

Going There: Jesus Say What!?!?
Week 4: "Get behind me, Satan."

I. Welcome:

A. Opening Story:

II. The command "Get behind me, Satan," was spoken to Peter by Jesus, and is recorded in Matthew 16:23 and Mark 8:33. "Get behind me, Satan" seems harsh and maybe a bit out of character for Jesus, especially when addressing Peter, one of His most devout disciples.

A. Why did Jesus say this? What was it Peter did to deserve such a rebuke? How can we learn from this exchange between student and teacher?

1. Today as we continue in our sermon series Going There....Jesus Said What!! We are going to look at how Peter has momentarily become a spokesman for "Satan" because he opposed the revealed will of God.

2. Peter is a figure of contradictions. But at times aren't we all? He is, I believe, an excellent example of our human nature.

a. Just a couple of verses back 13-20, we find him acclaiming Jesus to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God." We heard Jesus call Peter the 'rock' on which he will build his Church; we heard Jesus promising Peter the keys of the kingdom with the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven.

b. It was looking like Peter was starting to understand who Jesus was and what he was all about. That is until we hear verses 21-28 when Peter reveals his lack of understanding.

(1) He does not understand that the kingdom of heaven, which he will be given the keys to, will only come to its fulfillment after the Christ has suffered, been killed, and be raised from the dead.

(2) In these verses, Peter appears to show himself quite unworthy of the promises which have been made to him. Peter's unworthiness is shown by some ironies we find in the text.

c. A moment ago, Peter was called the 'rock' on which the Church will be built, and now he is compared with a 'stumbling block', a rock not on which to build, not a firm foundation, but a rock that one might trip over, a blockage or a barrier. And now it even seems as if Peter is attempting to use his newly given revelation and authority to bind and loose on Jesus.

(1) Say what?? He says 'God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you.' Here is Peter the disciple trying to correct the teacher.

(2) All this earns him the Lord's hard rebuke, 'Get behind me, Satan!' You see Peter has gotten it wrong because he sees things merely from a human point of view, not from a spiritual view.

d. "Get behind Me, Satan!" that is a hard expression especially for someone who only shows good intentions.

(1) Honestly, until I reflected on this passage, I had always thought that Jesus was bit hard on Peter. And just like Peter we tend to see things merely from a human point of view, not from a spiritual view. For example: Let's say one of our kid's Teachers called them Satan. What would you do? I bet a lot of us would immediately march up to the school demanding an apology. (I know you didn't just.....) Or what about a boss who you have been working hard long hours for and one day he corrects you by saying "Get out of my office Satan." Oh No! We are not going to take that level of disrespect, are we? Nope we would be writing a letter to corporate headquarters and heading down to HR. (I'm not sure what Jesus' problem is talking to me like that, but I am not the one. What you need to do is put him in some effective communication or sensitivity training classes or something.)

3. This is the wonderful thing about the disciples of Jesus, they were just like us with all their faults and dislikes. I find this very reassuring and here we see Peter's spontaneous reaction and eagerness.

a. We tend to put ourselves in Peter's place: Your beloved teacher, your friend, the man who heals the sick and gives sight to the blind, the one for whom Peter abandoned his occupation— has just announced he will be killed.

(1) Jesus is telling His disciples that He is going to die – and just as it was then, as it is today, we just do NOT talk about such things; death – is a subject we all avoid – its taboo.

(2) Someone once said there are only 2 certainties in life – taxation and death, but they are hardly favorite topics of conversation.

(3) Is Jesus being morbid? Surely not, He is at the height of His ministry – the crowds flock to hear His message and yet He is talking about His death.

(4) No wonder Peter tries to reassure Jesus that this will not happen, after all Jesus is only in His early 30s.

b. I believe Peter did what many of us would have done: he tried to shield a loved one from suffering and harm. Yes, Peter had good intentions; unfortunately, as the saying goes, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”

(1) You see Peter and the disciples could not grasp the enormity of God’s plan; this is why Jesus said, “Your ideas are not divine, but human!”

B. Verse 22 is vital to understand this passage. “Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

1. I checked different versions of the bible. NIV uses the word rebuke to describe Peter’s action; others use, revoke, scold, and correct. And all these words have the same meaning: to be wrong, to be out of place, and not know what one is doing. Therefore, we can paraphrase what Peter told Jesus like this: Jesus, you’re mistaken, you do not understand what you are doing, let me correct you and tell you how to do things, let me explain what your ministry is about.

2. This is how the version The Message translate verse 22, “Peter took him in hand, protesting, ‘Impossible, Master! That can never be!’” Basically, he is implying, “Jesus, you are wrong.”

C. We can paraphrase Jesus’ answer to Peter like this, “you know what Peter? I am not wrong, and I am not the one out of place; you are. You are trying to lead me. Have you forgotten what my Father revealed to you a moment ago? I am the Christ; I am the Son of God. Peter, go behind me; you are my follower; I am the leader.” Listen to how The Message translates verse 23, “Peter, get out of my way. Satan, get lost. You have no idea how God works.”

1. Immediately after this, Jesus called all his followers and told them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”

a. So what does Jesus mean by this? In Rome a prisoner carried his own cross to the place of execution, signifying submission to Rome’s power. Jesus used the image of carrying our cross to illustrate the ultimate submission required for us to follow Him. Jesus isn’t against us enjoying life, nor is He saying that we have to suffer pain to follow Him. He is just asking for total submission.

b. In other words, if anyone wants to follow me, stop seeking your interests and seek the kingdom of heaven. If anyone wants to follow me, stop trying to pursue you, to chase your plans and let God do his plans in your life and through your life.

c. The Message bible puts it like this- Mark 8:34 “Calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, ‘Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I’ll show you how.’”

D. Today, I believe that we can identify two keys to our becoming more like Christ - as we think about what is involved in following Him. Think with me about the old children’s game of “follow the leader.” When you play “follow the leader,” you must (1) first, go where the leader goes, and (2) second, do what the leader does. It’s the same in following Christ. To follow Christ is to become like Christ, and to become like Christ, we must be where He is and do what He did.

1. Being Where Christ Is.

Jesus lived His life in cooperation and partnership with the Father. That's part of what Jesus meant when He said, "I and the Father are one." - John 10:30 (NIV). Living His life being where the Father was eventually led Jesus to the cross.

a. Jesus used the cross to speak to us about the importance of seeking to be where He is. If I am to aim for excellence in life and become more like Christ, then I must take up my cross, I must embrace God's will for my life as my own. And where is God working? What is His focus?

(1) Romans 8:28-29 (NLT) "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son."

(2) Sinclair Ferguson puts it like this - "How can all things be worked together by God for good? The answer is at hand. It is because God's ultimate purpose is to make us like Christ. His goal is the complete restoration of the image of God in His child! So great a work demands all the resources which God finds throughout the universe, and He ransacks the possibilities of joys and sorrows in order to reproduce in us the character of Jesus."

b. To be like Christ requires that I follow Christ, which means that I am where He is - that my focus is His focus - developing Christ-like character. And if I am where Christ is, then I will find myself, my calling and my purpose.

2. Doing What Christ Did.

In partnering with the Father, Jesus denied Himself. If we would join Jesus in His work of making us more like Himself, we can expect to be called on to deny ourselves, too.

a. How easily and content we are to speak of Jesus Christ as our example. But do we realize what it means? If we did, it would revolutionize our life.

b. Do we begin to know our Bible as He did? Do we begin to pray as He did? How thoughtful He was for others, how patient toward dullness, how quiet under insult! Think of what it meant for Him to take a basin and towel like a slave and wash the disciples' feet! Do we stoop to serve? Can anyone say of us, as was said of Him, that we go about 'doing good?'

c. Think of His words, servants of His, 'I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.'

d. Andy Stanley lists five things God uses to make us like Christ.

(1) Practical Teaching - Matthew 7:24-27

Christ ordered His life according to God's word and so must we.

(2) Providential Relationships -

"Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble." - Proverbs 13:20 (NLT)

(3) Private Disciplines - Matthew 6:2-4, Mark 1:35

(4) Personal Ministry - Matthew 14:19-21 (12 baskets left over)

*The feeding of the multitude is one of Jesus most well-known miracles, and its central message is clear: Jesus provides - physically, as well as spiritually. But it's the 12 baskets leftover for our personal ministry. You can't out give Jesus. When you spend your life for others, your needs will be met. Jesus said that He did not come to be served by to serve and give His life as a ransom for others (Mark 10:45). Likewise, we need to be involved in ministry and evangelism.

(5) Pivotal Circumstances - Romans 8:28-29

My hope and prayer are that today might be a pivotal circumstance for you and me, where we decide that we are going to clear the path for Jesus to fully take the lead in our life. Let's agree to take up our cross, embracing God's will for you to become more like Christ, and denying yourself in whatever way you need to in order to grow toward Christlikeness.

E. Peter had some ideas about the Messiah; Peter had plans for the Messiah, and when he listened to Jesus' plan, he realized that they were not compatible. Peter decided who was wrong, and it was not him, it was Jesus.

That is why Jesus called him Satan, which means adversary, opponent, challenger, someone who comes and stands in the way.

1. Get behind me Satan.

At the time, Jesus' stern reprimand did not make sense to Peter. However, Jesus' indictment presents a profound message for us. We can easily see that Peter had the wrong perspective of God's plan for Christ's suffering and death. But we must also see how easily we can become an unwitting spokesperson for Satan. This is especially true when we lose sight of God's plan for us. This comes about when our focus is on our careers, our possessions, our security, the things of the world rather than upon sacrifice and service and the proclaiming of God's message. When Peter's focus shifted to his own desires and plans, Jesus rebuked him in order to get him back on track. May our focus always be on God and His plans that we may never experience a similar rebuke from our Lord.

2. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

What is profit...

take the gross income; subtract the costs, what is left is profit.

3. The Parable of the Kool-Aid Stand

What was Jason's mistake?

4. Think about this question by Jesus

What would it profit YOU or I ... if YOU or I were to acquire or gain everything we ever dreamed of ... if we were to do everything exactly the way we wanted to ... however we like, but if in the process, or as a result, you lost your soul?

a. Closing Story:

In 1000 AD, 186 years after the death of Emperor Charlemagne, officials of the Emperor Otto re-opened Charlemagne's tomb. Before them was an extraordinary sight. In the midst of all the finery buried with him—the gold, the jewels, the priceless treasure—there was the skeleton of Charlemagne himself, still seated on his throne, still wearing his crown. In his lap, there lay a Bible, and a bony finger rested on Mark 8:36: "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"

(1) I wonder what answer Charlemagne gave.

b. What answer will you give? What obstacle or desire is standing in between you and God? Get behind me drugs. Get behind me anger, resentment, unforgiveness. Get behind me lack or greed, envy or selfishness.

F. Conclusion: I believe we all want to get behind the will of God and live life on the highest level possible? So, let's commit to a lifestyle of personal growth in becoming more like Jesus.

Let today be the day that we say, "Yes, Lord, I will embrace my cross - and Your plan for me to become more like Christ. I am willing to count the cost and deny myself in whatever way I need to in order to see that happen in my daily life. I am willing to pay the price necessary to live my life on the highest levels of closeness to you Lord. Wherever and however You lead me, I will follow.