

112918

- I. My Notes... WWC message 12/2
- II. Series: Let's Live
 - a. Title: Coming or Going – You Will Be Celebrated
 - b. Romans: 14: 17-19 NLT2
 - c. Quote: “You are the only Bible some unbelievers will ever read.” – John MacArthur (Pastor, Author)
- III. Introduction
 - a. I'm sure you've heard the story of Martha and Mary. When Jesus had come to visit, Martha was in the kitchen (alone) preparing food and doing all the work. She wasn't happy about it at all. Mary was in the room with the Lord, listening and learning – continuing to invest in an active relationship. She was at peace. Martha griped and complained, she even told the Lord what He should do. Jesus challenged her about her choices and attitude. Do you know any “Martha's”? How about any “Mary's”? Where do you fit in this example?
 - b. Two friends are on a hike in the forest. They are amazed by all the wonders that surround them. In the distance they see a bear and decide to change direction. Suddenly, the bear turns and begins running towards them. These two friends turn and make a mad dash to get away from the charging animal. But then one of them stops, takes some running shoes from his bag, and starts putting the shoes on. “What are you doing?” says the other man. “Do you think you will be able to out run the bear with those?” Calmly his friend states, “I don't have to run faster than the bear. I just have to be able to outrun you!”
 - c. Growing up I was an avid reader of the Peanuts comic strip. I remember one comic where Linus was approaching Charlie Brown. Charlie looked at Linus,

as he walked by, and questioned him about why his shoes were only polished in the front. Linus responded, "I care about what people think about me when I am coming in, not when I am leaving." Now, that might be the attitude many we know carry with them. Or they may be times that you feel that way. If we are living and only considering what people think (or don't think) about us, there is a problem.

- d. As Christians, we are influencers. Our lives are a billboard and people choose and determine their beliefs about the Lord God by the way we live and act. Illustration: At a stoplight of a busy intersection there was a person honking and screaming at the other drivers. He was using angry and profane language and violent gestures. As he pulled through the intersection a police officer hit his lights and pulled this driver over. Approaching the vehicle, the driver angrily asked the officer, "What did I do?!!!" The police officer responded, "I saw the Christian bumper stickers and thought the car must be stolen..." Our actions speak, they testify – about us, yes... but mainly about our Lord.
- e. Pastor Chuck Swindoll has said, "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." In talking with people that struggle or are facing challenges they speak about being out of their element. Life has a way of taking us to places that are not expected and we get to bring all the gifts, lessons, and grace that the Lord God has poured out on us to the circumstance. In my opinion, life every day, each situation, all moments are to be celebrated. I was reminded of a story I read, some time ago. Listen to it...This is the story of a woman named Roberta Langella. A story she tells in her own words. At the age of 16 she left a broken home to move to New York City where she began living with a man twice her age. A man that got her into IV drug abuse through heroin and cocaine. One night after shooting up, her boyfriend thought she had died. He took off, leaving her on a rooftop where someone discovered her and called 911. The paramedics revived her.

Strong feelings of worthlessness led her from one destructive, physically abusive and drug-centered live-in relationship to another. She began going to underground clubs where she would shoot up and share needles with 20-30 people at a time. Eventually she and her latest boyfriend were out of money, out of food, the utilities had been turned off, and she they were selling their furniture to finance their drug habit.

Facing this impossible situation, she called her mother in Florida, who let her move in with her. Mom got her into Narcotics Anonymous where she kicked the drug habit and soared with newfound confidence.

But then – everything came crashing down. A visit to the doctor unveiled a horrible fact. She was HIV positive.

After 2 years of being clean she returned to crack cocaine with a vengeance. She craved drugs more than she ever had. After a week-long cocaine binge, she was truly at the end. Faced with an impossible situation. HIV positive. No money. No love relationship.

Years ago, she had happened to meet a woman in her apartment building who attended Brooklyn Tabernacle. And for some reason, that Tuesday night with nowhere else to turn, she showed up at that church and went to the altar shedding tears she couldn't stop. "God, I need you in my life. Help me please!"

And that night her life was changed. God gave hope when there seemed to be no way out.

Today, even though she is sick, she heads up a ministry at Brooklyn Tabernacle called, "New Beginnings," a weekly outreach to drug abusers. God is using her life and her mistakes for good--bringing hope to others who have none. (taken from Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire by Jim Cymbala, 1997)

- f. Each of us has a story to tell, each of us has a way we can share God's love and grace through our story – because of our experiences

IV. Text

a. Romans 14:17-19 (NLT2)

For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too. So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

b. Christian – every opportunity you choose to encourage, to find a way to help and support, to give and strengthen pays dividends... both personal and for the church

c. Christian – every opportunity you choose to gossip, to cause dissention, to bring division hurts all believers

d. In every opportunity we bring the Lord God with us...

e. Building relationships is a choice, it takes a determined effort

f. Those type of choices allow us to show the grace and goodness of the Lord God to others.

V. Words Matter

a. Psalm 33:8-9 (ESV)

Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

i. God spoke the world into existence...

b. Matthew 12:36-37 (TLB)

“And I tell you this, that you must give account on Judgment Day for every idle word you speak. Your words now reflect your fate then: either you will be justified by them or you will be condemned.”

i. Our words reflect our heart and future...

c. James 3:2,5 (MSG)

And none of us is perfectly qualified. We get it wrong nearly every time we open our mouths. If you could find someone whose speech was perfectly true, you'd have a perfect person, in perfect control of life... A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it! It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire.

i. Words help and can hurt

d. The mouth and the heart are connected. Jesus said, “the words that come out of your mouth reflect what’s in your heart” (my paraphrase of Matt. 12:34)

e. We need to learn to see the good, to be the source of grace and rest.

f. This is the foundation of a strong and supportive relationship

g. Ephesians 4:29 (NCV)

When you talk, do not say harmful things, but say what people need—words that will help others become stronger. Then what you say will do good to those who listen to you.

h. The Apostle Paul is telling us that our choice of words strengthens others

i. And think about this... our confession, our words, bring us to the place of salvation (cf. Rom. 10:9)

VI. Behaviors Matter

a. Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NCV)

Whatever work you do, do your best, because you are going to the grave, where there is no working, no planning, no knowledge, and no wisdom.

- i. Choose to give your best effort, always

b. James 2:18 (CSB)

But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works.

- i. Your actions reflect what you believe

c. A sobbing little girl stood near a small church from which she had been turned away because it 'was too crowded'. "I can't go to Sunday School," she sobbed to the pastor as he walked by. Seeing her shabby, unkempt appearance, the pastor guessed the reason and, taking her by the hand, took her inside and found a place for her in the Sunday School class. The child was so touched that she went to bed that night thinking of the children who have no place to worship Jesus.

Some two years later, this child lay dead in one of the poor tenement buildings and the parents called for the kind-hearted pastor, who had befriended their daughter, to handle the final arrangements. As her poor little body was being moved, a worn and crumpled purse was found which seemed to have been rummaged from some trash dump. Inside was found 57 cents and a note scribble in childish handwriting which read, "This is to help build the little church bigger so more children can go to Sunday school."

For two years she had saved for this offering of love. When the pastor tearfully read that note, he knew instantly what he would do. Carrying this note and the cracked, red pocketbook to the pulpit, he told the story of her unselfish love and devotion. He challenged his deacons to get busy

and raise enough money for the larger building. But the story does not end there!

A newspaper learned of the story and published it. It was read by a realtor who offered them a parcel of land worth many thousands. When told that the church could not pay so much, he offered it for a 57-cent payment.

Church members made large subscriptions. Checks came from far and wide. Within five years the little girl's gift had increased to \$250,000.00 a huge sum for that time (near the turn of the century). Her unselfish love had paid large dividends.

When you are in the city of Philadelphia, look up Temple Baptist Church, with a seating capacity of 3,300, and Temple University, where hundreds of students are trained. Have a look, too, at the Good Samaritan Hospital and at a Sunday School building which houses hundreds of Sunday scholars, so that no child in the area will ever need to be left outside at Sunday school time.

In one of the rooms of this building may be seen the picture of the sweet face of the little girl whose 57 cents, so sacrificially saved, made such remarkable history. Alongside of it is a portrait of her kind pastor, Dr. Russel H. Conwell.

d. 1 John 3:18 (MSG)

My dear children, let's not just talk about love; let's practice real love.

e. True love testifies, it honors and glorifies the Lord

VII. Results

a. When believers mature, others are able to observe certain traits. In other words, our testimony is revealed in the way we live and act

- b. Righteousness – right living, behaviors that are right in the sight of the Lord God
- c. Peace – stress- and worry-free living
- d. Joy – right living brings strength and understanding into the life of a faithful Christian
- e. It's not about ritual, about doing or eating certain things.
- f. Our words, our actions, our behaviors reveal what is important in life
- g. Relationships

VIII. Last Words

- a. Even those people who espouse a belief in God still often resist and resent the notion of specifically commanded behaviors. People often want the benefits of having a God for personal requests or crisis interventions and may use being a “believer” as a way to increase status, respect or trust from others.

Entering into a relationship with God is not just about rewards we receive in this world or the next but rather how we show God that we are serious about our relationship with Him.

... Commitment is demonstrated through action. (SOURCE: Dr. Laura Schlessinger and Rabbi Stewart Vogel, *The Ten Commandments: The Significance of God's Laws in Everyday Life*, 2013, p. 7, 8.)

- b. It's about time we – believers, Christians, the faithful – become relationship builders
- c. Let's Pray
- d. May the grace of the Lord in your life show others His love for them. May those around you see His love demonstrated thru your actions and attitudes. And may His glory shine on your path.

