



I believe God is truly leading us in this season. There is something so refreshing about studying the words of Jesus. There such clarity, and more than that... peace as we look into the commands of the One who loves us most. I've been challenged over the last few weeks, and I've been renewed in my love for the Word. I pray you feel the same. My hope is that as we study our Jesus, and as we renew our commitment to His instruction, that our lives would naturally and even inevitably bear good fruit.

Today we will cover up to command 25... and so we are at the halfway point. Again, I want to challenge you to put your heart in the position to receive and learn from Jesus. It's in this disposition, this place of submission, that we will experience the lightness of His yoke. Let's be willing to bend and bow to Him. At some point every knee will bow, let's make that day today. This is a once and for all moment, here and now, today is the day of salvation.

Hebrews 3

12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. 15 As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4

1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.

What we receive from God has everything to do with our disposition. It has everything to do with how we come to Him. Hearing the words is not enough to save you. Coming to church is not enough to save you. Rather you must come in faith, with a heart ready to respond. You may be broken. You may be hurting. But your will is in tact. You can respond to God today. It's possible to obey Jesus fully! Today is the day of salvation.

I. #22- PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPREAD THE WORD

Matthew 9

[35] And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. [36] When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. [37] Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; [38] therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

- A. We have many prayer meetings about revival, and I've preached quite a bit about revival, but I feel the need to clarify what I mean by revival. Revival predominately has to do with the church, not the



salvation of the lost. However, one can easily make the case that the revived church would certainly be the agent of evangelism in a lost world. When we cry out for revival, we are praying back Matthew 9. We are asking God to revive the laborers. The harvest is ready! Isn't that an amazing statement. In the mind of Jesus, the reason the world isn't converted isn't because of sin...it's because of a lack of workers. Is that our take? Do we agree with Jesus on this point? Do we believe that the harvest is ready?

Ephesians 6

[16] In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; [17] and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, [18] praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, [19] and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

- B. Paul is asking for prayer for all the saints, but also for himself. He wants prayer so that he can continue to release the Gospel in fullness without fear of man. Does Paul say, "Pray for me because I'm more anointed than you, I'm an apostle?" Did Paul ask for prayer to get out of prison? How profound! Paul's request is to simply labor as he ought.

- C. I know in the world of TBN, pinstripe suits and book deals, it's hard to navigate through the fluff, but we are all part of one body. The apostles and prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists aren't part of another more special body. We are all part of the same body with Christ as our head. Do we have different roles? Yes. Do we function in the same level of responsibility? No. But we are part of the same body.

Ephesians 4

[11] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. [15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

- D. We can read the command of Jesus in two ways:
 - 1. Pray for those in evangelistic ministry. They have a big job ahead of them.
 - 2. Pray for ourselves...we are the workers who need to have our eyes opened.

- E. What about reading it both ways. We are all called to be light. We are all called to labor. The fields are ready. Let's ask God to renew our minds about this, until we think like He does.

II. #23-BE AS SHREWD AS SERPENTS



Matthew 10

[16] “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. [17] Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, [18] and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

- A. In some translations Jesus says, “I want you to be shrewd like serpents and innocent/harmless/ like doves.” This is not quite what we expect Jesus to say. Why would He want us to be shrewd, or even wise like serpents?
- B. **Probably the thing in which Christ directed his followers to imitate the serpent was in its caution in avoiding danger. No animal equals them in the rapidity and skill which they evince in escaping danger. So said Christ to his disciples, You need caution and wisdom in the midst of a world that will seek your lives. He directs them, also, to be harmless, not to provoke danger, not to do injury, and thus make their fellow-men justly enraged against them. Doves are, and always have been, a striking emblem of innocence. Most people would foolishly destroy a serpent, be it ever so harmless, yet few are so hard-hearted as to kill a dove. (Barnes, Commentary)**

III. #24-FEAR GOD. DO NOT FEAR MAN

Matthew 10

[28] And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Luke 12

[4] “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. [5] But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

- A. Poor, poor Jesus. Doesn't He understand the grace of intimacy? It's all about love. Perfect love drives out fear. Isn't that a verse too. We're not made to fear God. We were made to love Him. Poor Jesus. If only He understood this glorious salvation we've been given! (Please read with the intended sarcasm!!)
- B. Have you heard this “gospel?” The one where God isn't really God. The “gospel” where God has rules, but won't do anything to enforce them... He won't limit selfishness, or rebellion because He's loving. What kind of parents won't enforce discipline on their children? Bad ones. Bad parents allow their children's basest natures to go unchecked... and all in the name of love.
- C. Jesus thought and taught that we should fear God. He thought that we should fear Him because He got the final assessment and the one that would count for eternity. I know I often quote A.W. Tozer who said, “What you think about God is the most important thing about you.” But I have a new



quote... "What God thinks about you is pretty important too." And I said that one. What does God think of your life? Does He think you're faithful? Does He consider you a friend?

- D. Jesus commands us to fear God because as we are faithful to Him we will come into persecution. And in those moments, for us know, maybe it's not even persecution but the fear of persecution... we need to remember that this is passing but there is another reality and it's not going to fade away.

Proverbs 1

[7] The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

IV. #25-LISTEN TO GOD'S VOICE

Matthew 11

[15] He who has ears to hear, let him hear. (Matthew 13:9, 13:43, Mark 4:23, Luke 14:35)

- A. There are actually 14 passages of scripture where Jesus uses this phrase. It's as if He's calling us to pay special attention. This may seem foundational, even elementary, but we have got to listen to God's voice. Prayer is not a monologue. We aren't sending our wishlist to the North Pole. Prayer is a dialogue. I know it can be uncomfortable to wait on the Lord... But that's what makes what we preach a reality in our lives. We learn to discern His voice. We learn!

1 Kings 19

[11] And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. [12] And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. [13] And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

- B. One of my favorite stories of all time is in Samuel 1 and 2... After many, many years in the wilderness, David learned the skill of inquiring. 20 years in the backside of nowhere, dreams being dashed to bits, have a way of breaking all forms of presumption. I believe it's why the Lord could say about David, even with all of his shortcomings, that he was a man after God's own heart. David learned how to inquire.
- C. Let me ask you something. If you were handed a promotion today that pulled you out of the thing that God had spoken to you about, what would you do? Promotion is not always from the Lord. But sometimes it is. How can we know? We make a habit of inquiring. We learn how to wait on the Lord. We open our ears to His voice. We're willing to hear what He's going to say, whatever it is.
- D. You've heard the saying, "It's not about religion, it's about relationship." And the saying is true. May it be true of us!