

“Christian Commitment”

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Text: Matthew 16:13-18

Theme: To encourage devotion to Jesus Christ

Introduction:

1. It is good to note that in some areas of our great brotherhood, we are hearing calls go out to Christians to be totally committed to the Lord.
2. It must be an ever pressing theme for Christians.
3. The Lord’s dealing with Peter will illustrate the point.
 - a. Peter was told his work would be the very work committed to us.
 - 1) Converting the lost – Matthew 4:19.
 - 2) Strengthening the brethren - Luke 22:32.
 - a) Consider the context.
 - b) It is interesting that this would be said to one who would deny the Lord.
 - b. Obviously, the level of Peter’s commitment was, and ours is, related to what we think about Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 16:15 - very direct.
 - 2) John 21 - three times - ‘lovest thou me more than these?’
 - a) It even made Peter upset; yet he had denied the Lord three times.
 - b) This was the Lord’s way of helping Peter realize the seriousness of his commitment to the Lord.
 - c. Tradition holds that Peter was indeed faithful unto death.

4. Our having a deep awareness of Christian commitment is important for two reasons.
 - a. The urgency of the time demands it.
 - b. It is the emphasis of the Biblical text.

Discussion:

- I. The urgency of the time demands it.
 - A. The world is in a state of upheaval spiritually.
 1. The whole world, even in our own country.
 - a. Article Waycross Journal- Herald , 10/9/87, said one-half of all pregnancies in the United States are out of wedlock.
 - b. An article in the Pensacola Daily Press, 5/21/89 said that in the U.S. 51.6% of new marriages will end in divorce. Even after ten years of marriage, the rate is 30%.
 2. So the church is faced with the problem of how to communicate the gospel of Christ worldwide in such a way as to challenge men to a genuine decision to commitment.
 - a. But uncommitted Christians are incapable of doing this
 - b. The church must never be reduced to a mere field for evangelism, because of uncommitted brethren, but rather must be a strong force for evangelism.
 - c. The hope of the world abides in the commitment of God's people.
- II. It is the emphasis of the Biblical text.
 - A. It takes a definite purpose and strength.
 1. Not everyone can receive the sayings of the Lord □ cf. Matthew 19:11 (context).
 2. Luke 9:62; John 6:60,66-69.

- B. II Timothy 1:12 - Paul was totally committed.
1. He put his whole life, soul and salvation in the hands of God.
 2. He gave up possessions and the enjoyments of this life to meet the two demands upon Christians: converting the lost, and strengthening the brethren.
 - a. cf. Philippians 3:8
 - b. II Corinthians 1:23-28; Philippians 4:12,13.
 3. II Timothy 4:13 - told Timothy to "hold fast."

III. Our commitment must be directed in three ways.

- A. Must be committed to the Lord.
1. There is a definite and ferocious attack upon God prevalent in the land.
 - a. Dial-an-Atheist - Time mag. 1/28/80.
 1. Started with twenty five members.
 2. Gained 70 supporters in 6 weeks.
 - b. Abortionist, feminists, humanists, homosexuals, etc. all find it necessary to deny the existence of God or allow his influence in their lives.
 2. Brother Thomas Warren guesses that every secular school in the U.S. now promotes atheism. (But many were started to train preachers.)
 3. Theists are ridiculed.
 - a. They say we are backward and stupid.
 - b. Joke about Jonah.
 4. Cannot over emphasize Psalm 14:1.
 - a. It is indeed foolish to deny the existence of God.
 - b. The universe, Bible, babies, funerals all cause us to know the foolishness of the proposition that there is no God.
- B. Must have a commitment to the church.
1. I Peter 2:22; I Thessalonians 3:12; I Peter 2:17.
 2. Ephesians 3:25 - Christ demonstrated great love for the church and we should have no less love.

3. The uniqueness and distinctiveness of the church are in seriously bad need of emphasis.
 - a. The church of Christ is not simply a church among churches, it is the church of Christ.
 - b. "The only good reason for being a member of the Lord's church is the overpowering conviction based upon God's revealed will that the church of Christ is the one true church." Pat McGee.
 4. There can be no separation of the thought that to be truly committed to Christ involves true commitment to the church belonging to Christ.
- C. Must be committed to the lost and dying world.
1. Romans 13:14 - we have an obligation.
 2. The single great mission of the church is to evangelize the lost.
 3. Matthew 9:37,38 - he saw the multitudes v. 36.
 4. We must not think only in terms of overseas missionaries.
 - a. Every Christian home anywhere in the world must be a mission center.
 - b. Every non-Christian home anywhere in the world must be a mission field.
 5. It has been calculated that if every member of the church would convert just one person a year, and this process were to continue (taking into account the birth and death rates), the whole world would be converted in just twelve years. (Crossroads bulletin 1/6/80).

Conclusion:

1. These thoughts place tremendous demands upon us.
2. Luke 14:28- it is important to count the cost of discipleship.
3. Yes, it is costly.
 - a. But that which is of little cost is of little value.
 - b. Every Christian has a challenge to his commitment (sin problems, pressures, etc.).
 - c. We are not promised that the way will be without obstacles (II Timothy 3:12).

4. Must be willing to not only accept the Christ of the cross, but also the cross of the Christ.

*Must Jesus bear the cross alone?
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.*

Invitation: