

Where Will Your Beliefs Lead You?

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Have you ever contemplated how many people have risked their lives to give you the opportunity to sit where you are sitting this very moment?
1. Have you ever thought about the innumerable people who have lost their lives taking that risk?
 2. Those individuals believed that whatever was worth living for was worth dying for.
 3. Those who leave an indelible mark on our world are those who have the courage to cry, "Give me liberty, or give me death."
 4. Ultimately, all freedom is bound up in a willingness to die for something worth living for.
- B. Timothy McVeigh was a fanatic who sacrificed himself for his warped beliefs.
1. The thing so striking about his life was that he was willing to boldly lay his life on the line for what he believed.
 2. Unfortunately, what Timothy McVeigh thought was worth dying for wasn't worth dying for.
 3. Nonetheless, he staked his life on his beliefs, and those beliefs led him to murder and injury a lot of people and then die a death by execution.
- C. In this study, I want to ask you two major questions:
1. "What are you staking your life on?"
 2. "Where does your confidence lie?"
- D. Our study will take us to a number of Bible verses found in Philippians 3.

WHAT ARE YOU STAKING YOUR LIFE ON?

- A. **Ultimately, all of us are staking our lives/souls on our beliefs.**
1. Every person in this audience is staking his/her life on something.
 2. You may not be as bold or warped as Timothy McVeigh, but you are staking your life on what you believe.
 3. You are giving your life for what you believe . . . thus, your beliefs are important.
- B. **Whatever you are living for . . . you are dying for.**
1. Whatever you are spending today doing, you are dying to do it.
 2. You have given one day of your life for it.
 3. On judgment day each of us will be judged for what we believe.
 - a. On that day we will fully realize that we staked our lives on our beliefs
 - b. It may be so incremental that we don't realize it at the time; nevertheless it is true.
- C. **It is no accident that life in Christ begins with a burial.**

1. **Colossians 2:12** - “Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith (**faith is believing something**) in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”
2. To commit yourself to die with Christ. This is what baptism represents.
 - a. **Romans 6:3-5** - “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.
 - b. Baptism symbolizes dying with Christ and for Christ.
 - c. baptism symbolizes the idea that you are just dying for a new way of life.
3. This may seem harsh to a modern world. However, I want you to remember that you are dying for your life-style regardless of the style of life you have chosen.
4. You already believe that whatever is worth living for is worth dying for.
 - a. You are demonstrating that every day you live.
 - b. You are dying for your life-style regardless of the life you have chosen.
 - c. You already believe that whatever is worth living for is worth dying for and you are doing it.
 - d. You are making that choice consciously or subconsciously however subtle it is.
5. Examples:
 - a. A drug addict is willing to die for what he/she is living for.
 - b. Sexually promiscuous persons lay their lives on the line for their life-styles.
 - c. How many lay their lives on the line for bad habits daily.
 - d. Whatever we have chose to live for we must die for . . . That is the very nature of belief.

D. You can't live in this world without believing in something.

1. Even if you say you believe in nothing, you believe in something. Your “nothing” is your something.
2. To believe in nothing is to believe. Your belief in nothing will direct your life.

E. I want to ask you one of life's most important questions.

1. Is what you are presently living for . . . Really worth dying for?
2. Are the beliefs that direct your life at this very moment worth dying for?

F. Do you know how to tell whether something is worth dying for?

1. By asking yourself what difference it will make when you physically die.
2. **Philippians 1:20-24** - “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now

also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.”

- a. Paul’s beliefs had a firm grip on his life.
 - b. Fortunately Paul’s beliefs did not originate from a warped perspective of life.
 - c. The beauty of Paul’s life was that it was so wrapped up in the life and death of Christ that whether he lived or died death was a joy. Will there be joy at your death?
3. When the Old Testament spoke of bodies left lying in the street or on a garbage dump, it was an indication that those people failed to live for something worth dying for.
 4. Do you remember wicked Jezebel? A classic example to illustrate what we are talking about.
 - a. Upon her death her body was left lying in the street.
 1. The dogs came and licked her blood.
 2. It was her judgment for living a life wasted upon herself.
 3. It was a sign to all Israel that her life was an abomination to God.
 4. It was God’s signal to the world about her fateful end.
 - b. **1 Kings 21:23-26** - “And concerning Jezebel the LORD also spoke, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field. But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.”
 - c. When they went out to bury Jezebel after her death they could find nothing to bury. **2 Kings 9:35-37** - “So they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as refuse on the surface of the field, in the plot at Jezreel, so that they shall not say, ‘Here lies Jezebel.’”
 - d. The judgment of God upon Jezebel is an object lesson for us today. They were visual lessons for that world and ours about the judgment of God.

1. Today we speak of hell, but then they spoke of a wasted life.
2. For a body to end up on a garbage heap or to end up in a field for vultures to devour was a sign from God.
3. When you see God's vengeance against the heathen in the Old Testament, you may think that God's judgment upon the heathen world was unusually cruel. You must remember that the heathen were cruel people.
 - a. They burned their own children alive as a sacrifice to Molech.
 - b. They did this to entreat the idol god for personal gain.
5. God's judgment then is to remind us of the tragedy of misspending our lives for worthless beliefs.
 1. It is an object lesson that is to come in the final day.
 2. Timothy McVeigh wanted his ashes to be given to one of his friends.
 - a. He wanted him to dispose of them without telling anyone the location.
 - b. No one will be able to say here lies Timothy McVeigh.
 - c. In the Old Testament that would be a sign that he wasted his life. That he did.
6. If you continue to live by the beliefs you now hold, how will your life end? Will you end up on a garbage heap?

WHERE DOES YOUR CONFIDENCE LIE?

- A. Our beliefs not only direct our lives but they supply power for living.
 1. Our beliefs empower our world for good or evil.
 - a. How powerful are the things you are dying for?
 - b. Can they really give you life?
 - c. They may give you life now, but will they give you life forever?
 - d. How much power do they give you for living a victorious life.
 2. We are looking for the strength within our selves.
 - a. Humanism dictates this position.
 - b. We are told to believe in ourselves..
 - c. When we look within for the power for victory we are limited by what we believe in ourselves.
 - d. Suppose someone says, "I know I can do that because I have confidence in myself."
 1. What power is that person depending upon to get the job done?
 2. Their confidence is in mere flesh and bones.
- B. **Why not choose to believe in someone more powerful than anything we can imagine.**
 1. A life in Christ is not dependent upon what we have the ability to accomplish.
 2. A life in Christ is not dependent upon privilege or personal achievement.

3. **Philippians 3:3-6** - “For we are the circumcision (Jews), who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.”
4. Friends, you will never discover Christ-power for living until you remove everything from your belief system but Christ. Here is what I mean.
 - a. Whether spoken or not, we all have this destination where we would like to arrive in life.
 - b. Achievements are rungs on that ladder.
 - c. If you’re pursuing your own agenda you will constantly be on the wrong ladder. Your dreams and goals and plans must give way to God’s dreams, goals, and plans for you.
 - d. “Let go and let God.”

C. **Paul had no confidence in his fleshy accomplishments.**

1. Paul had accomplished a great deal through privilege, conviction and achievement.
2. The achievements of those Jewish teachers who were trying to denigrate Paul’s character were put to shame by his portfolio.
3. They couldn’t hold a candle to his faultless legalism. However, Paul realized that his legalism didn’t hold a candle to what Christ had done for him. **Philippians 3:7-11** - “ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”
 - a. He had to die to all of that so he could enter into the fellowship of sharing in Christ’s suffering.
 - b. We share in Christ’s suffering . . .
 1. When we do the difficult thing.
 2. When we do the unpleasant thing.
 3. When we do the right thing because it is right.

D. **To believe in and to obey Christ is to place our confidence in what he has done for us and will do for us.**

1. Paul's legalism as a Pharisee could not begin to give him the power of living that Christ was able to give him through the power of His resurrection.
2. The same power that crushed the forces of darkness at the resurrection is the same power that is on the side of every Christian.

E. Jesus warns us to live for something worth dying for.

1. **Matthew 5:30** - And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."
2. **Matthew 10:39** - "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."
3. **Matthew 16:25-27** - "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."
4. If you believe and achieve the world's agenda for your life, will you gain anything in the end?

CONCLUSION:

- A. You have heard the saying, "Get a life!"
1. What kind of a life do you have?
 2. When you look at your achievements, is there anything literally worth laying down your life for?
 3. When life is over will you be able to look back and say that your life was spent doing something worth dying for?
 4. How much of our lives are poured into being successful in the eyes of the world?
- B. Being what God wants you to be is what you need to be.
- C. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**