

“Do Over – What the Church Gets Wrong About Jesus”

Psalm 1; Matthew 5:6

March 3, 2024

Do Over Introduction

- I got to thinking the other day, like many people, about my life and specifically my life in ministry.
- There are things that I'd like to, simply put, DO OVER.
 - o Things I got wrong along the way.
 - o Decisions I made, sermons I preached.
 - o And, like any good golfer (which I am most certainly not) I want a mulligan.
- But you see I am just one of these things called pastors, preachers, teachers, leaders in Christ church.
 - o And just as I got and get things wrong, on occasion, so does “The Church”.
 - Now, side note, and this is hugely important.
 - When we think “church” we think building, institutions, structures like Presbytery.
 - That’s radically different than the way that the writers of the Bible thought about church.
 - Church – the people sent out to proclaim Jesus.
 - o There’s a moment in our service.
- Anyway, we’re going to look at my mistakes in ministry, the larger church’s mistakes historically and then we’re going to funnel all our energy into the practice of Christianity.

The Story

- My first sermon at Moore’s Chapel United Methodist Church.
 - o They’re dying, the Bishop is just waiting for them to stop making their apportionments until they sell their land but that’s another story altogether.
 - o Psalm One
- DULL
 - o Stayed in a technical description of one word for about 2/3rds of the sermon. Beating a dead horse.
 - o And I knew it, this loud dude in the back started snoring.
 - o I started sweating.
 - o It was a disaster.
- The bottom line is that sometimes, when you’re preaching and teaching, things go sideways.

History Lesson

- After the Ascension which we read about in Acts 1 – Jesus is lifted off, back into heaven he goes.
- The Spirit descends, big things happen.
 - o CHURCH Grows
 - Simple message – Repent, practice the faith, do good things.
- **Acts 2:42-47** – *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*
- Acts then goes on to recount people joining like crazy and the disciples and apostles doing amazing things.
- BUT SOMETHING HAPPENS OVER TIME.

- The message changes, subtly at first then the message radically changes. We don't know entirely how, a lot of this is lost to historians, sadly. But we do know some things historically.
- Constantine was AN emperor of Rome.
 - There was a need for him to consolidate power.
 - Ta-da – he becomes a Christian but watch what happens following.
 - The Church becomes the state over time.
 - What once was a voluntary spiritual movement centered around Jesus Christ became an organized state power that then taxed the people and mandated attendance.
 - The Church “Grew” but not in real adherents, just people that were along for the ride.
- That happens on an ongoing cycle, if you really understand the history.
 - In moving from church, the people sent out, to “THE CHURCH” something happens
 - A drift away from the individual beliefs and practices that should always identify followers of Jesus Christ.
- Followers of Jesus Christ are “ON the way”.

On the Way Christianity

- Begins with Romans 10.
 - This is an important section of Romans, an important book.
- What is baseline declaration of Christians?
 - **Romans 10:9-13** – “...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.””
- Notice this is base level declaration of faith in the Lord.
 - Jesus is Lord.
 - Jesus is God.
 - Jesus is sovereign – no greater God.
 - God raised Jesus from the dead.
 - You believe in the Resurrection.
 - Then, WHAT DOES IT SAY?
 - YOU WILL BE SAVED.
- Do you believe that? Do you confess that with your lips?
 - Great. You're in. No worries.

But NOW WHAT?

Psalm One

- Blessed versus happy, my original sermon.
 - Happy – Krispy Kreme Cookie Butter Doughnuts
 - Blessed – Natalie
- I stayed there the whole sermon. No kidding. How dull.
- Let's notice what it says from there.
- You're blessed when YOU DO NOT follow the counsel of wicked nor hang out with sinners (except to help them).
 - This is what Jesus talks about when he discusses “The world”.
 - You see, what Jesus wants us to see is that the world that we live in.
 - Broken.
 - Leading us down some bad roads.

- **John 15:18-19** – *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."*
- **John 17:14-16** – *"I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."*
- **John 16:33** – *"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*
- **John 18:36** – *"Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now My kingdom is from another place.'"*
- So, don't listen to the world. Do what then?
 - **Psalm 1:3** – *"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night."*
 - And notice the payoff, you live forever, bearing fruit which is described for us in Galatians.
 - **Galatians 5:22-23** – *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*

How to do that?

- Morning prayer – REMEMBER Romans 10!!!
 - Notice what Jesus did!
 - **Mark 1:35** - *"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed."*
 - Then, consider the Word.
 - **Psalm 5:3** - *"In the morning, Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You and wait expectantly."*
 - **Psalm 90:14** - *"Satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days."*
 - Ask God to guide you towards being of service to others that day.
- Continual prayer throughout the day.
 - This is your relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - Simply talk to Him throughout your day.
 - He's really listening.
 - He really cares.
 - And when it comes to sin, He really already knows, so tell him and talk with Him about it.
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:17** - *"Pray continually."*
- Helping others
 - **Galatians 6:10** - *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."*
 - **Matthew 25:35-36** - *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."*
- At night
 - Notice what JESUS DID.

- **Matthew 14:23** - *"After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone."*
- **Psalm 4:4** - *"Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent."*
- **Psalm 141:2** - *"May My prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of My hands be like the evening sacrifice."*
- This is a key time.
 - Reflect upon your day.
 - How did you do?
 - What could you have done better or in a more Christian fashion?
 - What did you do that was wrong?
 - Confess it to God.
 - Make it right in the morning.
 - If I told someone off, tell them sorry and do better.
- Then sleep and repeat.