

## What Now?

It's so great being back up here and especially for such a monumental day in the life of the church. It's Youth Sunday, and so we're celebrating all that God has done in the life of the Youth Ministry here, but it is also Confirmation Sunday. So we are celebrating and praising God for the work He has done in the lives of the nine students we're confirming.

And so in my planning I knew from the start what I wanted to talk about. Now the Confirmation course is 12 weeks long and we cover a whole slew, a ton, a variety of different topics. But what we rarely talk about is what we do after today. What does it actually look like to live this life we've been studying and discussing?

Now we're going to be in Matthew 16. And in verses 17-19, it says... First, here's some context: Jesus has asked "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter says, "I say that you're the Christ, the Son of the Living God." ...v.17 "Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven." Now v. 18...Confirmands listen up. "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

So...

In just a few minutes, our Confirmands are going to be coming forward and making a public declaration and confession. And it's a beautiful thing when we confess Christ as our Savior. But it's important that we fully grasp this idea of confession. In Romans 10, it says that if you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord this means that you shall be saved. Now I'm going to lay it to you straight....if you don't understand the danger that we are in without Christ then you won't respect the salvation that comes through Christ! And a lot of people think that you can play church. But when you understand that without Christ there is eternal destruction and damnation, that should wake us up.

I'm reminded of a moment this past fall. I was whitewater rafting with some buddies and in the middle of one of the rapids I got thrown from the boat. And when I emerged from under the water, even though I had a life-jacket on, I felt like I was drowning. And I looked and saw my friend's hand reaching out and, needless to say, I was pretty excited.

And so when we understand the danger that we're in, we then respect the rescuer that comes! The reason why a lot of people play around with Jesus is because they don't believe they're in danger yet.

How many of us have friends or know people that thought that doing certain things were okay until something really bad happened? What about the people who say they're only going to do something once and then only once turns into every weekend? You see the sad thing is...sometimes we don't see the danger until it's too late!

Now this is just a word of wisdom, but by the time the rattlesnake has sunk its fangs in you, you've already been poisoned, right? And so a lot of times we have to recognize that sometimes we welcome the rattlesnake, we welcome the sin, into our life. And then we say, "Oh no! Oh, I'm scared I gotta get it away from me!" But what I want us to be able to do is recognize those things so that we can protect ourselves from danger.

One thing I've been praying about lately is addiction. And how so many people, especially young people, fall pray to addiction. And so in other words there's a lot of people in bondage and they need to be free. But here's the beauty of salvation! Salvation frees you! It frees you from everything When you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are free!

Now, I'm going to tell you all a little bit about my story. And some of you have probably heard me talking about this so just bare with me. Now I went into college very under-confident. And you're probably whispering to your neighbor, "No way! He's so charismatic and exudes confidence." Please!!!

But seriously, low self-esteem was my biggest foe. And in my mind I was battling double time because I thought low self-esteem was something only girls struggled with. You know how guys are "Nahh I don't have self-esteem..." and girls are like "ahhhh I don't like my hair!" And so I had low self-esteem, but where did it come from? It came from being bullied and picked on in high school. I got put in a trash can, for real! Like in the movies....put in the trashcan! Now I can look back and laugh about it now, but those moments scarred me for a long time! I had low self-esteem which meant my point of view about reality was skewed. In other words, what happens is sometimes we allow the world to tell us who we are, before we allow God to tell us who we are!

Now, John 10:10 says this "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;" So, Satan, the devil...his whole goal is to steal, kill and destroy...that's his whole motivation! What does he want to steal, kill and destroy? He wants to steal your identity, he wants to kill your destiny and he wants to destroy your hopes in Christ. That's pretty much what it is. How does he do it? He does it through side comments that make no sense.

Youth....I have to tell you. Jesus loves you. Middle School and High School is a rough time in life. I mean look at me....I'm a short guy. And I was even shorter in middle school! And it was something that I had to grow out of....literally. And so from that point on, because I was dealing with low self-esteem, I developed this mentality of competition. I competed in everything, not just athletically. Like, if you were not on "my team" you were my enemy. Which caused some fights and arguments and discomfort. Anyway, as I came into high

school and got older I found myself trying to prove myself according to the world's standards.

Now if I can be honest with you all for a second, understand that the world's standards for guys are very different than the world's standards for girls. And I will be honest, I don't know what it's like to be a girl. I've never been there. But one of the standards for guys, especially in today's way of thinking, is you're not a man unless you're out sleeping with a two or three different girls. And so in my mind, I thought in order to get past this whole "short" thing, I had to do this....but what I didn't realize was that I was chasing a perverted destiny. I didn't realize I was chasing something that could cause heart ache and pain. I was chasing something that God never planned for me to have in that way. And thankfully I never succeeded. Thankfully in the midst of my running, I slowed down enough to hear God yelling "STOP! Just stop! Stop trying to please the people who hate you and start pleasing the one who made you!"

And that's my goal today. I want you to recognize that God loves you! He has a plan for your life. In Jeremiah 1, he says I knew you before you were formed in your mother's womb. And when you know that God has a plan for you, when you know that you are accepted by God, you can tell everyone else who doesn't like you or that has something bad to say about you, " I look just like my Dad. And I'm talking about my Heavenly Father."

For so long we try to please the people living beside us. We spend so much time making temporary decisions, with long-term destruction.

That's why Matthew 16 is so important! Because at this point Peter changes his destiny. Jesus says, "Who do you say I am?" He says, "I say that you're the Christ." And understand that a part of confessing who Jesus is is that when you confess who Jesus is, you are releasing His plans into your life. And because He knew you before you were formed in your mother's womb, sin or darkness tries to hold back why God created you. And once you say, "Hey Lord I believe in you and who you are." He says "I'm glad you said it...I have this big, beautiful plan for you!"

And this is what happens to Peter. Look at how Jesus responds to Peter. He calls him by name, he says "And I tell you that you are Peter (which means rock), and on this rock (talking about Peter's confession and who Peter is) I will build my church,..." Jesus came to set the church up...not just the steeple. But to set the church up, the body of Christ, that people might come and know who God is. And so at this point, when he says "I'm releasing my vision for your life." I'm not talking about superficial goals, I'm talking about the real deal vision for your life.

Now, we all know the Lord's Prayer. "Our Father, which art in Heaven..." Now, there is a key part in that prayer. It says, "Thy kingdom come, thy WILL be done." In other words, when we pray that prayer we're saying, "God, I don't care what else is going on around me,

God I want whatever you have planned to happen.” And that’s when He releases His vision in your life.

Now there are two reasons why God wants us. He wants us to be transformed and He wants us to prove His plan. And that’s why He called us. This is what happens when we confess: when we confess to the Lord, when we say “Hey Lord I believe in who you are” this is what He does, He says “Well let me tell you who you are and let me tell you why I created you.”

Quick story –

There was this guy out in LA, out shopping and he’s looking for a shirt to wear to this party. So he walks into a shop and he’s browsing around. And he’s finds a tshirt...real simple. Like a Hanes soft cotton shirt. And he looks at the price tag and he’s taken back. “Oh they must’ve messed up; someone put the wrong price tag on this shirt.” So he keeps searching comes across another shirt, same kind, looks at the tag and it’s the same price as the last one....\$640. And he’s thinking to himself, “\$640?! What kind of gold fabric is woven into this shirt that it would be \$640?!” SO he puts it back and moves to a different rack, and comes to find out that those tshirts were on the “Sale Rack”. So he musters up the courage to go up to the sales guy at the desk and he says, “Um....okay I know it’s probably a misprint, it says this shirt is \$640. ....It’s just s tshirt. I mean if I wear this shirt, will some kind of healing take place in my body? What is it that makes it so special? Is it the material?” And he says, “No, it’s cotton....splash of polyester.” “So why is it \$640?!” And the sales guy says, “Oh it’s because of the designer man. The designer’s name on it adds value to it. It’s valuable because of who designed it.”

Do you understand that you’re valuable because of who’s name is on you? Do you understand that your worth and your value comes from who’s name is on you? Do you understand that God’s glory is stitched in your genes? You’re here to glorify Him.

But seriously, when we don’t realize that we were put here on this planet to manifest how awesome God is, we lose sight of it all. One of my favorite pieces of Scripture (it’s actually on the wall in our Youth Room) is from 1 Corinthians 10:31 and it says that “whether we eat or we drink, we do it all, whatever we do, we do it ALL for the glory of God.”

So when you make the decision to confess Jesus, just like Peter, you are accepting the responsibility that in ALL that you do...you will do it to bring glory to God. And that’s what I want you (Confirmands) to walk away with today. That when you stand up here and you confess Jesus, He is going to unleash His vision on your life. And it is your responsibility to follow through. That doesn’t mean you’ll always get it right. But it means you’ll strive in all you do to bring Him the glory. Be confident. Be fearless.