



Way of Life

Session 12 – 16th September 2017

Bible Readings

Colossians 3:12-17 John 12: 24-26 John 10:10 Proverbs 4:23

Sermon Notes

When I was a kid I was fascinated by the legend of King Arthur whose Knights sacrificed their bodies, purified their hearts and gladly renounced all they had in pursuit of the Holy Grail – itself a symbol of their union with God. No matter how difficult the task, no true knight questioned whether it was worth the cost. The Holy Grail was the “pearl of great price,” for which any rational person would joyfully give up everything.

But today our goals seem too slight – today we just seek a balanced life - we have forgotten that God is intensely interested in every part of our lives – and the call to sacrifice and self-denial - the wild, risky, costly, adventurous abandon of following Jesus. I believe that, deep down, you and I are probably hoping for something more from ourselves. So is God.

Jesus said, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me” - he wants us to do what he would do if he were in our place.

It's the life we've always wanted. It is the quest for what might be called a well-ordered heart – a heart that loves the right thing to the right degree in the right way with the right kind of love.

The writer of Proverbs says: “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” When our hearts become properly oriented we are not only increasingly free from sin, but also increasingly free from the desire to sin. We would be transformed from the inside out.

So how do we go about such a transformation? Well it requires a plan of action otherwise it is unlikely that we will deepen our relationship with God. We understand the need for wise planning in other important matters such as our finances. The need is just as great in pursuing spiritual life.

We need some kind of support or structure much as a young vine needs a trellis. We need sails to help us catch the winds of the Spirit.

For Jesus' disciples, the “plan” consisted simply of following the Master around learning from him how to live. Later when Christians and monasteries sought to order the events of ordinary life around growing more like Jesus, they developed a “way of life.” The Latin word ‘regula’ means a rhythm for living through which we can grow more intimately connected to God.

Over the next 6 months on the first Sunday of each month we will be looking at our own way of life - for us as individuals - and for us as households and families. The materials have been created for us by Debbie Hill, Rachael Heffer and Ed Olsworth-Peter. There will be workbooks for adults and families, available from the bookstall, (£1 each).

Each day is an Adventure with God. You and I are invited to make each moment of every day an opportunity to learn from Jesus and how to live in the kingdom of God.

(For the full sermon please go Online to listen www.stmarysely.org)

Key Quotes

“This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.” **GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.**

How fully can you surrender to God and not be afraid? **FRANK LAUBACH**

Discussion Questions

If we try to organise our lives just in a “balanced” way, what are some of the possible consequences for our walk with Jesus?

Describe a time when your life was oriented around something other than God – trusting something else too much - almost to the point of idolatry. How did this impact your spiritual life?

Read: 2 Corinthians 11:23–28.

How does Paul’s life serve as an example of shattering the boundaries of balance and entering a life beyond balance?

What are some healthy modern-day examples of a life beyond balance?

Which of the following questions challenges you most? Why? How and when do I pray?

- ✚ How do I handle money in a way that draws me closer to God?
- ✚ How can I approach work so that Christ can be formed in me?
- ✚ How am I involved in a Christian community?
- ✚ How can I fulfil my daily tasks 'In Jesus' name'?

What will you do in the coming week to respond to that challenge?
How can your small-group members pray for you and keep you accountable as you grow in this area of your life?

Prayer

Pray for your small-group members in the specific area of life where they expressed a desire to be more like Jesus. Pray for their attitudes and actions to reflect the heart of Jesus more with each passing day.

Living the Life

Think about some of the ordinary things you do each day in your life – practise doing them as you feel Jesus might do them.

Personal Reflection

In all the activities of life which do you find the most difficult to do in Jesus' name? Commit to pray for a dramatic change in this area of your life. What practical steps can you take (even if you don't feel like it) to more reflect the heart of Christ in this activity?

Blog, Vlog and Social Media

Please visit the Holy Habits pages on the St Mary's website.

www.stmarysely.org and join the conversation on our Facebook Group "Ely Team Holy Habits" www.facebook.com/groups/267574210421687