating His coming, looking for His coming, talking about His coming, waiting for His coming. Now, there's nothing wrong with that. And then there's something else we should add to that.

They were devout in their practice. For instance, they fasted two days out of the week. From sunup until sundown, they wouldn't drink water, they wouldn't eat food, they wouldn't even swallow their own spittle.

And they did this week in and week out, year in and year out. But it wasn't just fasting two days a week. They prayed three times a day, starting early in the morning and again in the middle of the day and evening.

And the shortest of their prayers, even if they hurried, would be about eight minutes. So that would mean at least twenty-four to half an hour a day spent in prayer. Now, there's nothing wrong with that, is there? And they tithed everything they possessed.

Every single thing they possessed. They tithed. Oh, even down to the absurd.

Somebody would pick some mint, you know, for flavoring tea. And they counted out leaf by leaf. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. And they tithed the mint and the anise, these little things, you know, seeds they used to flavor cookies. They'd count them out.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. And even the anise. And the cumin, the money that was so cheap and so--only the poorest of the poor used it.

But they'd count it out. Mint, anise, cumin. They tithed everything.

Now, here you are. Look at it. Fundamental in theology, evangelistic in zeal, missionary in fervor, premillennial in their hope, devout in their practice, fasting, praying, tithing.

And Christ said, if you don't have more than that, you'll never make it into heaven. Well, why? Because anyone with intelligence enough to come in out of the rain, anyone who had normal adult abilities of personality, could do all of these things without anything from God. And you see, salvation is not what we do.

Salvation is a person who came from heaven and lived and died and rose again from the dead and will, in response to proper faith, come into one's heart. But we've had two kinds of intellectual ascent. That's why Paul said, examine yourself, whether you be in the faith.

The faith. Not just some kind, not any, just any kind, but the faith. Now, the intellectual ascent's not enough.

And the dead faith and appropriation of rituals and all these other things we've talked about, that's not enough. Now, James talked about a third kind. He said, you say you believe.

Okay, that's good. But remember, the devils also believe. What do you do more than they? And they not only believe, but they tremble.

I call that an emotional response to the bliss of heaven and the possibility of loss and suffering in hell. And there are those that have been moved in that direction. And so Christ said, examine yourself, whether you be in the faith, through the apostle Paul.

Now, there's a third, fourth kind of faith. That's the kind Paul talks about in Romans, the tenth chapter, and the ninth and the tenth verses, where he said, Thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead. Thou shalt be saved for with the heart.

Now, man believes under righteousness, not just righteousness imputed in justification, but righteousness imparted in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ, our life. Now, it's extremely important for us to understand this.

The apostle said, look, don't wait. It's too important. It's too crucial.

Too much is at stake. Make sure. Make certain.

Make certain. Examine. Scrutinize carefully.

Weigh. Measure. Test.

Examine yourself, not your neighbor, not your friend, not your family, whether you be in the faith. Prove. Weigh.

Assay. Evaluate yourself. Prove your own self.

Know you, not your own self. How that Christ be in you, except you be reprobate. Now, this is the reason why John Wesley was instrumental of God in bringing back to the lost teaching that had been centuries hidden, namely, that when Jesus Christ comes to bring life, He tells you.

Now, you say, Christ, in His resurrection body, He's at the right hand of the throne on high. Does He come back physically and literally? No, not so. You see, the God of the Bible is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now, the Father is God, but God is not God only as Father. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the Son is God, but God is not God only as Son.

God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is God, but God is not God only as Holy Spirit. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now, wherever God is manifest as Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are. And wherever God is manifest as Son, the Father and the Holy Spirit are. And wherever God is manifest as Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father are.

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