

“Renegade Gospel: Seeing Jesus Today”

Matthew 7:7-8, John 12:20-21

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Rev. Dave Baldridge

Palm Harbor United Methodist Church, Palm Harbor, Florida

Song “Soldiers” by group Out of Eden that God Rodz presented was a new song to me. Little on the Renegade side! Did you hear the words?

I just got one question

Where my soldiers at

Gotta let the world know it

That you're not afraid to show it

If you're not afraid to show it

Let me hear you

All my people in the place

You're looking good with style and grace

But here's my question, listen clear

Where my soldiers

(Right here)

Say hey

Where my soldiers at

(Right here)

The world's watching you

Whatcha gonna do now?

Will you make a move?

Will you show and prove?

In all that you do

Gotta represent

Everybody on the left

And everybody on the right

(Are you) (Willing to testify?)

Where my soldiers at

(Right here)

Our student ministries is called Soldiers for Christ. But are we not all soldiers for Christ? Should we not all put on the armor of God and realize that we are fighting a battle for our very souls. And God has placed in our hands, on our lips the responsibility to let others know.

Tonight, Harvest America along with free food, great Contemporary Christian music there will be a call for salvation. a call for people to see Jesus. We are seeking people looking for Jesus.

Now let me stop and get a bit personal....Are you looking for Jesus? Do you see Jesus today? Where is your sense of expectancy?

Have you ever lost something, for example your keys or you cell phone. You lose it in plain view. Sometimes you overlook it. Perhaps you are so consumed by something else that you don't see it. Maybe you are in a rush and are too busy to take the proper time to look for it. Maybe you expect it to be in a certain place. So it is with Jesus. Sometimes we lose Him in plain sight. We overlook Him. We are so consumed by the world's issues that we don't see Him. We are too busy with life to actually see Him and here from Him. Maybe we expect to find Him just in church.

Oh beloved...be careful. Rephrasing of choir anthem...Jesus goes before us, behind us. He is the one who saves. He is right here. Do you see Him? He is, He is...the rock we need to stand on. We want His kingdom to reign.

We ask and we seek...and yet to be honest it seems like God doesn't hear our voice. Let's relook at what Savanna read for us in Matthew 7.

Matthew 7:7-8 English Standard Version (ESV) ⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

As we keep those verses up here is what Rev. Slaughter in his book “Renegade Gospel says about these verses: “It’s important to note that in the original Greek, the verbs used in that passage are in present continuous tense---that is, a more accurate reading of the verbs might be, “Ask and keep on asking...Seek and keep on seeking....” Expectations needs to be constant and ongoing---a daily intentional, whole-life priority of seeking the presence of Christ today, of actively listening for Christ’s voice in the present. Page 81

Are we seeking His presence...are we persistent about it. Are we actively listening for Christ’s voice? Maybe He is speaking and we are not listening. Maybe He is revealing Himself and we are not seeing Him.

The scripture from John 12 takes place right after Palm Sunday. We have some Greeks/Gentiles/non-believers come to Phillip and ask... “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Has anybody ever stopped and asked you, “Excuse me sir, madam, we want to see your Jesus.” Or perhaps I need to ask do they see Jesus in you?

A little boy who was frightened one night during a big thunderstorm. Terrified, he called out from his room, "Daddy, I'm scared!"

His father, not wanting to get out of bed, called back, "Don't worry, Son. God loves you and will take care of you."

There was a moment of silence. The little boy said, "I know God loves me, but right now, I need somebody with skin on."

Sometimes our great and awesome God seems almost untouchable. That is where Jesus comes in. He was God with skin on, walking among us and showing us what God is like. However, sometimes Jesus seems untouchable to those that have not yet seen Him and know Him. Can you be Jesus with skin on? You may be the only one they come in contact with who is a believer.

So you can pray and invite and bring people to Harvest America where they can see Jesus. However, I want to let you know that we need to be doing this on a regular basis. Once again we have made some cards (**IMAGE**) that simply say "Love to Have You worship with us!" They have our worship times...you simply hand out. Leave with your tip. Give to your neighbor. However, we have to be aware that we don't just want to bring people to church we want to bring them to Jesus. Invite...yes. Bring...even better. Tell them about Jesus yourself...Fantastic. At the very least invite them to church and prayerfully we will have the expectation that we through the ministries and messages of PHUMC they will see Jesus.

When my children were younger they would ask me on a Saturday night... "Dad what are you preaching about tomorrow." My answer... Jesus. They would ask me this about every week, and my response was the same. They eventually stopped asking what I was going to be preaching on because they knew that I was going to say Jesus.

Our worship is not about our styles and preferences. Our worship is not about us. It is about Jesus. We are called to minister and tell the story, the Good News of Jesus to All Ages!

Churches today have to be careful of what Rev. Slaughter in his book says is "Spiritual Drowsiness." Now we all know drowsiness can be dangerous. In fact according to the National Sleep Foundation's 2005 *Sleep in America* poll, 60% of adult drivers – about 168 million people – say they have driven a vehicle while feeling drowsy in the past year, and more than one-third, (37% or 103 million people), have actually fallen asleep at the wheel!

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year. This results in an estimated 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries...These figures may be the tip of the iceberg, since currently it is difficult to attribute crashes to sleepiness.

(DrowsyDriving.org)(National Sleep Foundation)

Now let me equate the dangers of being physically drowsy to being spiritually drowsy. Now some may wonder what I mean by this. Here is what it says in Renegade Gospel: “To see Christ today, we need to wake up, stay alert, and stop wallowing in complacency, comfort, and spiritual sleep....Most of all, we need constantly to be aware of our dependence on God.” Page 94

We must not become complacent and spiritually drowsy. We must stay awake! We have people like the Greek who says, “We wish to see Jesus.” Are we showing people Jesus?

In the book of Revelation Jesus speaks to the church at Ephesus. This is in Revelation chapter 2. He brags on the church to a certain extent but then as good as they are he has a problem with them. Now I am going to use Eugene Peterson’s The Message Bible. He is direct and very plain. Kind of hit me between the eyes.

Revelation 2:3-5 The Message ²⁻³ “I see what you’ve done, your hard, hard work, your refusal to quit. I know you can’t stomach evil, that you weed out apostolic pretenders. I know your persistence, your courage in my cause, that you never wear out. ⁴⁻⁵ “But you walked away from your first love—why? What’s going on with you, anyway? Do you have any idea how far you’ve fallen? A Lucifer fall! “Turn back! Recover your dear early love.

Other translations say, “You’ve lost your first love.” Don’t forsake your first love...don’t forsake that love of Christ. I know your persistence. I know your courage for the sake of Christ. You seem to never wear out. All good things....but....but don’t walk away from your first love. 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because he first loved us.” Don’t fall asleep, do not become stale and stagnant. Do not be lulled into the state of comfortable, safe Christianity. Don’t get stuck in a rut.

We cannot afford, the Church cannot afford, the kingdom of God cannot afford for us to fall asleep at the wheel. So we need to Wake Up!!!!!! Be active for Jesus.

Look up! And see the cross of Jesus and know that He not only died for you, but He died for all those around us. Invite them. Bring them.

Speak up! Yes, speak up for Jesus. Give an invite card. Tell them you would love to have them worship with you. Let’s bring people to Jesus not just the church.

So Wake Up! Look Up! Speak Up...and are your ready.....Stand Up!

Stand up for Jesus! Take a stand. Either you are with Him or you are against Him.

The Lord is with you.....