

I. REVIEW – LOVE JESUS. LOVE PEOPLE. MAKE DISCIPLES – LUKE 10: 1, 27-28

1 After these things the Lord appointed [a]seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go...²⁷ So he answered and said, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ ”²⁸ And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” Luke 10:27-28

- A. We are talking in this series about our vision and purpose as a local church community. Vision helps direct our mission and purpose, which in turn impact the way we build our culture.
- B. When we build our vision on key components given by Jesus and found in His Word, we create foundations that can withstand the shakings (troubles) that challenge our faith.
- C. Key Component #1 – *Love Jesus* (Passion for Jesus). Also known as the First Commandment.
- D. Key Component #2 – *Love People* (Compassion for People). Also known as the Second Commandment which Matthew and Mark record Jesus as saying, “...and the second is like the first” (Matt. 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31).
- E. Key Component #3 – *Make Disciples*. We are called to follow Jesus not only as our source of all things, but to take what he has taught us and give it to the world. Followers, disciples of Jesus advance the kingdom of God.
- F. We love Jesus and others **wholeheartedly, willfully, intentionally, and passionately**.
- G. Jesus’ promise that, “You shall love...” is his commitment to help us as the work of Holy Spirit seeks to transform our lives.
- H. The key components of our vision should carry *visionary identity, directional focus, and clarity with timing*. I like to say that a healthy vision statement also points to our mission or purpose.

II. UNTIL THE LORD RETURNS – LUKE 9: 23-26; MATT. 28:18-20

²³ Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. ²⁵ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels. Luke 9:23-26

- A. We have set a timing element into our vision statement. Component #4 of our vision is “*until the Lord returns.*”
- B. This phrase calls to us in three basic ways as believers.
 - 1. This phrase calls us to be: *faithful witnesses of God’s love and grace, who persevere and are resilient despite the pushback and setbacks that come from this present evil age.*

- C. The first century church faced much opposition from many sources that empowered their bold stand for Jesus. By the grace of God, believers were able to stand their ground under all manner of attack because they counted the cause of Christ and the love of God as of greater value and worth than earthly treasure.

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Phil. 3:7-11

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:6-9

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matt. 28:18-20

- D. Pushback, resistance and even persecution can either purify and strengthen, or cripple and break our faith. It is our choice that determines which happens. Our choices can be strengthened, motivated and empowered through the intimate love relationship we carry with God and Christ.
1. Deep intimacy with the Trinity is no guarantee against persecution, failure or sin; nor a promise of constant blessing.
 2. We are to be a people “...compelled by God’s love” and there in we are enough.
- E. *Faithful Witness* – What is a faithful witness? A faithful witness is a truthful reflection of who God is and what God is like. This reflection we call “truth” and is a standard we keep for the sake of love. We keep this standard because (1) we grow in love for God and (2) we reflect to others a true picture of our God, the one we say we love. We are a faithful witness of the family name and culture.

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness...Rev. 1:5

1. When we are faithful to the relationship with God, we experience pleasure in our love with Him.
2. When we are unfaithful in our relationship with God, we experience conviction in our hearts and as believers who love God, we repent and seek to restore the relationship.

3. Jesus in his letter to the Church of Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-13) affirmed a believer who was killed for his faith.

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. Rev. 2:12-13

4. WE are called to faithfulness because God is faithful.

Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. Ps. 119:90

For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”... ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb. 13:5, 8

- F. *Persevere* – What does it mean to persevere? We persevere when we, “...continue in a course of action even in the face of difficulty or with little or no prospect of success.”

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience (perseverance). 4 But let patience (perseverance) have its perfect work, that you may be perfect (mature) and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:2-5

1. So many have and will turn back from following the Lord. In fact Paul tells us in 2Thess. 2 that a sign of the approaching return of Jesus is that many will walk away from faith in Jesus Christ.
 2. The most common experiences that will drive many away from Jesus is when bitterness from betrayal or significant disappointment with the cares of life touch us.
- G. *Resilience* – What is resilience? Resilience is the capacity to withstand or recover (quickly) from difficulties, another way of saying it is our inner toughness.
1. Jesus wants to help us as we reset our lives after difficult experiences.
 2. Jesus warned Peter about the tendencies of his flesh during Passion Week. However, we can see from the narrative of Jesus’ arrest in the garden that Peter did not take heed to Jesus’ words. Peter’s angry outburst with his sword and his denial of Jesus were two failures that wounded Peter.
 - a. Peter was trusting more in his own strength and ability than preparing his heart for the crisis ahead.
 - b. We see Peter quit the apostolic team and go back fishing taking 6 other members of the disciples with Him. In John 21 Jesus restores Peter and strengthens him. Peter’s resilience from that moment on is clearly set in scripture.
 - c. Peter still stumbled in many ways but his ability to bounce back was evident.

III. JESUS IS OUR GREATEST EXAMPLE OF FAITHFULNESS, PERSEVERANCE AND RESILIENCE.

- A. Jesus was tested in many ways but refused to give in to temptations of the flesh, false forms of power or bitterness from betrayal.
- B. Jesus was tested through the lifestyle he lived.
- C. Jesus was tested at the cross.
- D. The greatest test of trust the earth has ever witnessed was the Son of God (Jesus) going to the cross fully expecting that the Father's redemptive plan for mankind would best be served in his death; and trusting that his Father's justice wouldn't leave him in the grave.
- E. Despite all the pressures of life and ministry, never once did Jesus act out of his own anger and bitterness. Therefore, he is the only one who knows how to empower us today as we face betrayal and disappointment.
- F. Jesus told Pilate that he could call upon 12 Legions of angels to protect him and rescue him yet not once did we see Jesus appeal for that kind of help. From the first strike of the scourge with all the pain of the moment, or hanging from the cross, not once did Jesus "get mad, pick up his clothes and go home."
- G. Jesus promises to be with us. So as we face pushback or setbacks he is with us.

19 Go...20 and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matt. 28:19-20

12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. James 1:12