August 20, 2017

Series: Asking for Directions

Growth Track Step 2 - Finding Freedom - Connection - Relationships

Give a result of generosity …

6 a.m. Prayer Meetings this week - 9 a.m. on Saturday

Pray

**Headwinds**

John 15:18-16:4

**Intro:** Asking for Directions - getting direction in our lives from God -

1st message - We have been given clear directions to our ultimate destination.

2nd message - Jesus gives us a guide who shows us the steps we need to take - The Holy Spirit is the Guide.

Last week - Fuel - Incentives - Staying in a relationship with Jesus - This gives us Lots of Life, Answered Prayer, God being Honored, Real Love, and Overwhelming Joy!

Anytime you go on a journey - any time you try for something great, there will be opposition.

Why do we always expect things to go easy?

That takes away joy! Stop expecting things to go easy! Expect things to go hard - really hard - then when it doesn’t go as hard as you thought - you won’t feel so bad.

But if you expect no opposition, even the slightest bit of opposition can throw you off!

Jesus is meeting with His followers towards the end of His time here - He’s getting ready to leave - and He’s not going to leave in the prettiest way … crucifixion …

He gives His followers some expectations - if we are following Jesus we can have these expectations as well.

There is a negative expectation - a positive expectation - then an instruction as to what to do about it.

**> Expect Hatred**

John 15:18-20 - If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. Do you remember what I told you? ‘A slave is not greater than the master.’ Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.

The world here is referring to the world system - for which the Bible says for the time being Satan is the ruler of the world system.

If you haven’t noticed, most people in the world, and most nations, do not follow the teachings of Jesus.

Lots of war, lots of problems, lots of hatred, lots of opposition to people who really love Jesus and want to help others come to know Him!

Satan was once called Lucifer. He was an angel who wanted to usurp God - overthrow Him. He lost. God won. Satan got kicked out of God’s organization - and until the final judgment comes he gets to cause havoc around here.

Why won’t the final judgment come and end it all? Good question!

2nd Peter 3:9 - The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

God wants more people to come into His family and He is waiting on us to bring them in.

Random Acts of Kindness cards …

Once you begin to follow Christ, you are not part of this world system anymore. We are still in the world, but we are not of the world. The world doesn’t rule us. The world doesn’t dictate to us. We are part of another Kingdom now - one that will last forever and never be overthrown.

But until the final culmination comes, we will experience much opposition in this world. Expect it.

Get your expectations in line.

We can’t go along to get along in the world and still be in a vibrant life-giving relationship with Jesus!

We can’t help other people get out of the life-sucking world system that is destroying them unless we are out of it as well and have Jesus’ life flowing through us to give life to them!

But here’s another expectation that goes along with this opposition -

Matthew 5:11-12 - God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

Oh yeah - you will be hated for following Jesus - there will be opposition - but there will also be joy!

This is not an isolated warning. If we are not experiencing difficulty, then maybe we need to get into the fight a little more!

No pain, no gain! No guts, no glory! You want real joy? Win a real spiritual victory!

2nd Timothy 3:12 - Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Revelation 13:10 - …God’s holy people must endure persecution patiently and remain faithful.

1st Timothy 6:12 - Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses.

This persecution has happened all through the centuries and it is happening all over the world right now. There is no reason not to expect it. It is the word of Jesus.

People will hate us - and a whole bunch of people won’t listen to us!

John 15:20-25 - …And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me. They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. Anyone who hates me also hates my Father. If I hadn’t done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father. This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures: ‘They hated me without cause.’

This doesn’t mean we stop talking - this doesn’t mean we stop sharing the Good News - they can’t NOT listen if we are not talking.

We have to give everyone an opportunity. Everyone in your sphere of influence should have the opportunity to accept or reject the message of Christ.

They hated Him without cause. Many will oppose us without cause - the only reason is because we are connected to Christ.

Keep sharing - it may lead to opposition, but it will also lead to great joy! It is also our commission - it is our purpose -

Know God - Find Freedom - Discover Purpose - Make a Difference!

Growth Track!

Random Acts of Kindness cards …

There is a positive expectation He gives us - this is great!

**> Expect the Holy Spirit.**

John 15:26-27 - But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

What is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God.

There is One God, but He has revealed Himself clearly to us in three ways - three parts.

God the Father - God the Son (Jesus) - God the Holy Spirit - He is the One whom Jesus sent after His resurrection and return to heaven.

The Holy Spirit lives inside those who believe in Jesus. He is our Helper, our Advocate, the One who is alongside us every step of the way - through every form of opposition, we are never alone.

He is the One who gives us power, wisdom and gifts to help bring others into a relationship with Jesus.

**The Holy Spirit gives us power to sail through the Headwinds!**

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 2:1-4 - On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

Are afraid of sharing? Are you afraid of the opposition? Are you afraid of using your gifts?

The Holy Spirit fills us with power to overcome the fear! Rely on the Holy Spirit! Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to increase in you until you experience what the Apostles did.

Peter before and after …

Paul thought this was very important -

Acts 19:1-6 - While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers.“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them.

“No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

“Then what baptism did you experience?” he asked.

And they replied, “The baptism of John.”

Paul said, “John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.”

As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues

and prophesied.

It’s important for you to be baptized AFTER you believe in Jesus - and have an understanding of what baptism is all about -

And - it’s important for you to receive the power of the Holy Spirit! This power gives us the ability to do what God wants us to do no matter what the opposition!

“I don’t think that’s for me!”

Acts 2:39 - This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.

Now - I said there was a negative expectation - Hatred - and a positive expectation - the Holy Spirit - then a word of instruction -

**> Hold onto your faith.**

John 16:1-4 - I have told you these things so that you won’t abandon your faith. For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. This is because they have never known the Father or me. Yes, I’m telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn’t tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer.

Sometimes the rejection that comes will be from those closest to you - hold onto your faith.

There are people in the world today killing Christians and they think they are doing God a service for it. We are seeing this promise fulfilled.

We are seeing believers hold onto their faith.

Last May, when Haters of Christians killed 29 Egyptians on a bus including women and children, this is the report that came -

*Survivors reported that the 29 Egyptians - 10 of them children - killed by Islamists May 26, were individually asked if they were Christian. Each one was told to renounce his or her faith and accept Islam, or die. Each of the 29 - including 10 children - refused and was shot in the head or throat.*

While it is certainly happening more frequently in other places, there is no reason to doubt that it could happen here. Any single individual could think they are taking up the banner of Islam, or Allah, and decide right here they want to take action - it could happen tomorrow - it could happen Wednesday - we don’t know.

I’m not trying to scare anyone - but Jesus gave us this expectation -and He said - HOLD ONTO YOUR FAITH!

What we believe in is for eternity, not just for a few years on this earth!

The next generation is facing great headwinds.

There was a young girl in the 9th grade - grades failing, skipping school, hanging out with students who did the same.  Her personality changed for the worse.

One day in December 1996, the mother quit her full-time job to spend more time with her children and went into the young girl’s room to look for a teen Bible.  Instead she found some letters written by her daughter and a friend.  They were full of sex talk, gory drawings, satanic spells, suicide and murder.  The letters spoke of the girl’s plans to kill her parents, so the parents took the letters to the sheriff.  They enrolled their daughter in a Christian school.  They began to regularly search her room and backpack, monitored her use of the phone and forbade her to leave the house without their permission.  No contact with old friends.  The only thing she was allowed to do was attend youth group at church.

Nothing changed right away.  The girl was filled with hate and anger toward God and her parents.  She smoked pot, drank, mutilated herself, listened to music with the worst messages.

Three months after changing schools the girl was allowed to attend a youth retreat with a friend.  When her parents picked her up she said, “Mom, I’ve changed.  I know you are not going to believe it, but I’ll prove it to you.”

It was true – Cassie Bernall had become a new person!  She requested to go back to public school.  She told her mom, “I can’t witness to the kids at Christian school.”

On April 20, 1999, two fellow students, Eric Harris & Dylan Klebold, came to her school that day with guns, and on a mission to kill.  They asked this young girl if she believed in God – she said yes!  She held on to her faith!

* You will be hated
* You have been given the Holy Spirit
* Hold onto your faith!

God’s got a purpose for us - for you - to make a difference in the lives of others.

To do this we have to expect the headwinds - be ready - and be ready to overcome!

We love you!