

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 20 September 2020

Sermon Title : Living Faith

Speaker : Rev John Foo

Text : Luke 14:1-11

INTRODUCTION

This scripture passage gives an account of what happened when Jesus was invited to a Sabbath meal at the home of the leader of the Pharisees. As we read about the issues that Jesus raised in His conversations with the lawyers and the Pharisees, let us turn it into an inward reflection of how we regard such issues and what God wants our response to be.

1. Context for Luke 14:1-6

The lawyers and Pharisees were watching Jesus very closely to catch any of Jesus' words or actions that could be used against Him. They did not have any real concern for the man suffering from dropsy but were intent on catching Jesus breaking the Sabbath law.

Jesus knew what they were thinking and deliberately asked the question "Is it lawful to heal a man on Sabbath?" (Jesus had broached the same subject earlier in Luke 6 and 13) When there was no answer from them, He demonstrated that work of mercy or compassion is not disallowed on the Sabbath because Jesus' question to them was really: Which is more important – keeping rigidly to the religious law or helping somebody in need?

What are we fixated on in our lives?

The Pharisees were only interested in ensuring that the Sabbath law was closely followed. They saw themselves as guardians and keepers of the Law. They were so legalistically preoccupied that they were compassionately devoid. They were so focused on keeping religiously to the letter of the Law that they had forgotten that their God is also a compassionate God.

Jesus had to remind them of the weightier matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Lesson 1: *We need to practise a living faith, and not just become practitioners of a lifeless religion*

- Practise a living faith – our faith ought to be a living faith because our faith is placed in a living God.
- Do not relegate our faith to just a strict set of 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' in our lives – if we only have stacked rules, regulations and routines in our lives and call them Christian living, this is not unlike the Pharisees. When Christians only go through the motion when living out their Christian life, they will get bored spiritually as there is not much life in their faith.
- God's Word is a life-giving sustenance for our lives given by a life-giving God – it is not just a manual for our lives. It is a life-giving sustenance for every aspect of our lives. (Matthew 4:4) Reading the Bible has to be God's living conversation with us. When we are fixated on relating to a living God through His living Word, God becomes alive to us and our faith becomes alive as well. We start relating to Him not as an object but as a person. That opens us up for Him to have His ways in our lives, and we start bearing His fruit and likeness in our lives.

As the God of compassion moves and transforms us, we will become people of compassion. Instead of just rules and regulations, we begin to incorporate grace, kindness and compassion into our actions. We begin to remember to do to others what we would like others to do unto us.

2. Context for Luke 14:7-11

Here, Jesus told a parable when He saw how the guests were going for the best seats or places of honour in the house.

This kind of mad scrambling not just for physical things but also for the intangibles like status, recognition, worldly success etc. still happens today. People scramble for such honour to feed their sense of superiority, their sense of worth - that perhaps they are a better human being than others.

This parable is all about humility. Pride makes us want to sit in the high places, whereas humility will bring us down to the lowest seat in the house.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Lesson 2: *God really loves and will exalt the humble but He especially hates and will humiliate the proud*

- He who humbles himself will be exalted
- Through this parable, Jesus is not teaching about good manners in a meal gathering, but the deeper condition of the heart – what sort of condition is your heart?
- A humble person is not a self-debased person – we do not put ourselves down just to appear humble.

“Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is simply strength under control”

- True humility is knowing our real worth. It is knowing well enough not to clamour for higher recognition for ourselves than we deserve.
- We are not really in charge of our seating in life, God is. We must recognize that God alone is the judge and He can put down one and exalt another. (Ps 75:7)

False views of success often puff us up with pride. Those who are humble have a better chance of finding God that they can relate to. They know where they stand in their relationships with God. They know what are lacking in their lives but they also know what God can do in and through their lives.

CONCLUSION

God is calling for us to come to Him as we are. Our faith is not about keeping to a set of rules, regulations and traditions. It is all about relating to a Living God who wants His ways in our lives. Let us always remember the weightier matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness for when the time comes, God will exalt those who are humble but He will bring down those who are proud.

May God bring us closer to Him, in a real living faith, as we behold a real Living God in our lives. And may we be humbled in the presence of our Holy God and submit ourselves willingly to Him, in awe and wonder of who He is.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Luke 14:1-11 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b. What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Living Faith"?

- c. How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. How can you tell if someone is practising a living faith?
- 2b. Why is it important that we practise a living faith, and not just become practitioners of a lifeless religion?
- 2c. How does knowing that “God really loves and will exalt the humble but He especially hates and will humiliate the proud” impact how you will relate to God and others?

- 3a. Describe your daily Christian living.
 - (i) Are you practising a living faith?
 - (ii) Is there anything you are scrambling for whether tangible or intangible?
- 3b. What is one thing you need to change to practise a living faith that relates to a Living God?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you achieve 3b above, for the next week(s) until your next meeting?

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your personal testimony on how God transformed you from a “practitioner of a lifeless religion” into someone who practises a living faith.

OR

Give thanks to God for helping you to incorporate grace, kindness and compassion into your actions.

5. As a group, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you and help you recognize if your group is not practising a living faith. Search deep and share if more grace, kindness and compassion needs to be incorporated into your group’s actions, or there should be less scrambling for places of honour. Pray for one another and surrender these to God so your group may know where you stand in your relationship with Him.

Commit all that have been shared in 3b and 3c to God, asking for our Living God to empower you to follow through what you and your group have committed to do in the following week(s), until your next meeting.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7