

Ridin' High Cowboy Church

8771 FM 35

Union Valley/Royse City, TX

Pastor: Steve Bishop

**Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I
should go, for to you I lift up my soul.**

Psalm 143:8

Sunday, March 12, 2017

Defining Moments

Complaining about all the “stuff” in the garage no room to park the car, when a guy at work said, “the only thing worse than that is an empty garage.”

When Jesus showed up in the world, there was a lot of confusion about who God is and what he is like, and Jesus said I’m here to explain God.

Good people don’t go to heaven.

Every year at Vacation Bible School, this was the first Bible story to tell the kids.

John 3

1 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. (These people were in charge of keeping the Jewish people happy with the Roman government and Rom happy with them, in return they were paid very well. **2 He came to Jesus at night** (translated in our culture – he sent a text) **and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.** (Nicodemus was saying he had been watching Jesus and was impressed, - water into wine, healings, only God could be behind that.) Nicodemus’ other job was to look for the Messiah. **3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” 4 How can someone be born when they are old? Nicodemus asked, “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” 5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to the spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, you must be born again.** (The Jews thought if you are related to Abraham you are in the God, just by your birth.) **8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with**

everyone born of the Spirit. 9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

Nicodemus believed that GOD had a big scale and the good had to outweigh the bad.

Skip to verse 14

14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, (Nicodemus knew the Old Testament, he believed this story to be true, all the people were sick and Moses picked up a pole with the figure of a snake and said everybody look at the snake, the ones who did were healed.) **so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.**

The days of the scale are over.

When Jesus was on trial, Nicodemus asked should we condemn an innocent many, but they shut him down...when Jesus' body was on the cross, Nicodemus came to take care of him.

John 6:53

Background: Jesus had just healed and fed 5000, the people were amazed and wanted to follow Jesus anywhere at this point.

Jesus is at the peak of his popularity, the Disciples are famous too, Jesus and the Apostles were on the A list.

Jesus goes to the synagogue (church) and began to teach in Capernaum...4 groups were there, 12 Apostles, Disciples hundreds-followed everywhere, crowd – just observers, religious leaders trying to trap Jesus.

Then Jesus preaches the weirdest sermon in the Bible...

Jesus said I am the bread of life, John 6 (OT reference to the Messiah) that comes down from heaven, the leaders said no he isn't, we know his parents...

53 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you. (all the note takers went “WHAT?”, Jews did not eat any blood) 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.” (Now that is just weird)

What Jesus said is like us saying someone eats, drinks and sleeps horses – it was a figure of speech but it was still weird.

Jesus was demanding a complete allegiance to Him, and demanding that everything else – including literal bread – be put in second place.

60 On hearing it, many of his disciples (not the 12, but the hundreds that followed him) **said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”**

61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, **“Does this offend you?”** Of course this offends us, this is really weird, (ever been in a really weird church service? The disciples must have interrupted him, OK – we’re gonna take a quick break just talk amongst yourselves and wanted him to teach on some of the popular things, prayer, sermon on the mount, parables maybe, we’re losing the crowd.

66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. (In spite of all the miracles, they began to leave in mass, people had given up businesses and jobs and now they abandoned Jesus over this teaching.)

The twelve began to listen to Jesus and watch the crowd maybe they wanted to slip out, they most certainly had intense doubt.

Jesus knew their hearts and he turns to them and says **67 “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.** Crickets are chirping...this is where I live sometimes. It’s hard to follow Jesus. Christianity means we miss out sometimes, stay in tough marriages, stay in our dorm rooms at college...we want to distance ourselves from Jesus.

At some point in life this question is relative to you? You don’t want to leave too, do you?

The next thing that happens can change your life. It puts all doubt in perspective. **68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go?”** Peter recognized that to walk away from Jesus is to walk toward something else, and quite honestly, what else is there? Peter said even though this isn’t fun and it will be costly, I can’t see any other valid options.

When you have doubts, don’t get tangled up in your questions, but consider your options (so many times in life, I have had my doubts and questions, but when I consider my options like Peter, I conclude “where would I go?”

When you consider the options you get clarity for your questions...

You have the words of eternal life, Jesus, you’re the only one promising eternal life, every other promise comes up short of that...**69 “We believe and (have to come to know, they had seen too much) know that you are the Holy One of God.”**

Peter was saying Jesus we have seen too much, we’re just gonna come back if we leave. In the midst of your doubts and questions, you have to consider your options.

I realized if I walk away from Jesus, I still don't get my questions answered and I have some scars and bruises when I come back.

These guys had no idea what was at stake at that moment of their decision. They were beginning to wonder about Jesus. Peter for instance, you will have buildings named after you, you will best. Peter and you will write two books translated into most every language on earth. Everyone who comes to heaven wants to meet Peter, you're the guy!

John gets to write 5 books, tons of boys named after you, people will spend forever trying to figure out what you wrote in revelations.

These guys were gonna carry the most significant message of all time to their generation.

They had no idea what hung in the balance of their decision and neither do we.

Some of us have been Christians long enough to know what would have happened and what we would have missed if we had bailed out 10 years ago. Nobody else offers eternal life and we have seen too much also.

What do you do with your doubts, you carry them with you as you follow Jesus because there are no other good options.

John summarized this story in the next verse from our John 3 verses...

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Two questions to answer:

1. What do I have to know?
2. What do I have to do?

What we need to know

1. God loved
2. God gave

What we need to do

1. We believe
2. We receive