

Sunday Morning Message

March 11, 2020

Occupy Till I Come

Text – Luke 19:1 - 27

Congregational Reading – Luke 19:11 - 13

Introduction

One of the most discouraging things for a pastor is to see the people of his church begin to gradually fizzle out spiritually. Many who were once very zealous for the Lord, and very faithful to God's House, and very committed to fulfilling the Great Commission, and very separate from this world have already turned back and have forsaken God altogether. Some are gradually slipping away from Him, and others are just not growing in the Lord as they once did.

In our text today, we will look at two stories. The first is an historical narrative which involves a man – Zacchaeus - who gloriously gets saved and promises to give himself to the Lord completely.

The second is a parable where Jesus tells the story of a man who leaves on a long journey to go into a far country. This nobleman charges his servants to stay busy while he was away; to keep serving him until he returns. He gives each of the ten servants a certain amount of money to invest – one pound each, and they were expected to make that money grow. Some of them did what the Lord had asked and when he returned they were rewarded, but one in the story took what the Lord had given him and buried it in the ground and did nothing with it. When the Lord returned he had the original money given him by his lord, but no interest. The Lord rebuked him sharply for not doing anything with what he had been given.

The key verse connecting these stories is v. 11:

"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

(Luke 19:11)

The point of these two stories taken together is that many people start out very well for the Lord, but soon become weary in well-doing, and give up serving Him, and some don't do anything for the Lord.

The Lord wants us to occupy – stay busy for Him – until He comes.

Some people start out well, but they eventually quit.

Parallel Verses:

Turn to Matthew 13:1 – 9; 18 – 23

In the Parable of the Sower, there of four groups of people discussed. The Lord Jesus teaches us here that some never receive the seed of the Word of God because Satan steals it away. These people have been blinded by the god of this world. But, there are others that do receive the seed of the Word of God, but they never seem to grow in the Lord. Then there is a third group that do grow for a time, and even produce fruit for a while, but eventually they too fizzle out and lose interest, and become unfruitful. Only one group out of the four groups mentioned in this parable continue to grow in grace, and continue to produce fruit in their lives.

God wants us to continue going and growing for Him. He wants us to remain faithful even when the rest of Christianity is throwing in the towel:

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: (1 Timothy 4:16a)

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; (2 Timothy 3:14)

(Jesus said, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed [John 8:31];)

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: (1 Timothy 6:20)

Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. (Proverbs 4:13)

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. (Hebrews 2:1)

Our Lord Jesus has gone on a long journey, but He is coming back for us:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also." (John 14:1-3)

As we read through these two stories, let us consider our own dedication to the Lord as we wait for His return. Are we using what the Lord has given us for His glory, or our we hiding out, mingling with the world around us, doing nothing of eternal value.

I A New and Excited Convert (vs. 1 – 10)

Many of us start out like Zacchaeus, but the question is – will the Lord find us just as zealous when he comes.

II An Necessary and Extended Continuation (v. 11)

In Jesus statement in verse eleven He alludes to the fact that the people had a misunderstanding regarding the timing of what He was doing. They thought He was going to set up the Kingdom immediately. However, Jesus was about to leave the earth and He would be gone for a very long time. The people would need to know what to do while they waited for His return.

III A Narrated Exhortation to Continue – Stay Faithful and Busy *Till I Come* (vs. 12 – 27)

Jesus gives them a parable – a story to illustrate the truth of staying faithful.

Jesus said, “*occupy till I come*” (Luke 19:13), which means we are to stay busy serving Him until the time that He calls us home to Heaven. Don’t quit now, we are almost home. Don’t even slow down. If anything, things should pick up as the day of His return approaches.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Stay focused in your faithfulness to attending church; to supporting this ministry with your tithes and offerings; to your service for the Lord; to your soul-winning efforts; to your loving support of the pastor and his family.

In the Book of Revelation Jesus reminds the churches of Asia Minor, and all of us, that He is coming back quickly. He told some of those churches that they needed to repent, He told one that they needed to hold fast to that which they already had. I would say to the members of this church that some of us need to repent about some things, and others need to just hold on to some things and not let them slip away. Why, because the Lord will soon return.

The Lord is coming soon. We need to stay focused on the task of sowing the seeds of the gospel to this lost world. Don’t allow the distractions of this world to veer you off of the path. Don’t allow the devil to pull you out of God’s will. Stay in the game until you hear the sound of the trumpet.

Turn to 2 Peter 3:3 – 4; 9 – 18

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Conclusion

Many are quitting today. There are countless illustrations that I could use to drive home the point that many Christians are quitting today. But I don't need to do that, because you all know a lot of examples of what I'm talking about yourself. Most of you know people who have fallen away, and you probably also know what the devil did to lure those folks out of God's will.

But I don't think the biggest problem in Christianity today are the "crash and burn" casualties. I think that the biggest problem we are seeing today in our churches is a spirit of apathy. God's people today are not living with the anticipation that the Lord will soon be returning. He's coming back! And, He expects you to have some fruit for Him when He returns. He expects you to do something with the pound of talents that He has given you.

Where will you be 5 years from now if the Lord tarries? Will you still be in church and serving the Lord? Will you be further down the Christian road than you are now, or will you have turned back? I'm scared for all of us because better people than me have already fallen. I'm worried about some of you because you just don't seem to be as excited as you once were. You're missing church a lot more than you used to. You are probably not in the Word privately as much as you once were either. When was the last time you shared your faith with somebody? How about your love for the things of this world? These are all some sobering things to consider. Are occupying – staying busy for the Lord – or are you hiding out with your pound, just enjoying life in America?