Senior Sunday: No Turning Back

5/16/21

* Have you ever thought about how nuts the disciples were?
  + Church leaders don’t like him.
  + Government leaders don’t like him.
  + Political enemies are annoyed by him.
* Jesus would never get hired as a youth minister.
  + We’d take one look at his social media page…
    - Did you see him calling the priest a hypocrite.
    - No, but did you see him running through the church like a mad-man chasing people with a whip?
    - And did you see whose pictures he was liking? I know for a fact that girl is a total sssssinner.
  + Jesus wasn’t exactly a societal role model.
  + And my point isn’t for you to be some rebel.
    - Scripture also tells us to live at peace with all men if possible.
    - That people will know we belong to him by our love.
  + My point is that Jesus wasn’t the easiest man to follow.
    - The work God had called him to do, and that he invited his disciples to join him in was costly.
    - When it came time for his trial, people were asking for a terrorist, Barabbas, to be release instead of him.
    - Can you imagine your mom giving you that advice?
    - *Act*
* And many made the choice to unfollow Jesus.
  + John 6:66, I call it the devil’s verse, because of the 666 number but also because it is the purpose of the devil wrapped up in 1 sentence.
  + “From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”
* Why did they turn back? I ask this, I bring it up, because I don’t want you to ever turn back. I want you to say for the rest of your life, “No Turning Back.”
  + Through temptations, no turning back.
  + Through doubts, no turning back.
  + Through heartbreak, disappointment, unmet expectations, no turning back.
  + When Jesus doesn’t turn out to be who you thought he was, how do you not turn back?
* Well, I can tell you a recipe that will bake up a nice batch of turning back.
  + Make Jesus out to be your genie.
  + Jesus, I’ve seen what you’ve done for them and I know you can do it for me!
  + He promises no such thing. He might even let you die. Go hungry. Be put in prison. Or worse have to drive a used car into your mid-30s, hypothetically speaking.
* He is not out to give you your best life. He is life. So much so, that you can go hungry, be in prison, drive a used car, and as long as you got him, you’ll have enough.
  + Max Lucado used to put it this way when he’d preach: I’d be forever in debt if all Jesus ever did for me was pay for my sins.
* The disciples are our example this morning.
  + You see, they originally had it way wrong.
  + They too thought Jesus, the prophesied Messiah, descendent of King David, was going to come and kick the Romans out.
* So when Jesus said, “Follow me,” they were all in.
  + 4:29, Until he goes to his hometown, proclaims the Spirit of the Lord is on him, and they tried to kill him. The dude couldn’t even win over his family. That’s like George Bush losing Texas in an election. It’s not going good.
  + 5:30, But then the Pharisees and big wigs start to question his company. I mean tax collectors? Romans and Jews despise them. Don’t you think you’re gonna need the Jewish leaders for a Jewish kingdom?
  + 6:24-26, But then Jesus goes and says blessed are the poor, hungry, weeping, and hated.
    - I’m just doing a quick google of history, and no one ever got what they wanted by being poor, hungry, sad, and hated, ever.
  + 7:14, You ever seen someone raise a boy from the dead.
    - 8:24, Or calmed a body of water in the middle of it raging?
    - 8:54, or raise a little girl form the dead?
    - 9:16, or multiply food after Sunday church without the aid of Chick-Fil-A. I don’t think so.
* This Jesus guy is tough to turn back from. But let’s be honest, he’s also tough to follow.
  + 9:23, You want to be my disciple, pick up you unfair form of suffering and death, and follow me.
* Follow me, don’t turn back.
  + You see, Jesus is not offering something so inherently attractive that everyone flocks. He’s not such a slam dunk leader that he doesn’t have to invite followers.
  + The outsiders don’t like you. The insiders don’t like you. Who are you gonna turn to to overtake the Romans?
  + Just how do you intend to give us the life and freedom we’ve been longing for?
* And as if Jesus isn’t doing a good enough job, driving people away he begins…
  + 11:52 mocking the religious
  + 12:21 mocking the wealthy
  + 12:53 dividing families
  + 13:32 calling the king names
  + 19:23 hanging out with short people for crying out loud
* But the topper of them all? The reason we have the devil’s verse, John 6:66 where people turned back?
  + 6:55-56, Jesus said, “For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.”
  + Did you hear what JC said? Oh, ya, we all heard it. I think he wants us to eat him.
  + When he said remain in me, and I in you, I didn’t think it was because I’d be eating him. I just thought he meant more quiet times.
  + 6:60, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept this?”
* And you know what’s extra nuts? Jesus doesn’t even explain himself.
  + 6:63, Instead he just says, “The words I have spoken to you – they are full of the Spirit and life.”
  + 6:66, “From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”
  + 6:67-68, “’You do not want to leave too, do you?’ Jesus asked the 12. Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”
* He doesn’t respond, “Jesus, (wink, wink) I understand that you only meant some grape juice and a cracker. I understand that you’re not going to become a earthly king and take over the Romans
  + In, fact, we know Peter doesn’t understand this stuff because he cuts a guy’s ear off so Jesus won’t be captured.
  + He doesn’t get it. All he knows is that Jesus is :69, “The Holy one of God,” and I’m not turning back.”
  + To whom would I go? Yes Jesus, your freaky weird, but your also the only one with life. I’m not turning back.
  + Even when you aren’t making any sense, I’m not turning back.
  + Even after you died, and I hadn’t figured out you were coming back, I’m not turning back.
  + Even when I got thrown in prison, I’m not turning back.
  + Even when pressed to my own death on my own cross, I’m not turning back.
* And not because if I hold on long enough I’ll get my own Job story where God doubles what was taken from me, but because even if everything is taken from me, you are enough!
  + Poor, hungry, weeping, hated. Christ is enough for me. So I’m not turning back.
  + Whom would I turn to? Seriously, who would you turn to?
    - So I can’t control who Jesus heals.
    - So I can’t control when Jesus multiplies resources.
    - So I can’t expect him to be a genie in a bottle.
    - But I know he can do those things, and so I’m not turning back.
* Instead I will keep my eyes open and every year adjust my expectations for who Jesus is and what Jesus is doing.
  + Not because I like it every moment of my life.
  + But because he either is God or he isn’t.
  + And if He is God, then I’m not turning back.
* But lastly, what happens when do turn back? When I mess up big time?
  + John 13:37, “Peter asked, ‘Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.’”
  + What happens when I make a declaration that I won’t turn back and I do.
  + We all know Peter denied Jesus 3 times at his hour of greatest need.
  + 21:17, Listen to Jesus’ response, “Do you love me?”
  + And as I say “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”
  + He will return to the place our relationship began. :19 “Follow me!”
* This life is not about what Jesus can do for you. If it is that you will turn back. Life will seem too unfair.
  + But instead, if you see what the disciples, minus Judas, saw, that life is singularly about following the un-understandable Jesus, you will discover life.
  + I don’t make the rules, I just read them as I see them.
* Luke 9:23-25, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”
  + Jesus is not here to give you your version of life. That would sound like giving Jesus the invitation to follow you.
  + He is here to give you himself, the life, and you won’t get it unless you follow him.
  + No turning back. Because there’s no life there.
  + No turning back, because He is the holy one of God, who has to words of eternal life.