

Who We Want to Be, part 5_ An Obeying Community
August 25, 2013

This morning we wrap up this series of sermons about who we want to be as Emmanuel Baptist Church. We have not yet arrived. We are not yet who we want to become. We are still in process. We are still looking to the future as a church. Read this objective aloud with me.

Under God, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus, the Christ; we commit ourselves... IN APPLICATION... To apply the teaching of Jesus to our daily activities, encouraging others to choose the freedom and responsibility of a Christian life-style.

Notice the key word is application, defined as applying the teaching of Jesus to our daily activities. This means your individual daily activities, not the church's daily activities. Together, as the church, we recognize that obedience to Jesus is an individual thing. The church isn't living the Christian life for you.

If you take any of the other objectives we have looked at, worship, proclamation, education, or ministry, you see both a group and individual aspect to them. Take worship for example.

The church sponsors group worship experiences. But the church doesn't worship for you. The church plans worship experiences in which you can participate and, we hope, worship God yourself. But the church cannot worship God for you.

Another example is our education objective. The church plans Bible studies. But the church can only teach the Bible. We can't learn the Bible truths for you. Nor does the church make you learn the Bible. We cannot fill your mind or heart with its truths. We can provide help in YOUR learning of Biblical truth.

In that same way, the church isn't applying the teaching of Jesus to your daily activities. The church isn't living the Christian life for you. The church does not choose the freedom and responsibility of the Christian life for you. You must do so for yourself. You must apply the teaching of Jesus to your daily activities. Living a Christian lifestyle in your job is your job. Living a Christian lifestyle in your school is for you to do, not the church.

What the church CAN do is urge each other to apply the teaching of Jesus to each other's daily activities. That means each of us encouraging each other. Sure, the Bible study teachers and pastor do it. But it is not their responsibility alone. It is the responsibility of each of us to encourage each other to choose the freedom and responsibility of the Christian life.

We expect each other to apply the teachings of Jesus to our daily activities for three reasons. First, ...

Apply the teaching of Jesus to your daily activities because you believe Jesus.

We believe Jesus is who He said He is.

John 4:25-26 (NIV)

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Messiah. And we believe Him. That is the first reason we apply His teaching to our daily activities.

We believe all that Jesus said about Himself. We believe that He came to earth to die for our sins. We believe God, the Father, accepted Jesus' death as the full penalty for our sins. We believe God proved His acceptance by raising Jesus from the dead. We believe Jesus then appeared to His apostles in His resurrection body, commissioned them for their ministry, and ascended up into the heavens before their eyes. We believe He is coming back the same way to appear to all men in His glory and gather His followers to Himself. And we will be with Jesus forever after. All of these things we believe about Jesus.

Because we believe Jesus we also believe His teaching about how we should live for Him. Those teachings are in the Bible, spelled out in the four biographies of His life and ministry, and further explained in the rest of the New Testament writings.

This is what we believe about Jesus. It is why we follow Him. It is why we want to apply His teaching to our lives. It is why we urge you to do the same. It is why we have made this an objective of our church.

Apply the teaching of Jesus to your daily activities because you believe Jesus. Secondly, **Apply the teaching of Jesus to your daily activities because you want freedom.**

We are Americans. As Americans, one of the things we treasure is our freedom. This freedom has many aspects to it. And we hardly think of ourselves as slaves to anyone or anything. Yet, Jesus says that is what we are.

John 8:31-36 (NIV)

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

We are slaves, not slaves to people, but slaves to sin. We are held captive by the sin that is in us.

We usually think of sin as the wrong things we do, the breaking of laws or commandments. Those actions ARE sin. But the reason we commit those sins is because sin is first in our hearts. There is much sin in our hearts.

Our actions of sin are a symptom of the sin in our hearts. **We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners.**

When you try to stop sinning, you find you are helpless to fully do so. You succeed some, but you keep sinning. You succeed, for awhile in one area, but fail in another. You work on that new area and then commit the first sin again.

This is when you discover how deep sin runs in your heart. This is when you learn that sin is a part of you, that you are a slave to sin. Like a cancer, sin has become a part of you. That is why you sin.

Some of us have already learned of this slavery to sin problem. We have discovered that we are slaves to sin. Despite our prayers, our good intentions, and our attempts at self-improvement, we continue to sin. The sinful desires keep working their way out of us. . All our attempts to better ourselves failed. We realized we would continue to fail, that we could not clean ourselves up. We could not solve this sin problem. It ran too deep. It was too much a part of us. We finally admitted that we are slaves to sin.

It was only then that we truly understood what sin is. It was only then that we fully grasped what Jesus could do for us. In frustration and fear we threw ourselves on Jesus for mercy and forgiveness.

Only Jesus can break the bonds of this slavery. Only Jesus can free us from our sinful self. Only Jesus can begin the process of removing sin from our hearts.

This we are learning to let Jesus do. This we invite you to do also, to learn the freedom of the Christian life. Only in Jesus have we found the peace that comes with freedom from sin.

Apply the teaching of Jesus to your daily activities because you believe Jesus. Apply the teaching of Jesus to your daily activities because you want freedom. And then one more reason. **Apply the teaching of Jesus to your daily activities because you are grateful.**

In gratitude that Jesus freed us, we now live our lives for Him. We serve Jesus, for this is why we were made. We were not made to serve sin. We were made to serve Jesus. But being slaves to sin, we were powerless to serve Him. Now that He has rescued us we can fulfill the purpose for which we were created. In gratitude, in love for Him, we can serve Him.

John 14:15 (NIV) If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Because of what He has done for you, love Jesus through obedience to Him. Because Jesus died for your sin, obey Him. Because He freed you from slavery, live for Him. Because you are experiencing the joy and peace of the Christian life, submit to Him.

Do you love Jesus? If you are not living for Him, what other thing or person is more important to you than Him? What part of this fragile, temporary life do you value more than the secure, eternal life He is preparing for you?

Lay it aside. Give up your interest in it. Quit dreaming of it. Change the focus of your daydreaming to one of bringing glory to His name. Live for him. If you love Jesus, then fulfill the responsibilities of a Christian lifestyle. In this you will discover special joys and delights that await those who live in obedience to Jesus.

As a church our objectives are centered in worship of Jesus, proclamation of Jesus, education about Jesus, ministry in Jesus' name, and application of the teaching of Jesus. Our objectives come from the Bible. They reflect what we read there from Jesus' commands and the life of the first churches. God has led us to our objectives. God is moving us in this direction.

If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join with us in becoming who we want to be.

If you are a member, remember that this is who we want to be. Renew your commitment as a member. Use these objectives to focus your prayers for your church. Use these objectives to direct your prayers for each other. Use these objectives to inform your prayers for yourself.

INVITATION

I said earlier that we serve Jesus because we believe Him. We believe all that God has revealed to us about Him in the Bible. If you have now come to believe also He invites you today to receive Him as your personal Savior and Lord. If you don't know quite how to put that into words, there is a sample prayer at the end of the sermon outline in your bulletin. It represents the ideas that you need to include in your prayer of receiving Him.

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Sample Prayer:

Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner against God. I know my sin deserves death and hell. I am enslaved to sin and need a rescuer, a savior. I believe You are the Savior I need because You died for my sins. I believe you are alive today because God raised you from the dead. I now receive You, as my Savior and turn my life over to You as my Lord.