

## STANLEY FAITH EV FREE John 12:20-26

Pastor Michael Thompson      Sunday May 21, 2017

### Hating Your Life or Living the Dream

#### INTRODUCTION / REVIEW

Today we are covering John 12:20-26. Before we dig in let's remember the context. In the verses, right before what we cover today we read about Jesus entering Jerusalem on a young donkey. The crowd cheers for Jesus, here is the observation of the Pharisees;

#### **John 12:17-19 (ESV)**

***17 The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. 18 The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. **Look, the world has gone after him.**"***

The Pharisees had played several political cards and done their best to lie exaggerate and turn people against Jesus. Jesus threatened their power base. You can imagine their disdain and jealousy as massive crowds greeted Jesus as He rode into town on a donkey signifying Jesus' claim that He was The True and Eternal King of Israel.

The atmosphere must have been like a rock concert or a world series victory parade. Tens of thousands chanting His name and shouting.

In that rowdy crowd was Lazarus whom Jesus had recently raised from the dead sharing with everyone what Jesus had done.

Immediately following this time of celebration Jesus speaks to the crowds warning them that following Him is not always a parade. Following Jesus involves more than showing up to an event. I would say the same thing is true today. Showing up at Christian concerts or Music Festival and getting pumped up with the rest of the crowd is cool and fun but that does not mean you are following Jesus Christ. In our text today Jesus explains what is required to be a follower of His.

#### READING THE TEXT

#### **John 12:20-26 (ESV)**

***20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in***

Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

## PREACHING THE TEXT

### John 12:20-26 (ESV)

<sup>20</sup> Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup> So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup> Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

## SOME GREEKS

Here are Greeks coming to a Jewish Celebration to meet Jesus. Word of Jesus the miracle worker had gotten to even the Greeks. What does it take Jesus for me, a Greek to be part of your awesome events like this all the time? Can you invite me to be on your events page?

<sup>23</sup> **And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.**

Jesus claims He is soon to be glorified but it will not be through the massive and exciting events. He will be glorified in an unexpected and humble manner. Jesus continues...

**24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.**

## DEATH (like seeds) BEAR MUCH FRUIT

When grains of wheat are pulled off the plant and fall into the dirt they die. But if planted in the ground they become a seed that can produce a whole new plant with many seeds. Jesus is about to be plucked from this life and laid on a cold slab in the tomb. And by being put in the ground of

God's will and He will rise up producing billions of Christians around the world. And He is glorified and the seed of His work multiplies life.

## **Death Of Self**

Jesus is hinting at the idea of dying to self and being reborn as a new creation.

### **2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)**

**17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!**

In verse 25 Jesus summarizes how we can gain this new life and become this new creation. He first warns that not everyone will obtain this new life in Christ. Here his description of those who will not gain the new life.

**John 12:25 Whoever loves his life loses it**

## HOW TO LOVE YOUR LIFE AND MISS HEAVEN

Jesus told the Greeks and his listening disciples that if we love our life we will lose it. What does that mean? Some love their lives in a way that is a rejection of Jesus Christ. People chose their life instead of Jesus. And this is a result of our selfish desires and an ongoing battle for your mind. The enemy wants you to love your way of life in this world more than Jesus. Let's take a closer look.

### **Three Battlefields**

There are two primary ways that Satan tries to set things up so that you will choose to love your life instead of Jesus. And here is how Satan is working that out in your life and mine and in the whole world.

The first way in which Satan sets things up so that you love your life more than Jesus is in the world systems and societal norms.

- 1. WORLD** - In this world there is a socially acceptable way of thinking and believing. There is pressure in your school, in your workplace among your friends to hide your faith and to get your life from the things promoted by commercials and most of the people you see every day.

We see what other people have and we must have the same stuff. So we covet and obsess and we decide in our heart that the very first thing we

are going to do when our paycheck arrives is rush to get what other people tell us we need so that we fit in and blend in with the world.

If others are wearing jeans with holes we must have jeans with holes. If other have a super-duper cell phone or tablet, we must have one or we feel like we do not fit in with the world.

If others are dating by the age of 12 and sleeping around by the age of 14 then we want to fit in with the world and be accepted by others so much that we take on these soul killing ways of living.

The world tells us to do whatever you want (never mind what God your creator wants), but just be safe and then apparently, everything is okay. That is worldly thinking. And those are some of the ways in which Satan is setting our agenda. He wants you to desire more than anything to fit in and live lives like the people who adore in movies and shows.

The world tells us to pour our money into entertainment and toys. Everyone has 7 rifles and 2 ATVs and takes cruises and trips to Cancun. There is not anything automatically wrong with that unless Jesus tells us to forego rifle number 5,6 and 7 and instead support someone in need, or send a missionary. But we love our life and way of doing things so much that we have no room for God and His will.

If God is not calling you to sponsor the missionary this time then book the vacation, purchase the rifle. Vacation can be a good thing and rifles are awesome. But what if the missionary was never an option for us because all we think about is our latest exploit or gadget?

The world tells us we are the Lord of our life. However, The Bible tells us that Jesus is Lord of our life and lifestyle. Jesus tells us we belong to Him. We are purchased by Him. And He invites us to come follow Him by dying to our worldly manner of thinking and living. We must die to self and take up a kingdom minded mindset where we fixate on that which God puts on our heart. Here is how James puts it.

### **James 4:1**

**<sup>1</sup> What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup> When you**

ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

<sup>4</sup> You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with **the world** means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?

## 2. FLESH

The next way in which Satan is after our mind is to get us to fixate on matters of the flesh. Satan will use every means to get you and I to focus on the pleasure of the flesh so much that we ignore the will of God or we hide from God in shame and embarrassment after we fall to temptation. Here is what Paul said about the battle of the desires of our flesh.

### **Galatians 5:19-22 (NIV)**

<sup>19</sup> The **acts of the flesh** are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Satan wants us to crave for that which is impure or that which feeds our pleasures and desires.

The sobering thing is that Jesus said if your life is characterized by this kind of activity then you will not inherit the kingdom of God, even if you are in the crowd celebrating when Jesus rides by on the donkey or at a Christian concert. So how do we turn this around?

### **Don't Hide, Stand and Cry Out to God**

The way in which you hate the world is to ask God to show you specifically in what ways you and I are ignoring His will. Ask God to cause you to hate your old life and instead love Jesus and love His plan for your life. And ask Him to show you the joy and intense pleasure of serving Jesus Christ.

(Verse 25 continued) **whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.**

## WHOEVER HATES HIS LIFE (in this world) KEEPS IT ETERNALLY

Hating our life means we hate and turn our back on a worldly way of thinking and no longer organize our lives around the temptations of the flesh. The struggle that most of us have including myself is to have times in the week in which we are filled with the Spirit and we are following Christ.

But there are also times that we get lazy with our faith and we do not guard our mind. Pretty soon we are getting all our input from the TV shows or internet or social media or people that are hell bound and have no interest in hating their life. We are tempted to take back our life instead of dying to the world and the flesh.

Jesus gives us a wakeup call when He says;

**John 12: 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.**

### TO SERVE IS TO FOLLOW

If you claim to follow Jesus Christ are you serving Him? Are you wanting His direction in each area of your life? And are you experiencing the joy of walking in His power and His will?

### SUMMARY / CHALLENGE

Hating our old life and embracing the new life given by Jesus opens a whole new dimension and almost dream like existence where you see things and hear things and discern things that are not available to those consumed with the flesh and the world.

### **STORY:** "Quit you job today"

Anyone can live the life of the flesh and think like the world. That is easy but over the years it gets boring. Same old temptations same old addiction same old futile way of thinking and going along like a Lemming with the crowd. Slavery to our old life becomes boring. There are no God sightings in our slavery to the world and the flesh.

Do you love Jesus more than your reputation? Do you love Jesus more than the temptations you face? Do you love Him more than you love the American dream? Do you love Him more than your stuff?

If so, welcome to a whole new world of joy with unlimited possibilities and God sightings.

## **TAKING IT HOME**

1. In what ways is your calendar populated by activities that God thought up for you? Are you joining Jesus where He is at work?
2. What are some of the ways that you have become Lord of our own life by doing what you want without considering God's will?
3. What are some things you might tell yourself to justify investing in the flesh and world instead of the kingdom of God?
4. What is a habit or addiction or a worldly way of thinking that God is calling you to hate and renounce right now?