

What Matters Week 7 Sermon

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Matthew 9:35-38, Isaiah 6:1-8

- Though there are many messages in media that try to tell us what matters-advertising, TV programming, news programs, etc.
 - I would submit to you that what advertising and media says is not what matters.
 - Look at Romans 12:1-2-we aren't to find what matters in worldly advertising. We aren't to be conformed to what matters in a worldly way.
- Where can we find what matters? Where can you find what God's will is-in general and for your own life? Right: in God's word.
 - God's word is our clearest revelation to know what matters in life.
 - Now God has also written what matters on our hearts to a degree. This is why during great tragedies people recognize that "this isn't how it should be." It is why nations and peoples, even not working for the sake of God, do good things during tragedies.
 - Yet God's word will clearly reveal to us what matters in all things.
 - Perhaps one of the most amazing revelations in Scripture is how much we matter to God. Though we have sinned, fallen away, fall short of God's glory, we still matter to him. And God's work is to make us right with Him again.
 - God's work of restoration is what matters. He desires to restore every person on this planet to himself, and amazingly to invite us to be a part of that.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 with commentary.
- Now God has given us the ministry of restoring this world along with himself.
 - Yet the church has lost this calling-or our culture has perceived it has lost this calling (which really makes no difference).
 - The church is seen as only letting people in who look like us, act like us, smell like us, etc.
 - The church is known for "Raising the threshold and lowering the bar." Expecting people to be a certain way before they come but then not pushing them to mature in the faith.
 - But Jesus was known for "Lowering the threshold and raising the bar." He loved sinners, but loved them enough to not leave them in their brokenness, but brought healing and restoration to them as he encouraged them to mature in their faith.
- Brought up an episode from America's Most Wanted where John Walsh was covering the child sex trade in Cambodia.
 - He spoke of the horrors of the trade, but at the end spoke of a woman who had been restored out of this slavery.
 - For 7/8 years she was forced to "entertain" 20-30 men a night. I can't fathom the horror.
 - One day her pimp came in and killed her best friend. She realized she had to get out.
 - Now, 10-15 years later, she runs a home where she is rescuing and rehabilitating other children who have been brought out of this horror. This is the work of restoration my friends. Rescued to be a rescuer. Reconciled to offer reconciliation. Comforted to give comfort.

- While she could play the victim card, she doesn't. She is in the work of restoration.
- Matthew 9:35-38
 - Jesus clearly saw the harassed and helpless of His time. He recognized that they needed restoration, just as people in our time do.
 - Notice how Jesus makes this comment in the midst of a lifestyle of bringing restoration. Jesus had created a lifestyle that no matter where He was, or who He was with, He was restoring people to the kingdom of God.
 - Folks, we are not Jesus, but it is not impossible for us to live a lifestyle that recognizes the harvest is plentiful and to be about the harvest no matter where we are and what we are doing. Christ can work through us to carry out His work of restoring others to Christ as we live our normal lives. It's why Peter says in 1 Peter 3:15 to always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us.
- But too often we had made our faith a scheduled thing
 - Go to church, bible study, pray, read, etc on a schedule. Yet God never intended for faith to be blocked into certain parts of our schedule.
 - This is not how Jesus operated.
 - The harvest is always plentiful, by friends. God always needs people at the work of harvesting (or planting or watering).
 - Are you praying earnestly for the harvest? For God to raise up workers from every generation to go out and share the Gospel so that broken, sinful, hurting people can be restored to their creator?
- Consider Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1-8
 - Isaiah sees God in His glory, and realizes he should die for seeing it.
 - He cries out, yet God sent an angel to him to reconcile/restore Isaiah to God. "Your guilt is taken away, your sin is atoned for," the angel said. [Feel free to embellish here, this is the Gospel.]
 - Then God asks who will go and proclaim His message of restoration and reconciliation to His people. Isaiah, restored, cries out to God, "Here am I, send me."
 - My prayer is that with Isaiah you would see the great restoration that has been worked in you through the gift and grace of God. I pray you would know how God has atoned for you through Jesus Christ, and has taken your guilt away.
 - And I pray that you, with Isaiah, would also begin a ministry of reconciliation, sharing that great grace with others.