

The Commands of Jesus series

Living Like Jesus

January 19, 2020

We are in a series on The Commands of Jesus. And last week we began by looking at the commands surrounding becoming a disciple of Jesus. Such things as: come to Him out of your life of weariness, repent, believe in Him, follow Him completely – not just casually, taking up your cross daily and remaining in Him day by day.

So, now that you're in a relationship with Him, what should your life look at. And we're going to be discovering together those aspects over the next several weeks.

This morning we're going to specifically look at what does it look like to Live Like Jesus. And I've chosen three of Jesus' commands to focus our minds and hearts on this morning.

1. We need to learn to serve with humility

The command of Jesus for this occurs in the Upper Room with his disciples. The cause of this command from Jesus occurs because the disciples are arguing over which of them is the greatest. This had happened at least one time prior to this. Here's what Jesus said in this instance.

Luke 22:25-27 (NIV) Jesus said to them, *"The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."*

Apparently, this was a very common practice at that time, trying to determine where exactly you stood on the ladder of importance. And that's not unlike our society today. We often measure our importance and value by how far up the success ladder I've climbed. And Jesus says, *"Don't compare yourself with others – instead focus on me and how important the ladder of success is to me."* This point of Jesus began particularly poignant right after this when He picked up a basin and a towel and went around to each and every disciple and tenderly washed their feet. Imagine how foolish they must have felt, in light of their arguing over who's most important, that they neglected to wash Jesus' feet and He washes theirs instead.

Their argument over which one of them is the greatest, could be to determine who has to wash the feet or it could have been to decide who gets to sit closest to Jesus. But whatever their reasoning, Jesus seizes this opportunity to teach them about the importance of humble serving. Throughout his ministry, Jesus taught and showed the importance of humbly serving the needs of others.

Mark 10:45 (NIV) *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Humbly serving doesn't begin with the act of serving but with the attitude of a servant. Jesus says, *"The greatest among you should be like the youngest."* And a child doesn't have any pretense that they are better than anyone else. They are simply dependent upon their needs being met by their parent. A child hasn't begun to climb the ladder of importance, they are just happy to get another meal. You can certainly serve others without an attitude of humility, but then you're just begrudgingly going through the motions of service. And that's not at all what Jesus is commanding. He's commanding that we serve, by first becoming like a child.

Later the Apostle Paul reiterates this by instructing us to have the same attitude of humble service as Jesus had.

Philippians 2:3-8 (NIV) *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Did you notice that the key to Jesus leaving heaven and coming down to earth was that he didn't consider equality with God something to be held on to. And once he had that attitude, then it was possible to let go of heaven and come down to earth. Jesus was focused on following God's will for His life rather than His own desires. And once you put God's desires for your life as your daily agenda, then you're freed up to serve others with great humility. One of the most important ways to adopt this attitude into your life is to daily submit your will to the Father's will for your life. Then all of life becomes an adventure, because you're eagerly anticipating how God wants to use you this day. And frees you up from yourself and puts you in a position to be used by God in miraculous ways this day.

Summary: to serve one another humbly it must begin with your attitude before your actions.

2. Avoid Sin at all Cost

As you know, Jesus was the only sinless person who's lived. So, to live like Jesus, He commands us to take sin seriously and get rid of it in our lives. Listen to this bold command by Jesus.

Matthew 5:27-30 (NIV) *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.*

Wow!!!! It's pretty clear from this passage that Jesus takes sin in our lives quite seriously and calls us to approach dealing with it very seriously as well. There's no room for a casual approach to sin in Jesus' mind and words. There's no allowance for justifying our sins with the argument that "It's no big deal – because after I sin I just need to ask God for forgiveness and He is obligated to forgive me." Jesus says, if lust is the issue in your life, then cut out your eye in order to eradicate it from your life. Some will argue that Jesus is using **hyperbole** (over stating something for the shock factor produced by it). And that might very well be true. Especially since, removing one of your eyes or cutting off your right arm – it still leaves you with one good eye and one good arm to still lust with. I believe that Jesus' main point is that you can't take sin in your life casually if you want to be a follower of his.

But this Sermon on the Mount is filled with strong examples of the importance of living your life on a whole different level than is normally acceptable.

7 verses before this Jesus says,

Matthew 5:20 (NIV) *For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.* Jewish tradition had established that there were 246 positive commands in the Law and 365 prohibitions. That's 611 commands to keep track of, and the Pharisees and teachers of the Law were the experts in doing exactly that. And around each of these commands were all sorts of teachings explaining each of them in detail.

And Jesus says, that your righteousness needs to be better than what they were accomplishing for you to get into the kingdom of heaven. That pretty much seems impossible.

Let me give you one more Scripture to emphasize Jesus' call to extreme obedience.

Matthew 5:48 (NIV) *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Some of you are going – Jesus is calling us to do the impossible.

Let me give you one example of this perfection Jesus is calling us to.

A young rich man comes to Jesus and asks him what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus instructs him Jesus answered, "**If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will**

have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Matthew 19:21 (NIV)) And it says that this man left very sad because he had many possessions. In reflecting upon Jesus' harsh demands the disciples remarked that this is impossible and asked Jesus, "*under this system who can possibly be saved?*" to which Jesus responds, "*With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*" Did you catch that? Under our own strength and sheer will power, what Jesus is demanding of us, is impossible to achieve, but with God it's entirely possible. And let's be clear – Jesus isn't condemning being rich. But He taught that money can easily become our replacement god (little "g" for God (big "G")).

I think the key to understanding Jesus' extreme demands is to look at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. And at the beginning of his sermon, Jesus explains to us what people who make up His kingdom are like on the inside.

They are the '*poor in spirit*'

They are those who "*mourn*"

They are the "*meek*"

They are those who "*hunger and thirst for righteousness*"

They are those who are "*merciful*"

They are the "*pure in heart*"

They are the "*peacemakers*"

These are individuals who are first of all desiring God above all else. They come to the realization that their way of doing life isn't working. They come to the end of themselves and find God and crave God. They are broken and out of their brokenness they reach out to God and find healing for their very souls. These are all internal character qualities not external works. And then after listing the inner characteristics of his followers - Jesus begins to show practically what this looks like as they live their lives. And the descriptions are not like anything they'd ever seen. And as they live their lives they reflect the character of God to the world.

- **God does not hate** – so a perfect man doesn't hate (Mt. 5:21-26)
- **God doesn't lust** – so a perfect man doesn't lust (Mt. 5:27-32)
- **God doesn't deceive** – so a perfect man doesn't deceive (Mt. 5:33-37)
- **God doesn't retaliate for an injury or hurt** - so a perfect man doesn't retaliate (Mt. 5:39-42)
- **God's love isn't just restricted to those who love Him.** He loves everyone – even His enemies – so a perfect man loves even his enemies (Mt. 5:43-47)

You see the way that a follower of Christ's life exceeds that of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law is that their righteousness was external but ours is internal first before it becomes external. And if the inside is right and in love with God and desiring a relationship with God above all else – then the outside will take care of itself.

Often Jesus described the Pharisees and teachers of the Law as white washed tombs or a good looking cup. They both look great on the outside but the inside is dead and cold and seeking their own pleasures rather than God's desires.

The Apostle Paul understood this when he wrote:

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. (Philippians 3:12-16 ESV)

Paul was striving for perfection through his pursuit constant desire to be like Jesus. And a couple of key ways he did that.

1. **He let go of his past** (some of you need to let go of your past)

2. **He held on to what he had already attained.** (if you've accepted Jesus Christ you're a member of God's family, so live out of that godly privilege. See yourself as God sees you, His beloved child and let that transform the way you see yourself and put within you an insatiable desire to become just like Jesus – in thoughts and feelings and actions.

The way that our “righteousness” can exceed that of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law is by not focusing on keeping the Law but instead focuses on becoming just like Jesus in thoughts and feelings, desires and goals first. And then the outside actions will naturally be changed.

And you can't do this on your own – but Jesus gave each follower the gift of the Holy Spirit to enable you to accomplish it. The Holy Spirit desires, far more than you do, that you become just like Jesus. And so He's going to be empowering us to reach that goal. So, every day reflect on the character of Christ and strive, by depending upon the leading and convicting of the Holy Spirit, to become more and more like Jesus. And if you'll do that you'll find your actions are being transformed as well.

Amidst Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law, He continually emphasized working on cleansing the inside of the cup, which is their lives, and then the outside will take care of itself.

3. Be filled with God's light

Luke 11:33-36 (NIV) *“No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your whole body also is full of darkness. **See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you.**”*

Once again, Jesus is emphasizing not being a light (external) but letting God's light shine first inside of us and then out to the dark world. The way we do this is through times of self-examination. Asking God to reveal any sin that might have crept into our lives and then repent of it, confess it to God and accept His forgiveness of sins and begin to shine brightly once again.

Question: Are there any areas of darkness in your life right now? Why? Ask God to help you eliminate that darkness from your life.

Commitment:

I am treasured and loved by God.

I am righteousness in and through Jesus Christ.

I have the power of God living within me, enabling me to live like Jesus lived.

Therefore, I will strive to

- Serve with humility
- Live free of sin
- Let God's light shine in and through me

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- God's love isn't just _____ to those who love Him. He loves everyone – even His enemies – so a perfect man loves _____ (Mt. 5:43-47)

In Philippians 3:12-16 Paul did two key things:

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