**THE COUNSELOR…Let’s Talk**

**What We Need to Know, 1 Thessalonians 5:14**

Sunday, March 6, 2022

**WE Slide 2 TIMELY NEW SERIES- The Counselor.** We’ve been saying t’s going to take EVERYONE to accomplish the mission God has for us, we who are Christians need to be ready to walk with those God brings into our church family- those hurting, fearful, depressed, and anxious about life. **We get to show them how God uses their struggle for their growth and to draw others to Him for salvation.** Here’s the command God give us- 1 Thessalonians 5:14 **Slide 3** **Paul goes on to explain HOW we admonish, encourage, and help those struggling in vv. 15-23 which we’ll talk about next week- HINT: It involves a TOTAL LIFESTYLE CHANGE in how we think/respond to life.**

**TODAY WE NEED TO ADDRESS A PROBLEM FIRST: We’ve got Christians who are just as fearful, depressed, and anxious as non-Christians.** We who are to have the hope of salvation, the confidence of faith, the joy of Christ, aren’t experiencing any of that. **If we don’t know how to MANAGE our fear, depression, and anxiety, how will we ever help others?** **Here’s part of that TOTAL LIFE CHANGE in how we think/respond.** I say MANAGE, not heal, because we live in sin-filled bodies in a sin-filled world where we are tempted to go back to the sin-filled THINKING/LIVING we did before God saved us from that life. **We want God to remove all struggles/pain from our lives, but God never promises that.** He does promise to strengthen us in our struggles so He can accomplish His purposes through us- namely to show who He is, to grow us spiritually, and through us draw others to Him for salvation.

**TODAY: Slide 4 So, why is it that Christians struggle with fear, depression, and anxiety? If you’re not a Christian this is great stuff for you to hear and process as you consider whether to accept God’s offer of forgiveness/relationship. Slide 5** As one who has struggled with bouts of depression let me suggest 3 main reasons.

1. **Ignorance**- some Christians don’t know what God says about who we are, who God is, and how He uses their struggles for their growth and to accomplish His purposes.
2. **Disbelief**- some don’t trust that God’s way work. They’ll trust a non-Christian doctor but not their Creator or Savior. We’re OK with some of God’s commands but some are too constraining so we rationalize those.
3. **Laziness**- others don’t want to put the time in necessary to experience God’s freedom; drugs only deal with the symptoms for a time and not the underlying thinking/perspective that causes F/D/A.

**I can’t make a person trust God or motivate them to do what God says to do but I can tell you what God says about who we are, who He is, and how He uses our struggles to accomplish His purposes.** There are going to be A LOT of verses this morning- I want us to see what God says about these things. **I’ve put a list of them at the Info Center- grab one on your way out. So, what do we need to know? Slide 6** First… Christians are sinners saved by grace and as such we can say NO to sin- look what God says in Romans 6. **Slide 7-13**

**GOD**

1. **WE ARE SINNERS SAVED BY GRACE (but we’re still sinners)**
2. **As Christians We Can Say No to Sin, Romans 6:5-7; 12-14**
3. God forgiving our sin when we place our faith in Jesus removes sin’s eternal consequence- eternity in hell AND removes sin’s earthly power over us.
4. We can say NO! to the temptations we face and not sin in our thoughts and actions.

**That doesn’t mean Slide 14 we become perfect here on earth, that’s for heaven.** We still wrestle with our sin. **Even Paul knows this struggle personally.** **Slide 15-18**

1. **As Humans We Still Struggle with Sin, Romans 7:18-19, 24-25**
2. Now that we can say NO to sin there’s a battle between our sinful flesh and God’s Spirit in us.
3. When we think we know better than God we will fail in doing life God’s way. **Why? Look at this…**
4. **Slide 19** Jeremiah 17:9 Our hearts- we don’t even realize how sinful our hearts are and we think we, or non-Christians, know better than God. **Paul says we’re so deceitful we deceive ourselves.**
5. **Slide 20** 1 Corinthians 3:18 Over and over the Bible tells us to not deceive ourselves, **Why?** Because our hearts are deceitful, sinful and we end up thinking we or other people know better than God. Foolish- non-Christians/some Christians will question you/make fun of you.

**When we trust God’s way Slide 21 we will have success is doing life God’s way** **AND that’s where God the Holy Spirit comes in- l**ook at Romans 8:11 **Slide 22-23**

1. **As Sinners We Need the Holy Spirit to Empower Us, Romans 8:11**
2. The same power God used to raise Jesus Christ from the dead is at our disposal when we choose to do life God’s way.
3. As we take a step of faith to do life God’s way, reject our way, then God the Holy Spirit empowers us to do what God’s commanded us to do.

**That’s who we are- sinners saved by grace who need God’s direction and power to do what He calls us to do and when we do we’ll look foolish to non-Christians.** WE STRUGGLE **Slide 24** because we fail to appreciate that God not only created our physical lives but also how life should be lived. **That brings us to the next thing we need to know.** In Genesis 2:15 Moses tells us this. **Slide 25-26**

1. **GOD IS THE CREATOR OF LIFE (but not just physical life)**
2. **God Created Life and Our Purpose, Genesis 2:15**
3. As our Creator HE DETERMINES our purpose and we submit to His purpose.
4. He didn’t create us to do whatever we think is best, but to do what He knows is best.
5. He created us to “cultivate and keep”, manage and protect, what He’s given us in order to accomplish His purposes through us.
6. When we do that He promises to make sure our needs are met.

**Here’s a KEY POINT- Slide 27** When God created this world and our purpose He didn’t ask man what his opinion was and He’s not interested in us telling Him how our lives should be lived. **Look what Isaiah says.** **Slide 28-30**

1. **No One Tells God How to Do Life, Isaiah 40:13-14**
2. God is God and we are not; He tells us how to live life, we don’t tell Him.
3. ILLUSTRATION: Payroll company doing the tax return according to the client’s wishes, not how it’s to be done legally. They're the experts and make sure it's done right. The client doesn't know what's legal, proper and what's not. Same with Christians.
4. We can do life our way and since God loves us too much to force Himself on us we’ll have to experience the pain that comes from doing life incorrectly.

**Why has God done all of this?** Why has God created us, saved us from sin/hell and given us the Holy Spirit to do life His way? **Slide 31 He’s not a personal genie who does whatever we want Him to do.** Look what God says in Eph 2 and then Eph 3 as to why He saved us. **Slide 32-37**

1. **GOD SAVED US FOR HIS PURPOSES (He’s not our personal genie).**
2. **To Reveal His Character to Us and Others, Ephesians 2:4–7; 3:8–10**
3. God didn’t save us because we had a great personality, or incredible talents and it wasn’t to be our personal genie, to make us happy through fulfilling the wants/desires of our deceitful heart.
4. Eph. 2:4-7 Despite being spiritual dead due to sin God saved us through Jesus’ sacrifice to show His infinite mercy, love, grace, and kindness to us through Jesus.
5. Eph. 3:8-10 God saved us to show to the spiritual world His awesome wisdom- no one, not even Satan, could have come up with the plan and details of salvation.

**Once He saves us from our sin, Slide 38 it’s eternal consequences, and its earthly power He allows us to be involved in His revealing Himself by growing us spiritually so we become more like Jesus.** Look what He says in Romans 8:28-29. **Slide 39-40**

1. **He Saved Us to Grow Us Spiritually, Romans 8:28–29**
2. God’s not interested in a “better version of you/me” but in us becoming more like Jesus.
3. “loving” God means looking out for His best no matter the cost to us; the cost is not doing life our way.
4. Not everything we go through is “good” or enjoyable, but it’s good in that it will help us become more like Jesus if we respond the way God directs us to in the Bible.
5. The difficult times we go through are God’s way of disciplining/training us to be more like Jesus, Hebrews 12:7–11 **Slide 41-46**
6. Our earthly fathers disciplined us sometimes correctly/sometimes incorrectly.
7. God is our heavenly Father, who never disciplines incorrectly and always does it for our good and holiness- become more like Jesus, spiritual growth.

**As we close here’s the BIG POINT: if we as Christians are going to manage our fear, depression, and anxiety in a way that grows us spiritually and can be used to show others who God is we need to stop thinking we or others know better than God and totally surrender to think/respond as He commands.** As the band comes up let me give you some TAKEAWAYS from today.

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

1. **Salvation-** the only way to properly deal with the hurts, pains, struggles of life and give them purpose is to give your life to God through faith in Jesus Christ is.
2. Admit you’ve sinned and are separated from God.
3. Believe- entrust your spiritual well-being to God and what He says will bring His forgiveness and your salvation- that Jesus took your eternal punish for you.
4. Confess- tell God these things.
5. **Carefully/prayerfully read ahead in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23 and ask God to show you where you’re not trusting Him/His way completely.**
6. **Read up on depression/anxiety from a biblical perspective. List at the Info Center**

**PODCAST: What we need to know before we know what to do about fear, depression and anxiety-** 1 Thessalonians 5:14, Romans 6:5-7; 12-14, Romans 7:18-19, 24-25, Jeremiah 17:9, 1 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:11, Genesis 2:15, Isaiah 40:13-14, Ephesians 2:4–7; 3:8–10, Romans 8:28–29, Hebrews 12:7–11