September 24, 2017

Series: It’s All Yours!

Growth Track Step 4 today …

Example of Generosity …

Prayer

**Choices**

John 18:1-27

**Intro:** It’s all yours!

You’ve heard people try to sell you something - a car - a house - work, family & pleasure - “You can have it all!” - Game Show - “All this and more can be yours!

What do I mean when I say - It’s All Yours?

I’m looking at the teachings of Jesus at the end of His life -

Sources of Joy

* Confidence for the Future
* Answers to Prayer
* Plain truth & love
* Peace

The Most Important Prayer - the things Jesus prayed for us:

* Honoring God
* Protection from spiritual attacks
* Receiving truth that leads to holiness & joy, sharing that with others
* Living in the same kind of unity that exists between Jesus and Father God.
* Experiencing His kind of love

Yes - all this can be yours - and more!

Freedom -

**You have the freedom to receive all this that I’m talking about - or not to receive it:**

**> The Choice to Reject**

John 18:1-9 - After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. “Who are you looking for?” he asked.

“Jesus the Nazarene,” they replied.

“I Am he,”Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) As Jesus said “I Am he,” they all drew back and fell to the ground! Once more he asked them, “Who are you looking for?”

And again they replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

“I told you that I Am he,” Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.” He did this to fulfill his own statement: “I did not lose a single one of those you have given me.”

Judas was one of Jesus’ followers, but He came to the conclusion that Jesus’ plans weren’t for Him. He had another plan - He thought it was a better plan - So He chose to reject everything we’ve been talking about -

His rejection led to him betraying Jesus - and Jesus being arrested and turned over to be killed.

That didn’t stop God’s plan - but it stole all of God’s blessings from Judas.

When we reject God’s plan, we lose out on all He has for us.

This is not a pick and choose what you like kind of deal

* This is not like picking out options on a car.
* This is not like ordering the salad and leaving the croutons off.

God’s deal is all or nothing - the reason it is that way is because only He knows what is really good for us. We have to trust Him, listen to Him, accept everything He offers us -

To reject part is to reject all. But you have this choice. He gives you this choice.

He tells you everything that is good - He tells you there will be trouble - He tells you He will give you peace in the trouble - He tells you that in the end things will be better than you could ever imagine -

He leaves the choice up to you. All or nothing.

Think of Judas - think of what he was offered -

* Jesus had many people following Him, but one night He spent the night in prayer to decide which twelve should be closest to Him and receive His authority and power - Judas was one of those twelve.
* He was chosen to spend every day with Jesus for over 3 years …
* Judas had a part in feeding the 5000 …
* When the disciples were sent out 2 by 2, Judas was among them ….
* When they came back and reported miracles, and power of demons, Judas was part of that…

He saw the power of God - but in the end, he placed a higher importance on what this world considers important. He rejected the plan of God and the offer of God as being less valuable than a kingdom of this world.

What makes rejection so painful is that the person who is rejecting you knows your heart.

Have you ever been rejected? Do you know how much that hurts?

Judas’ rejection of Jesus was painful - But Jesus knows your heart just as much as He knew Judas. Jesus wants you just as much as He wanted Judas.

Jesus is willing to give you power and authority, just like He gave Judas.

And your rejection of Him will hurt Jesus just as bad as Judas’ rejection - and just as bad as any rejection you have ever experienced.

But Jesus still gives you the choice.

He doesn’t have to! He gives you the choice because He loves you! He respects you! He gives you this authority! This is part of what it means to have it all - you have the choice!

A cat doesn’t have a choice - a dog doesn’t have a choice - no other part of creation has the reason and rationale - no other part of Creation has been given this choice, but us - but you.

After all He’s done for you - after all He’s offered you - you have this choice to reject.

**> The Choice to Receive**

John 18:10-14 - Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest’s slave. But Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?”

So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, “It’s better that one man should die for the people.”

Jesus was willing to receive God’s plan - no matter how difficult it was.

Some of you may think choosing to follow God will be difficult - it will - but

**The result of the difficult choice is better than the result of the easy choice.**

Some who are already following Christ, may have difficulty choosing His plans for you because you know they will be difficult - it’s a difficult choice - but **the result of the difficult choice is better than the result of the easy choice.**

Peter struggled to accept this plan. It wasn’t what He wanted. He didn’t understand -

Here’s our problem - here’s where we have trouble following God’s plan - He can see the outcome, we can’t.

We have to trust Him! Receiving His plan is trusting Him! Rejecting His plan is not trusting Him!

Can you trust God and receive God’s plan no matter how difficult it may be?

Once while Francis of Assisi was hoeing his garden, he was asked, “What would you do if you suddenly learned that you were to die at sunset today?” He replied, “I would finish hoeing my garden.”

Do we have this kind of peace that comes from trusting in God’s plan?

A lady once asked John Wesley if he knew that he would die at midnight the next day, how would he spend the intervening time. He replied, “Why, madam, just as I intend to spend it now. I would preach this evening … and again at five tomorrow morning; after that I would ride to Tewkesbury, preaching the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I would then go to Martin’s house … talk and pray with the family as usual, retire myself to my room at 10 o’clock, commend myself to my Heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in glory.”

That’s the peace and confidence we can have when we trust in God’s plan no matter how difficult it may seem!

Walter Knight told of an old Scottish woman who had not learned this lesson - she went from home to home across the countryside selling thread, buttons, and shoestrings. When she came to an unmarked crossroad, she would toss a stick into the air and go in the direction the stick pointed when it landed.

One day, however, she was seen tossing the stick up several times. “Why do you toss the stick more than once?” someone asked.

“Because,” replied the woman,”it keeps pointing to the left, and I want to take the road on the right.”

She kept throwing the stick into the air until it pointed in the direction she wanted to go!

Oftentimes we reject God’s plan, and we keep going from person to person, from counselor to counselor, from pastor to pastor, until we find someone who will tell us what we want to hear.

That in and of itself should tell you something about what God’s purpose is.

So - we can reject God’s plan - and be aligned with Judas, Jesus’ betrayer -

Or, we can receive God’s plan - no matter how difficult, and be aligned with Jesus.

Peter struggled - but he learned - He teaches us another choice -

**> The Choice to Repent**

John 18:15-27 - Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest’s courtyard with Jesus. Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in.

The woman asked Peter, “You’re not one of that man’s disciples, are you?”

“No,” he said, “I am not.”

Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. Jesus replied, “Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said.”

Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. “Is that the way to answer the high priest?” he demanded.

Jesus replied, “If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I’m speaking the truth, why are you beating me?”

Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, “You’re not one of his disciples, are you?”

He denied it, saying, “No, I am not.”

But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?” Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.

While Jesus was inside - his abuse was beginning … Peter was outside denying their relationship …

Peter was there like Judas - called after prayer … followed Jesus everywhere … teachings … miracles … took part in all of it.

“I don’t know Him! I swear, by God!”

Peter messed up badly - here’s where he differed from Judas - Judas realized his rejection and gave up - he went and hung himself.

Peter realized his rejection - and repented immediately. Matthew, Mark & Luke all tell us that as soon as Jesus’ prediction came to pass, Peter remembered, and he went out and wept bitterly.

You may have rejected all or part of God’s plans at this point in your life - to repent is to change. You can change your rejection into reception.

Judas didn’t - Peter did - and it made all the difference in the world!

Patrick Morley, in his book *I Surrender*, writes that the church has an integrity problem - we have a misconception “that we can add Christ to our lives, but not subtract sin. It is a change in belief without a change in behavior.”

This is what we mean when we say all or nothing.

It’s His plan - His plan has to become our plan - It’s not part of His plan and part of ours - That’s what Judas thought he could get away with.

**Choices:**

* **Reject**
* **Receive**
* **Repent**

What’s yours?