

Get Your Life Back – Part 3 – January 24, 2021

“The Best Trade”

Welcome – One House, many Rooms (East, Fort Myers, Online at home...)

Series – “Get Your Life Back”

John 10:10 *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

- The enemy is working overtime in our lives to try and steal, kill and destroy
- But Jesus wants to remind us that He came so that we could have life to the FULL!!!

Week 1 we talked about how the ultimate goal is “Union with God” – Increase Capacity, so we can be filled with more of Him (5 Gallon Bucket) – Fasting & Praying during this time (make room)

Thank you Matt for last week’s message – Word of God & the rhema Word that he spoke to you about how we must pray, be in the Word, be able to discern voices and ultimately hear from God

Book - “Everyday practices for a world gone mad!” // **Pause App** (benevolent detachment)

- Be so careful that we aren’t allowing the enemy to steal something that God is trying to give us through our own “pride” or “likes” – the point is to receive from God (but that requires us to stay open)

Today is Part 3 of this series & the title of my message is: “The Best Trade”

Matthew 16 – turn in Bible, follow along, take notes

- Jesus begins to predict his suffering, his death and his resurrection. Peter says, “no Lord this can’t happen” and Jesus rebukes Peter saying that he is becoming a stumbling block to him...that Peter didn’t have the concerns of God, but only human concerns.

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”

- Jesus says, it’s not good for us to gain everything in this world, but lose our soul. And ultimately if we want to save our life, we need to lose it & truly find life in Christ.

PRAY – ears to hear / Holy Spirit revive us

ILL: Pack lunch at school – better trades than others “I’ll trade you my apples for your Twinkie!”

- Bad trades (you’re on the losing side), Fair trades (you’re on equal sides), Best Trades (you’re on the winning side)

Jesus asks us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him – trade our life for His. And when we do this, we will always be on the winning side.

- What does a cross represent?

- Jesus was foreshadowing what He knew was going to happen. He was going to give his life for us & he didn't want to, but he prayed to His Father, *"Not my will, but yours be done."*
- A cross represents a trust of God's will, His plan, His ways, and a surrender of ours.

I think that there are some crosses that God is asking us to carry in this season and they look different for everyone:

- **Fasting** – skip those meals and pray instead *"Not my will, but yours be done."*
- Loving and **being kind to a coworker** who is mean and rude
- **Serving on a team** when our will is we just want to attend and make church about us
- **Leading a group in our home** (being hospitable) – when we'd just rather have a night to ourselves
- **Taking care of a family member** who is sick
- **Giving above & beyond financially** – when we wish we could get that new house or car
- **Ultimately LAYING DOWN OUR OWN RIGHTS** – OUR OWN PREFERENCES, our own ways...

The enemy will always try and steal the reality of the cross from us.

- That's what happened to Jesus. As he starts proclaiming the truth of what he was going to sacrifice for us, Peter tempts him: No way! Surely this can't be God's plan. That sounds too hard.
- Satan will always tempt us to have the reality of the cross removed from our lives. He doesn't want us to *"deny ourselves"* – he wants us to make ourselves the point.
- But Jesus says that the truth of this trade will actually set us free.

Three Truths about Crosses:

1. Crosses can be Heavy.

- **When we decide to deny ourselves & obey our Heavenly Father, there can be a weight to it.**
- Often times we buy into the myth of "American Christianity" that life will be easy because we are following Jesus.
- Jesus carried his cross and there was a weight to it – he was beaten, bruised and the cross was so heavy as He was carrying out the Father's will that he fell and couldn't carry it anymore.
- I get it. Maybe that's you – you're trying to raise your kids, be a Godly spouse, set an example for your friends or your family, but it's hard...it's heavy!
- BUT – there is a great exchange that can happen, even when we are carrying a heavy burden!

Matthew 11:28-30 *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

- **ILL: Mom's Heart Surgery – "I give my Mom to you" (cried two tears & overwhelming peace)**
- Just because it's heavy, doesn't mean it's not God's will. Often times, the heaviness is a test – will you learn from me – will you find rest in me...we can carry a cross, but lay it down for Him to pick up!

2. Crosses aren't meant to be carried alone.

- Yes – in order to be a disciple of Jesus, we need to deny ourselves, take up our cross & follow him...but we don't have to do it alone!
- That is the beauty of the Body of Christ. We truly are better together!

Ecclesiastes 4:0-10 "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."

- God gives us this model through Jesus – the Bible records that on his way out of Jerusalem, Jesus was carrying His cross...and when he couldn't bear it, he kept walking toward his ultimate goal, but someone came and carried the cross behind Jesus.

Luke 23:26 "As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus."

- Jesus was fully God, but fully human. God shows us that in His humanity, he chose to be vulnerable and not to carry the cross alone. He not only had God, His Father with him, but when it was too heavy, there was someone else to carry the load.
- Some of us are trying to carry the weight of the world on our own shoulders – you aren't meant to carry that alone. Lay your pride aside. Trade your strength for vulnerability...
 - Open your Bible, find truth in God's Word (reach out for Him)
 - Reach out for prayer / confess where you're struggling (brings healing)
 - Get some help (struggling in marriage, or parenting phase – reach out and learn)
 - Join a Group (begin this week)
- **ILL: I just did this in December – Vulnerable with some Sisters and asked for prayer!**
- I challenge you, don't carry your cross alone. It's okay to fall, but you need someone there to help pick you up.

3. Crosses have Great Reward.

- When we follow after God with our whole heart – when we obey His ways and His will – when we take up our cross & deny ourselves...there is a reward.
- The ultimate reward that we have is because Jesus took up His cross, and freed us from our sin, gave us eternal life, and access to the Father.
- **But we also get to see additional rewards here on earth**
 - Choosing to serve, see salvations
 - Fast, and see answered prayer
 - Lead a group and see life change
 - Take care of someone who is sick and watch them recover
 - Give generously and then God blesses us even more
 - Are kind to that coworker and watch them turn around
- **ILL: Last week, visiting Mom – long line (wanted to take up myself – rethink their system, tell someone about all that was wrong, complain to the people around me – instead, I seized the opportunity to be positive, to encourage the security guy, to be thankful that we could be there) – reward was joy, life to the full in that moment...**
- And sometimes, we take up our cross, deny ourselves and we don't see the reward here or now...but in Matthew 16, after Jesus said – what does it profit if you lose your soul, he says:

Matthew 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done."

- This life is not all there is – don't give up. Keep obeying. And Your WILL be rewarded according to what you have done.
- God's love is unconditional, but his reward is attached to our obedience.
- **MIP: Where do we need to obey to have confidence that a reward is coming???**

Jesus is speaking in Luke 17:31 "On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything."

Luke 17:33 "Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it."

We will get our life back when we trade it for His. When we realize it's not ours to begin with. And ultimately it's the BEST trade.

We can't trade our life for His, if we are clinging to our ways. Our pride. Our self. Our unforgiveness.

- Maybe you're walking around offended – you can deny that offense & choose to forgive.
 - The last act that Jesus did as God in the flesh was on the cross, he chose to forgive & willingly gave his life for us!
- Maybe we are so focused on self that we can't see God or others.
- Remember – the enemy wants to steal this life, but often times we let him by our own lack of surrender.
- **ILL: Text from surgery center – "You give. You take away. I choose to bless your name. You are a good Father. You have a good plan. I love you." Later God showed me that if I had been with someone we would have tried to figure it out OR if I was on social media I would have medicated with distraction: Instead, I had UNION – I found LIFE!**
- The best trade begins with keeping the reality of the cross alive for ourselves.
- Maybe you've never experienced the cross of Jesus – today can be your day! Opportunity to pray.

Challenge: "Holy Spirit, show us where we need to deny ourselves. Where have we been jealous? Offended? Selfish? What cross we are to take up? Surrender...Not my will, but yours Father..."

PRAY

- **SALVATION**
- **SURRENDER – deny ourselves. Our ways & choose to obey, take up our cross and follow you.**