

# Following Jesus - Part 6 : “The Big Why”

## Introduction and Prayer

Well, good evening to all of you. So glad you can join us once again this Saturday evening. This is our sixth and second last message in the CEP series on following Jesus. So glad that you have been with us since circuit breaker days. We are now in phase one of reopening, hopefully going to phase two soon. And I hope this has been a blessing to you. It has been a blessing for me to be able to share God's precious truths with you. And my prayer is that you may really know his word and grow deep in Him and enjoy Him and worship and to serve Him. Let me begin this time in a word of prayer once again. Father, thank You for this time, I pray that you will teach us your word and bless your people that you might be glorified in and through us. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

## The Big “Why?”

Now, I know many of you struggle with this in your life. And that is to study. Studying is not easy, isn't it? Sometimes we just don't have the aptitude for it. But there may be other reasons why people struggle in studies. And how about this? Weight loss or exercise? It's also something that we struggle with? And why is it that we struggle? And how about loving your husband or loving your wife? That's something we know we should do. But we find it very hard to do. Now, what is it that makes all these things easier? Or what is it that makes all these things harder? Many things you can think about, but one thing I want to focus on this evening is the question why? Studying is hard when you do not know why you should study. loving your wife is hard when you do not know why you should love her. Exercising is hard when you do not know why you should exercise. And I think that's the same with regards to the Christian life. Christian living requires the understanding of why. So today's session is entitled The big 'Why?'. You really need to know why, otherwise, you will never really follow Jesus well.

## Wrong Motivations: Self-righteousness

So what are some of the reasons that you should not have in following Jesus, we're going to look first at some wrong motivations. One wrong motivation that the Bible forbids, is that of self-righteousness. There are people today who want to follow Jesus because they think that that is the means by which they can earn favor with God. And God hates that, don't ever try that. You never get right with God by doing things on your own. You never get right with God by assuming that you can earn his favor. Because that absolutely demeans God to think that he can be reached by our sinful standards. And actually self-righteousness, according to the Bible is pure pride, to think that we could in our sinful flesh accomplish that. So don't ever try to follow Jesus. Don't ever try to obey the Bible as a means to earn favor with God. Self-righteousness, or what we would call legalism, living by the law in order to earn favor with God is not God's prescribed way at all. I also want to say that maybe subtly related to this is don't think that serving God is a means to cover up for your sins and your failures in life. All right, that's, that's not what the Bible prescribes, we come to God on the basis of his grace and not on the basis of our own merits, there is none.

### Wrong Motivations: "part of the gang"

Now a second rung motivation is simply to want to be part of the gang. You know, there are people who go to church, join Bible studies, prayer meeting, serve, because they just want to be in the in group, they don't want to be left out. So, for that reason, they kind of be more engaged in church activities, they want to be part of the gang. I think that's not a proper motivation as well.

### Wrong Motivation: Pride

The third wrong motivation is simply pride, to look good in front of others. So, they want to live a holy life. They want to go to church they want to give to the church, they want to help the poor, because they want to be seen of men, no matter what you're doing, that motivation to receive praise of men, to be seen of men is a wrong motivation. So, these are common wrong motivations for the Christian life.

### Right Motivation: Grace

What then is the right motivation? What's the big why? So let's look at that in Romans chapter 12. As the Bible says, "I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (Romans 12:1) What should fuel and motivate worship and a living sacrifice is the mercies of God, the grace of God, the love of God, and what he has done for us in Jesus Christ. We have mentioned earlier that self-righteousness is not the right motivation. Self-righteousness is the attempt by sinners, to reach God, in our own strength, we want to earn our way to heaven. And in God's eyes, that is not acceptable, that does not cut it with God. On the other hand, the right motivation is based not on what we have done, but on what God has done. See, it begins with God, that He reveals to us out of His grace, He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, and Jesus, we are taught in the Bible died on the cross to save us from our sins. And those who believe this message will naturally be filled with gratitude in our hearts. And when we are grateful to God, we want to live out as what Romans 12 would say, by His mercies. We are fueled and motivated to live a life of living sacrifice, of worship, and so we aspire to live a life of godliness, and this godliness is necessary because we know that will glorify God. So, this is not self-righteousness. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, we see elsewhere in Luke seven. "Therefore, I tell you, her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much, but he who is forgiven little, loves little" (Luke 7:47) Why would she love Jesus much? Because the Bible tells us she's loved much, she knows the mercies, the grace of God. And again, in 2 Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ controls us." And in 1 John 4:19, "We love because he first loved us". So, the very important motivation in a Christian life is the mercies of God. So, what's the big why? God's love, God's mercy. And when we understand that we begin to live lives very differently. So, the big motivation in the Christian life is that of love, God's love for us, by the mercies of God. And this motivation is going to be manifested in a very concrete way. Now, Paul says, be a living sacrifice.

### To be a living sacrifice

What does that look like? It's very concrete is being expressed or detailed in Romans chapters 12, to 15, it's going to be seen in a way you use your spiritual gifts to serve one another. It's going to be this is

seen in a way you love one another. You will read verses there that speaks about given to hospitality, to meet needs. And then you will see that this living sacrifice is seen in a way you do not avenge yourself. It's very natural, when we live for ourselves to take revenge. But a living sacrifice understands that I'm living for God, and He does not want me to avenge myself. To be a living sacrifice means that I recognize God's placement of authorities over me, and that I need to submit to them. To be a living sacrifice means that I will be careful not to stumble others. You see all these things flow from the understanding of being a living sacrifice. And the reason why you are living sacrifice is because of the Gospel, the mercies, the love and the grace of God in Jesus Christ. And so we do all these things, because we are motivated by love. So, the big why is so important. Yes, we need the power of the Holy Spirit. We looked at that a couple of weeks ago. But we also need to be very clear, why? And I think the number one reason in the Bible is grace, God's love for you. Now, let me speed on to another two powerful motivations. The reason why I will be a living sacrifice, I will obey God, I will honor Him and glorify Him is number one, the love, the grace, the mercy of God.

### Right Motivation: Gladness

Number two, it's because of gladness. Now you say that is so obvious. Well, the gladness I'm talking about is the gladness that flows from God in obedience. You see in Matthew 11 Verse 29, to 30, Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light". Sometimes, oftentimes, people think that living in sin is pleasurable. Let me say this, it is, but only for a short period of time, it actually brings you greater sorrow and bondage and alienation from God. But the Bible tells us that when we follow Jesus, take on his yoke, fulfill the same agenda he has, which is to glorify the Father, then the Bible tells us, Jesus tells us you find rest for your souls, because His burden is easy, or his yoke is easy, and His burden is light. Again, we see in John 15, verse 11, "These things I've spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full". So, there is a blessedness, in abiding in Jesus, we're going to learn about that next week. There's the blessedness in doing the Father's will. So, I want to encourage you, obey God, follow Jesus today. Why, you say? Because He loves you. He loves you in Jesus Christ, He has given you his Son, he has given you the Bible, He has given you the church, He has given you all things that pertain to life and godliness. And follow Jesus today because number two, gladness, there is rest. There is real joy when we obey Him and not live in sin.

### Right Motivation: Glory

Finally, the third and last motivation is that of glory. So very simple way of looking at motivation. Look at the cross, look back at what Jesus has done. Look within yourself today and realize that real gladness comes from following him, and then look forward to the glory that is to come. This is a very powerful motivator in the Bible, repeated many times, Matthew 5:12, "Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven". That's something that will take place in the future. Matthew 6:20, "But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven". So, there is a certain enjoyment in the time that is to come. "If anyone would serve me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also, if anyone serves me, the father will honor him." (John 12:26) Again, we look forward to a future honor from God Himself.

1 Corinthians 3:14, "he will receive a reward". 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord". And then Colossians 3:23 to 24, "You will receive the inheritance as your reward".

### Conclusion and Prayer

So, this is not meant to be a very comprehensive session. But I want to help you lock in these powerful motivators. Why should I deny myself and follow Jesus? Why should I give myself for the sake of the gospel? Why should I serve? Why should I lead a holy life? Very simple, because God loves you. Very simple, because when you do so, there is a joy in your heart. Very simple, because it is worth it. In the end, there will be a glory and reward that is to come. So, may these three motivators undergird all that you know, and motivate you in being a living sacrifice to bring Him glory. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this time with these simple teachings, I pray your people will be encouraged and by the help of your Holy Spirit, we will not only know these realities, but we will apply them regularly in our lives, whether it be in obedience, in service. in relationships, we pray, Dear Lord, we will live for you. Thank you, in Jesus' name. Amen. Do join me in our Q&A session right after this. Look forward to seeing you there.