

Mount Olive Wednesday Night Bible Study and Prayer Meeting

May 6, 2020

Notes on John 3 : 25 - 30

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Pastor Tom again gave us two questions to be thinking about as we study:

1. Have you found yourself, during this time, thinking 'Life is not fair'?
2. Do you believe Satan uses people to sway or distract you from your divine purpose?

We will also see jealousy as means that Satan uses in these verses from the Gospel of John.

John 3:25

“Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.”

*In this verse we will see John's divine purpose.

*There are 3 points to look at in this verse:

1. John's disciples - men and women who were following John the Baptist's ministry
2. The Jews - who were probably rulers of the synagogue but we do not know for sure.
3. Purifying - which means a process of cleaning, sanctifying grace or as Webster explains: to be free from guilt or defilement.

*John the Baptist's ministry or calling was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ through 2 tools:

1. Preach repentance
2. Baptize
 - a. Infant baptism - babies don't know what is being said so the parents make a vow to bring up the child so the child can make a decision for Christ someday. They have duties and responsibilities to fulfill that vow to God.

The body of Christ also has duties and responsibilities to that child to train him up and lead him to Christ.

God's prevenient grace covers the child until that day and we trust God to His part while we do ours as the child grows.
 - b. Adult baptism - mostly, this is when adults have received Jesus' salvation and now want to make a public declaration of that decision to repent from sinful ways and now want to be baptized (as in the 2 tools of John the Baptist).

John 3:26

“And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.”

*This verse is a test to try and sway John away from his purpose.

*Satan is a long term strategist, he plans into the future.

*The Jews called John 'Rabbi' but in reality he was just an 'odd dressing and eating guy out in the wilderness. It was like the Jews were trying to flatter John with a title that wasn't his. Interestingly, the Jews did not name Jesus and they twisted the truth to say that Jesus baptized. This was subtle Satan sowing seeds of jealousy into John's mind.

Proverbs 14:30

"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."

*Envy and jealousy are like a cancer, rotting you to the core and ultimately, destroying the body.

Proverbs 27:4

"Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?"

*Envy and jealousy are worse, beyond wrath or anger. We do not have the capacity to deal with envy and jealousy!

I John 3:12

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

*Why did Cain kill Abel? Because of jealousy.

*Pastor Tom took us back to the Old Testament to study the story of Cain and Abel.

Genesis 3:21

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

Genesis 4:1-11

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

4 *And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:*

5 *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

6 *And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?*

7 *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.*

8 *And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*

9 *And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?*

10 *And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*

11 *And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;*

*Adam and Eve knew the rules God had set down in Genesis 3:21.

God needed a blood sacrifice to atone for Adam and Eve's sin.

Adam and Eve would have taught the boys this rule.

Abel was farmer so he brought sheep, a blood sacrifice to God. God respected, liked, appreciated, accepted Abel's sacrifice.

*Cain was farmer and brought a harvest of plants to God as his sacrifice. God did not respect, like, appreciate or accept Cain's sacrifice. Cain got mad at God and pouted. Then God asked him why he was so mad/sad...he knew the rules, he knew what must be done to do it right.

*And if you don't do it right, then sin is ready and waiting to pounce on you.

*We still want to make up our own rules for sacrifice(for finding favor with God, for getting into heaven) but Jesus(THE Blood Sacrifice) is the only way to restore our broken relationship with God.

Then Cain spoke to Abel, got angry with him and killed Abel. God asks Cain about it, Cain gets sassy and God asks "What have you done?"

The blood sacrifice was set, but Cain disregarded it. The sacredness of the blood cries out to God from the ground.

Cain got mad/jealous because God chose Abel's sacrifice. Then that jealousy caused Cain to murder his brother. Satan's long term plan!

The same plan Satan used to get John the Baptist jealous of Jesus!

John 3:27

“John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”

*This was John's wise response and a good model for us to use to deal with jealousy.

*John recognized that God is sovereign (supreme power). In Latin: 'supra' meaning a power above. So God is above everything and he is in control so we do not have to be jealous!

John3:28

“Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.”

*Jews were the people who were the witnesses when John the Baptist said, “I am not the Christ...I am not even worthy to tie his shoes!” The Jews were twisting the story again.

John 3:29

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.”

*John knew his place:

The Church is Jesus' Bride. Jesus is the only bridegroom who can have the bride. John is like the best man who knows he cannot have what belonged to the bridegroom only.

John 3:30

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

*This was John’s divine purpose: to decrease while Jesus increased.

*Much like the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition:

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition (UMH #607)

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,

Exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O Glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

Thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,

Let it be ratified in heaven. **Amen.**

Proverbs 30: 7-9 from ‘The Way’ version of the Bible

I God, I beg two favors from you before I die:

First, help me never to tell a lie.

Second, give me just enough to satisfy my needs!

For if I grow rich, I may become content without God.

And if I am too poor, I may steal,

and thus insult God’s holy name

*If we are truly honest, all of us have been jealous at one time or another!

Then Pastor Tom unmuted us and discussion opened for the 2 questions he asked at the beginning of the study:

1. Have you found yourself, during this time, thinking 'Life is not fair'?

-We are quick to say it's not fair when life does not go our way, but we never mention fairness when life is good.

-Satan often goes after Jesus' followers, not the unbelievers.

-Since we live in a broken, sinful, fallen world, how can life ever be fair?

2. Do you believe Satan uses people to sway or distract you from your divine purpose?

-Yes, anyone or anything can distract us - loved ones, TV,

Then Pastor Tom posed a couple more discussion questions:

*Does jealousy play a factor in church?

-yes-if it's outside the church then it is inside, too!

-But we should be acting differently...we are to be in the world but not of the world.

*Then are we believers held to a higher standard?

-To whom much is given, much is required.

*May the Lord watch between me and thee,
While we are absent one from the other.*