

“LIFE AND FAITH-----LIVED TOGETHER”
**A SERMON BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF
MATTHEW (22:34-46) AND PRESENTED FOR
ORLEAN UMC ON OCTOBER 25, 2020-----**

**JESUS AND THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN
JERUSALEM HAVE BEEN AT IT FOR AWHILE.....
THEY HAVE BEEN TESTING AND FIGHTING WITH
EACH OTHER OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE IN
JERUSALEM..... ON THE TIMELINE OF JESUS’
LIFE, IT IS TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK. IN JUST A
MATTER OF DAYS, JESUS WILL BREAK BREAD
WITH HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS AT THE LAST
SUPPER, HE WILL BE BETRAYED BY JUDAS, AND
HE WILL BE PUT TO DEATH.**

SO IT IS TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK, AND JESUS HAS BEEN DEBATING FOR HOURS WITH THESE RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

NOTICE HOW JESUS HAS A HABIT OF GIVING THE PHARISEES MORE THAN WHAT THEY ASK FOR.

LAST WEEK, WE HEARD THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ASKED JESUS A QUESTION ABOUT LIFE – SHOULD WE PAY TAXES TO CAESAR, THE EMPEROR? A SIMPLE YES OR NO WILL SUFFICE. AND YET JESUS' ANSWER CONTAINS BOTH LIFE AND GOD. HE SAYS, “GIVE TO CAESAR WHAT IS CAESAR’S AND TO GOD WHAT IS GOD’S.” THEY WERE LOOKING FOR ONE ANSWER AND JESUS GAVE THEM TWO.

**THEY ASK A QUESTION ABOUT LIFE AND JESUS
BRINGS GOD INTO THE ANSWER.**

**THIS WEEK, WE HEARD THE RELIGIOUS
LEADERS ASK JESUS A QUESTION ABOUT GOD
– WHICH IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT?**

**AND YET JESUS GIVES THEM ANSWER THAT
CONTAINS BOTH LIFE AND GOD. HE SAYS,
“WELL THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT IS ‘YOU
SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL
YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND
WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’”**

**BUT THEN JUST AS EVERYONE IS ABOUT TO
TURN AROUND AND LEAVE, HAVING THOUGHT
THAT WAS HIS ANSWER, JESUS SAYS, “WAIT,
THERE’S MORE...THE SECOND GREATEST
COMMANDMENT IS LIKE THE FIRST: ‘YOU SHALL
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’” AGAIN,
*THEY WERE LOOKING FOR ONE ANSWER AND
JESUS GAVE THEM TWO. THEY ASK A QUESTION
ABOUT GOD AND JESUS BRINGS LIFE INTO THE
ANSWER.***

**I THINK WHAT JESUS MIGHT BE TRYING TO SAY
HERE IS THAT YOUR FAITH AND YOUR LIFE
CANNOT BE LIVED OUT SEPARATELY.**

**ONE CANNOT BELIEVE IN GOD AND NOT HAVE
AN EFFECT ON THE WAY THEY LIVE THEIR LIFE.
AND ONE CANNOT LIVE THEIR LIFE WITHOUT IT
SAYING WHAT THEY BELIEVE ABOUT GOD.**

**FAITH AND LIFE CANNOT OCCUPY DIFFERENT
PARTS OF YOUR LIFE. INSTEAD, THEY
INFLUENCE ONE ANOTHER. THEY SAY
SOMETHING ABOUT EACH OTHER.**

**A STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A MINISTER. IT IS
SUNDAY EVENING AND SHE IS SITTING IN HER
HOUSE, READING A BOOK. ONE OF HER
PARISHIONERS KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.**

SHE OPENS THE DOOR. HE IS A BIG GUY. HE IS SWEATING. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE RAN ALL THE WAY TO THE HOUSE. HE IS IN TEARS. HE SAYS, "LISTEN THERE IS A FAMILY THAT LIVES JUST DOWN THE ROAD. THE GUY LOST HIS JOB IN THE RECESSION, SHE IS LOOKING AFTER THREE KIDS, AND THEIR MOTHER STAYS WITH THEM. BUT THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR THEIR RENT. THEY'VE GOT NO MONEY AT THE MOMENT. AND THEIR GONNA GET KICKED OUT OF THE HOUSE. EVEN IF THEY ARE ONE DAY LATE ON THEIR RENT, THEY ARE JUST GOING TO GET KICKED OUT ON THE STREET.

IT'S THE MIDDLE OF WINTER. WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING. PLEASE, LET'S DO SOMETHING."

SO THE MINISTER SAYS, "YES, WE WILL GO AND WE WILL GET SOME MONEY." JUST IN PASSING SHE SAYS, "OH AND HOW DO YOU KNOW THEM?" AND HE SAYS, "OH, WELL, I'M THEIR LANDLORD."

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ASK A QUESTION ABOUT HOW ONE LIVES THEIR LIFE AND JESUS BRINGS GOD INTO THE ANSWER. THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ASK A QUESTION ABOUT HOW TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND JESUS BRINGS HOW ONE LIVES THEIR LIFE INTO THE ANSWER.

FAITH AND LIFE – THEY HAVE TO BE HELD

TOGETHER, NOT SEPARATE.

AND YET, FOR THIS LANDLORD, FAITH AND LIFE ARE DIVORCED. IN THIS LANDLORD'S FAITH LIFE, HE IS CONCERNED FOR THIS POOR FAMILY THAT DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY THE RENT AND HE IS DESPERATE TO DO SOMETHING. BUT IN HIS PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL LIFE, IT IS JUST BUSINESS AS USUAL. IF YOU CAN'T PAY THE RENT, OUT YOU GO. THOSE ARE THE RULES. AND SO THIS MAN IS LIVING A DIVIDED LIFE. HE WORSHIPS GOD AND DOES NICE THINGS ON THE WEEKENDS, BUT COME MONDAY, HE STEPS BACK INTO THE RAT RACE.

THE VERY THING THIS MAN IS DOING ON MONDAY IS THE SAME THING HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT AND FIGHTING ON SUNDAY EVENING. HIS FAITH AND HIS LIFE ARE DIVIDED. THEY DON'T INTERSECT..... HE CAN'T SEE HOW THE WAY HE IS LIVING OUT HIS FAITH ON SUNDAY IS DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE WAY HE IS LIVING OUT HIS LIFE ON MONDAY MORNING.

GOD CANNOT SIMPLY BE LOCATED IN ONE PART OF A PERSON'S LIFE. GOD IS A PART OF THE WHOLE DARN THING----THE WHOLE "KIT AND KABOUTTLE" ----"THE WHOLE BALL GAME" AND I THINK YOU GET MY POINT HERE.....

AND SO WHEN WE GATHER TOGETHER ON A SUNDAY MORNING TO WORSHIP GOD, WE DON'T DO SO AS A WAY OF SEPARATING AND PROTECTING OURSELVES FROM THE WORLD OUT THERE. WE GATHER TOGETHER TO REHEARSE. TO REHEARSE WORSHIPPING GOD, SO THAT WHEN THESE DOORS OPEN AND WE STEP OUT ONTO THE STAGE OF LIFE, WE KNOW OUR PARTS, WE KNOW OUR LINES. WE KNOW HOW TO WORSHIP GOD OUT THERE.....

AND TO LOVE AND WORSHIP GOD ON SUNDAY IS TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR ON MONDAY MORNING. TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR ON MONDAY MORNING IS TO LOVE GOD ON MONDAY MORNING.

LATER IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, JESUS SAYS TO HIS DISCIPLES, “WHEN YOU FED THOSE WHO WERE HUNGRY, YOU FED ME. WHEN YOU CLOTHED THE NAKED, YOU CLOTHED ME. WHEN YOU WELCOMED THE STRANGER, YOU WELCOMED ME.”

TRUTH BE TOLD, THIS LANDLORD IS NO DIFFERENT FROM YOU OR I. IN FACT HE IS BRAVER THAN I. BECAUSE AT LEAST HE IS WILLING TO ADMIT HIS PLACE IN THE BROKEN SYSTEM. HIS LIVELIHOOD, THE FOOD HE PUTS ON HIS FAMILY’S TABLE DEPENDS ON PEOPLE PAYING THE RENT ON TIME.

**AND SO HE IS STUCK. WE ALL ARE. STUCK IN
SELF-INTEREST. SELF-PRESERVATION. HOW DO
I LIVE OUT MY FAITH AND CARE FOR MY
NEIGHBOR WHEN MY LIFE IS ON THE LINE TOO?**

**PERHAPS THE PLACE TO START IS TO
ACKNOWLEDGE THAT LIFE AND FAITH CANNOT
BE LIVED OUT SEPARATELY.**

**BUT THEY ARE HELD TOGETHER, AS JESUS
TRIED TO REMIND THESE RELIGIOUS LEADERS.**

**THE PLACE TO START IS TO SEE THAT WHEN
YOU LEAVE THIS MESSAGE THIS MORNING ---
EITHER READING IT IN YOUR HOME OR HEARING
IT IN YOUR CHURCH -----GOD GOES WITH YOU,
ALWAYS....ALWAYS....ALWAYS....GOD GOES WITH
YOU!!!!**

**AN THEN WHEN YOU COME BACK ANOTHER TIME
----- AGAIN TO WORSHIP ----- NOT ONLY DO YOU
RETURN WITH GOD, BUT WITH THE SUCCESSES
AND FAILURES OF EACH PERFORMANCE DURING
THIS WEEK IN SEARCH OF BOTH CELEBRATION
AND FORGIVENESS.**

PERHAPS THE PLACE TO START IS TO

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT LIFE AND FAITH CANNOT

BE LIVED OUT SEPARATELY.

**SO-----TOMORROW BEGINS ANOTHER WEEK----A
NEW WEEK TO BE LIVED IN THE REALITY OF OUR
TIME AND PLACE-----SO TELL ME, WHAT ARE
YOU AND GOD DOING TOMORROW AROUND
9AM?**

**PRAISE GOD AND MAY IT BE SO FOR YOU AND
FOR ME.....AMEN**