

The Assignment

Life in a Tent, Pt. 5

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I. PRAYER

- i. Convince us that nothing will give us more joy in this life than you.

II. INTRODUCTION

a. This morning, we will conclude a sermon series that we've been in called "Life in a Tent."

- i. This has been a verse by verse study through 2 Corinthians 5.
 - One chapter of one letter the Apostle Paul wrote to a church in Corinth, Greece.

b. In this one chapter, I believe we get a snapshot of Paul's worldview.

- i. Paul uses the analogy of a tent to illustrate this worldview.
 - He says that as followers of Jesus, we should see our lives and our bodies as tents.
 1. Temporary
 2. Fragile
 3. Not that comfortable.
 4. We experience pain, suffering, and brokenness in this life.
 - Our present life is a temporary life where we are living in a place that we really do not belong.
 1. As followers of Jesus, we are children of God and therefore we belong with God in his Kingdom.
 - So, Paul says that we long and we groan to be away from this life and to be in God's Kingdom where our lives and our bodies will be like a building.
 1. Permanent
 2. Stable



3. Comfortable.
 4. A place where there is no longer any pain, suffering, or brokenness.
- ii. **And so, as we've studied v.1-16 of 2 Corinthians 5, we've seen how having this worldview impacts all areas of our lives.**
- If I live with this worldview that says that this life is all there is and I need to make the best of it...
 1. Then I am going to view myself, God, and other people as instruments to make the best of my life.
 2. My life will be dominated by my pursuit of my comfort, my joy, and my pleasure.
 3. I will believe that the answer to my longings and groanings is found in this world and I'll be disappointed over and over again as the world never delivers what I want it to.
 - However, if I live with the worldview that Paul has - that says that this life is not all there is, the best is yet to come, but for now I live here in a tent...
 1. Then I am going to view myself, God, and other people as God does.
 2. Instead of my life being consumed with the fear of missing out and living for myself, I am free to love and serve God and others in this life in a tent.
 3. I know that the answer to my longings and groanings is not found in this world but rather later in God's Kingdom.
 - So, if you have missed any of those sermons, I encourage you to go to our site or our podcast to listen to them...



1. In those sermons we dive into how this practically plays out in all areas of life.

c. But, if you will, allow me to vocalize maybe some angst that you might be feeling (I know I do) about this worldview. Some pushback...

- i. Maybe you're thinking: you know I get what you're saying. I understand the worldview that Paul is writing about here and I even agree that it is a good worldview to have!

- But it's easier said than done.
- It's easy to talk about this worldview but to actually view this life as temporary and set my hopes on an eternal life after this one is hard and a lot to ask.
 1. Are you saying that I shouldn't care about nor desire to advance in this life?
 2. Should I not care about growing in wealth?
 3. Should I not care about worldly accomplishments?
 4. Is it wrong for me to desire to be married, desire to have kids, desire to buy a house...?
 5. Should I not care about my pleasure and my joy in this life and should I just wait for the joy and the pleasure that is to come?
 6. Does God wane me to be joyful in this life in a tent?

ii. Because if we're honest, when we think about this worldview...

- We kind of want to have one foot in and one foot out.



1. We want to have one foot in the worldview that trusts God and looks to His Kingdom.
 2. But we want to have the other foot in this world living for ourselves just in case this thing isn't really true.
- That's why most of us have lives that are compartmentalized.
 1. There are parts of our lives that we don't want our faith to touch.
 2. So, we may be committed to the church and the values of the faith but we don't want that to impact our work relationships.
 3. We may be committed to the church and the values of the faith but we don't want that to impact our view of money.
 4. We could come up with all sorts of examples of how our lives are compartmentalized.

**d. And so, as we finish out 2
Corinthians 5 this morning, this is
my goal...**

- i. I want to try and convince you that nothing will bring you more joy in this life than jumping in with both feet into God's assignment for your life in this tent.
 - You've heard me talk about an assignment that God has for us while we're in this tent.
 1. And it's time to explore what that is.
 - To do that, I want to study these final verses of 2 Corinthians 5.
 - We are going to take this final section in three chunks.



III. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

- i. Read v.17
- b. If I am going to claim that nothing will give you more joy in this life than jumping in with both feet into God's assignment for your life in this tent...then we need to talk about joy.**
 - i. And v.17 has something to say about joy.
- c. Because in v.17, we learn that when we become a follower of Jesus, something changes inside of us.**
 - i. When we trust in Christ and our sins are forgiven, we are adopted into God's family never to be kicked out no matter what we do, and when we receive the promise of a future in God's Kingdom for all of eternity...
 - Our hearts change.
 1. The Scripture literally says that God removes the heart of stone and puts in a heart of flesh with his law written on it.
 - We are new creations with new hearts that are filled with new desires.
 1. Desires to trust God. Desires to live how we has called us to live. Desires to live for him and no longer ourselves.
 - The old is gone and the new has come.
- d. And this impacts how we feel and receive joy.**
 - i. What is joy?
 - Joy is this state of pleasure, delight, happiness.



- And our old self before we knew Christ interacted with joy one way and our new self as new creations with new hearts experience joy a different way.

ii. What is Old Joy?

- Our old selves live with the worldview that this life is all there is and I need to make the best of it.
- As we live with that worldview, this is how we interact with joy:
 1. Joy = Pleasure fueled by circumstance.
- If things go well for me in this world, then I may experience some joy. If things don't go well for me, I do not experience joy.
 1. We get a raise at work, we feel joy. That night I get in a fight with my spouse over how to use that raise, joy is gone.
 2. It's early April, we have the first 70 day of the year, and you roll down your windows for the first time all year and feel the sun...that puts you in a good mood! Then you hit traffic, good mood gone.
 3. When we're hanging out with friends, we feel the joy of community. When we go home and are all alone, the loneliness sets back in.
 4. When our kids obey and act cute, we love it! When they disobey and talk back, it's hard.
 5. The beginning of the month when you get paid, things feel good. At the end of the month when you see your bank account, the anxiety and stress returns.
- In this world, our joy = pleasure fueled by circumstance.



1. In other words, our joy is circumstantial. It's fleeting. It comes and goes. It's not guaranteed. It's always at risk.

iii. So, what's New Joy?

- Well, when we live our lives knowing that this life is not all there is, the best is yet to come in God's Kingdom.
 1. Joy = Pleasure fueled by hope.
- It's a joy that does not go up and down based on my circumstances because the joy is rooted in something that transcends those circumstances.
 1. It's rooted in something that is unchanging and eternal.
- Let me ask you this question: If you're here and you're a Christian (trusted in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and you now seek to live your life following Jesus)...from this point and for the next decade, if you were to live your life just for yourself...doing nothing but trying to maximize your joy and pleasure in this life...trying to advance in wealth, advance at work, getting to the place in this world that you want to be, having the experiences that you want to have...
 1. What do you think the state of your joy will be in 10 years? Will you experience a lasting joy or will you crave even more from this world over the next 10 years?
 2. Maybe you're deceived into thinking that all of those things will deliver you lasting joy?
 3. Maybe you're so prideful to think that no suffering nor hardship will come your way over these next 10 years.



- But what if over the next decade you jumped in with both feet into God's assignment for your life, living for Christ and not for yourself, loving and serving others over yourself...
 1. What do you think the state of your joy will be in 10 years?
 2. Who knows what your bank account looks like.
 3. Who knows what mountains and valleys you'll have to face.
 4. Who knows where God has you?
 5. But you'll have spent those 10 years loving and serving Christ over yourself and loving and serving others over yourself.
 - I promise that at the end of those 10 years the later scenario will experience more joy because they will have a pleasure fueled by hope and not circumstance.
 1. They will have a lasting joy that is not connected to their possessions or their position in this life but is rather connected to our everlasting God.
- iv. **So, that's the difference between Old Joy and New Joy.**
- Pleasure fueled by circumstance vs. pleasure fueled by hope.
 - One is fleeting. The other is stable and everlasting.



IV. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-20A

- i. So, I am saying that nothing will give you more joy in this life than jumping in with both feet into God's assignment for your life in this tent...what is the assignment?
 - Why does God have us in these tents?
 - Why doesn't God just pluck us out of this broken world once we are reconciled to him and put us in his kingdom?
 - Why are we still here?

b. Read v.18-20a

- i. This is why you are still living life in a tent!
 - God has made a way for people to be reconciled to Himself, through Christ.
 1. God has made a way for Him to no longer count people's trespasses against them.
 2. God has done that work and he is doing that work in our midst.
 - But God gave us, the church, followers of Jesus a role to play.
 1. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation by entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
 2. We are citizens of God's Kingdom but we are His ambassadors here in the world on assignment because God has an appeal he wants to make to people and he is making that appeal through us!
 - Hear this: God has planted your tent where it is, in your neighborhood, in your workplace, in your community, in your family, because he wants ambassadorial representation there!



1. You are someone who has the message of reconciliation.
2. You know how a sinner is reconciled to God.
3. And God has sent you to proclaim that where you are.
4. That is your assignment.
5. God has entrusted you with that role where you are.

V. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B-21

- i. And what is the message of reconciliation?

b. Read v.20b-21

- i. God has made us ministers of reconciliation by entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
- ii. This means that people need to be reconciled with God. That people are estranged from God. Enemies of God. Reconciliation needs to occur.
 - We were once enemies of God and we needed to be reconciled to God.
 - And v.21 tells us that Jesus is the one who actually accomplishes this reconciliation.
 1. Breakdown v.21.
 2. Non-believers.
- iii. But to those of us who do follow Jesus, we need to understand this morning that God has entrusted to us this message of reconciliation.
 - He has sent us on a mission on an assignment to proclaim that message.
 1. What I just said.
 2. The message is clear in v.21.



3. V.21 is the appeal that God wants to make through you to the people around you.

VI. CONCLUSION

a. And I am saying this morning that nothing will give you more joy in this life than jumping in with both feet into this assignment in your life.

- i. Nothing will give you more joy than living out your calling as a minister of reconciliation and an ambassador of Christ.

b. Here's how it works...

- i. If I live with the old worldview that says that this life is all there is and I have to make the best of it...
 - Then I will view my circumstances as for my pleasure.
 1. My circumstances exist for my pleasure therefore I need to live my life in such a way to control my circumstances to maximize my pleasure.
 2. My co-workers are for my pleasure and that dictates if I talk to them or not.
 3. My money is for my pleasure and that dictates what I use it on.
 4. My kids, my spouse, my parents are for my pleasure and serve my needs.
 5. My job is for my pleasure.
 6. My neighborhood is for my pleasure.



- ii. But if I live with the worldview that this life is not all there is and the best is yet to come in god's Kingdom and right now God has me on assignment in this tent as a minister of reconciliation...
- Then I will view my circumstances not as for my pleasure but rather as opportunities to be a minister of reconciliation.
 1. My co-workers don't exist for my pleasure...but God has given me these co-workers because he has an appeal he wants me to make through me to them.
 2. My money doesn't exist for my pleasure. No, my money is a resource God has entrusted me with so I can be a minister of reconciliation.
 3. My kids don't exist for my pleasure. No, god has entrusted me with these children and to see every moment with them as an opportunity to represent Christ.
 4. My neighborhood is not for my pleasure. No, it's the very place God has planted my tent so that neighborhood would have an ambassador in it!
 5. Listen, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then think of the enormity of the grace of God upon the lives of your nextdoor neighbors.
 6. Because your nextdoor neighbor has a nextdoor neighbor who knows the God of the Universe and has the message of reconciliation.
 7. Think about the enormity of God's grace upon your co-workers.



8. They work with someone who knows the God of the universe and has the message of reconciliation.
 - Christian, your joy is not found in the things of this world...no your joy is found in living within the exhilaration of being an ambassador of Christ in enemy territory and speaking the message of life to those who are dead.
- iii. Spend the next 10 years of your life for yourself and you'll still be chasing joy.
- iv. Spend the next 10 years of your life embracing your assignment as a minister of reconciliation, then no circumstance in your life will threaten your joy.

c. The question this morning is, will you jump in with both feet?

- i. Or will you continue to live with one foot in and one foot out?

d. But let's be honest, we all in one way shape or form are one foot in and one foot out.

- i. Look at v.17 again.
- ii. When we read that, we can begin to think that what the Bible is saying is that as followers of Jesus, we should receive all new desires and never struggle with the old desires and old worldview.
 - And that if we still do struggle with those old desires and worldview, we have not yet become a new creation.
 - That is not what the Scripture is saying.



- iii. See, when we become new creations, the old has passed away and the new has come, the Bible is referring to our identity.
- Yes, we do receive new hearts and new desires.
 - And our identity has changed from being an enemy of God to someone who is reconciled to God, a child of God.
 - But, as we live this life in a tent, our old self, with our old heart, and our old desires are still attached to us.
 1. We are no longer defined by the old self.
 2. And the good news of the gospel is that we are no longer judged by the old self.
 3. But the old self still lingers around and whispers lies into our ears.
 - It whispers things into our ear like:
 1. How can you really be sure that this life is not all there is? It makes more sense to live for yourself now than to trust in God for the future.
 2. What if God calls you to do something hard? Like live in a hard place? Or take a job that doesn't pay that well? Or live a life of singleness? Or whatever it is... Is that a risk your willing to take?
 3. Are you really going to talk to that person about Jesus? That is really awkward and that person will lose respect for you. It is way better to play it cool with them than to talk to them about that.
 - We all struggle with believing the lies of our old self.



iv. **How is your old self lying to you and when do you listen?**

- Because part of the struggle of living in the tent is seeking to diminish the influence of your old self.
 1. Paul says in Ephesians 4:22 – “...put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires...”
- And one of the ways that we help one another live for Christ and pursue joy in this life and be fruitful as ministers of reconciliation is helping each other to recognize when we are living according to our old self.
 1. When we are being convinced of those lies.
- This is one of the reasons that we always give you reflection questions from the sermon in your bulletin.
 1. Many times we discuss these in Community Groups but we also provide them so you can reflect personally or with other people.
 2. And I encourage you this week, get with someone and discuss these questions.
 3. Read questions.
 4. We grow, we change, we pursue joy when we do this together.

e. Grace Hill, nothing will bring you more joy in this life than jumping in with both feet into the assignment that God has for you in this life.

- i. There is a reason that God has placed all of us together here in Northern Virginia.



- ii. There is a reason that he has led us to plant this church.
- iii. There is a reason that he has left us in the tent for short time until he brings us home.
 - Let's help each other live faithfully and joyfully in this life in a tent.

VII. PRAY

