

Title: How is it... (John 4:9)

Last night we talked about be approachable and how patience: Patience... to bear and forbear is something we all desperately need from one another, even more than we want to personally admit. And, if we'll be honest with ourselves, the balance, between what we demand FROM others and what we FEEL like giving them, is too often tipped to our advantage. Therefore, we approach the tangled mess with self preservation and not patience.

There will be (3) ways that this phrase, "How is it..." will be used toward us.

Let's look at them... turn to John 4

It's not [what] we give, but [how] and [why] we give that has a way of blessing and building a stronger faith in us and others.

And I'm not referring to just money or resources... sometimes it's as simple as giving away kindness, a smile, even a cup of water, the truth or being gracious to others. In our Nesting with Jesus we've seen how Jesus used a lunch to feed an army of people and impact a city through a woman He helped.

Notice, again, the conversation the woman at the well had with Jesus. Pay attention to what she said... She didn't ask Him "Why" but "HOW is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman." (John 4:9)

"HOW... (and not WHY), are You talking with me," is implying that she noticed quickly that something about Him was different than any other encounter she had ever had. A "WHY" question would imply that she understood that He was wanting something from her... but she sensed something different. Therefore, her response, is telling us, she's saying, "HOW CAN YOU," "What's in You, that You can overcome our differences and speak with me, I want to know?" Obviously, by the rest of the conversation we can see there was tension between Jews and Samaritans. A tension that He overcame in [how] He engaged her in a conversation.

You see, when the [how] in giving is right, the [why] in giving is going to be right. Jesus was going to richly bless her with His lovingkindness and grace.

Think about it, [what] we give has very little to do with [how] we give. [How] we give, no matter what it is that we give, will rest on the shoulders of [why] we give. [Why] focuses on the [who] and [how] of giving more than [what] was given... [what] we give does matter, even when it's a few loaves of bread and a handful of fish, but it's not near as important as the [how] and [why] in giving away His goodness. The [how] and [why] in His hands makes all the difference, in more ways than one.

"How is it... that you didn't warn me?"

A lot of people (a whole world) missed out on what God was doing in Noah's day...

Think about this... Jesus made a direct connection with the days of Noah and how life will be for many prior to His return to execute His promised judgement upon all who are not persuaded that He's God and God's ONLY answer for this life and what's to come.

He said life will be as usual for them... it will be routine and normal, people doing life the way people have been doing life for generations upon generations. The only thing missing in their daily lives is Him... His presence, His purpose, His passion, His priority and His praise. And when He returns a lot of people will have also missed out on much, including His presence and protection during the judgment, just like the people did when God shut Noah in the ark but shut them out to face the waters Noah had been warning them about.

Noah preached the waters are coming... they mocked his witness and missed the urgency of its warning. They were lulled to sleep... when year after year passed with no signs except a man building an ark and preaching his message.

The floods came... and so will Jesus!

Everyone that dismissed Noah's claim, before the rain, forfeited a place to claim when it started to rain.

You know what that means? Ultimately, it meant everything was lost. While they waited on others to get involved before they got involved cost them and their crew more than they ever imagined.

Can you imagine all the children that told their daddy and momma, when the flood waters of Noah were rising, something like this, "But dad, you and momma said that man Noah was crazy!" "But momma, I trusted you and daddy knew best, you told me I'd be a fool to listen to Noah and his God." "You told us to stay away from him and that crazy thing he was building."

Every soul that didn't stand with Noah couldn't float with Noah when the floods came.

The floods came... and so will Jesus!

Don't wait until it's too late... a lot of people you love and lead trust your claim. Will it cost them or you... are has Jesus already paid it in full for you?

It's worth considering before He comes again. Eternity is too long to be wrong...

Keep building His church brethren. Keep proclaiming the gospel of His redeeming grace.

Keep inviting others to join you as you follow Him and live in the light of His promised return.

"How is it... that you claim to love and know Jesus but live no different than me?"

A word to the wise... can I encourage you? Don't compare yourselves with those you know in this world. You may ask why not? Because we are instructed in the Scriptures not to do so... it's not wise. And one of the main reasons being—the world cannot RECEIVE or RECOGNIZE the Spirit of truth (the Holy Spirit). That's why we cannot look at our neighbor and accurately compare ourselves. What we can do is look to the Word... and ask ourselves if this truth best describes me or does this look more like me? A section of Scripture that helps us look at both groups of people living in the world (those that love Jesus and those that don't) is in our #nestingwithjesus reading today

(John 14:15-24). Jesus said there are two kinds of people on the earth... those that love Him and His Father and those who do not love Him. The fact that He describes these two groups tells us that their will be those who SAY they "love" Him...but the evidence He gives helps us recognize the difference between those who do and those who may only "claim" they do.

He draws a line in the sand and gives a definitive difference in the lives of all His disciples compared to the rest of the world. He does it with a word... and that word is "keep." The idea and principles of this word is found throughout the Scriptures. God told Joshua the plan, "you shall mediate" and the reason why we should feed and continually replay and ponder His truth, to observe or keep that which is written in it. And it's no different that what Jesus said in the Newer Testament, she. He said those that keep His word are those who love Him. The word keep or observe means to set your eye upon to watch, know, guard and protect. It has the idea of giving your attention and focus to something because of its significant value—something that is treasured. We focus our attention on things we love and treasure... like our spouses, children, family, principles and resources. And this distinctly identifies a believer/lover of Jesus from everyone else. They treasure, and therefore, set their heart and give their attention to Him and upon His word to know, understand, keep and honor His message with their lives. Their love is no claim... it is clearly and unashamedly manifested by a diligent and disciplined longing and love for the word of God. Which all give evidence of His redeeming grace. When a man treasures something...everyone that knows him will not have to wonder what [it] is...

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Luke 12:34

So I encourage each of you to put down the measure sticks and stop looking at your neighbor and ask yourselves... "Do I love Jesus?" "Do I keep His word?" "Do I treasure it enough to seek it, and set my heart and focus upon it, so I can live my life by it?" "Or is it something I too easily neglect—and can get by without and rarely, if ever, seek?" He drew the line in the sand, not me and neither did you... but I surely want to live on the side He plans on manifesting Himself on. Glory...

So what will a world around us say:

"How is it or how can you engage me?"

- Because Jesus knew how to deal with problems (especially cultural differences between people) therefore, problem were no threat to Him.
- Because Jesus knew how to treat people with love and compassion He was approachable.
- Because Jesus knew how to handle pride because His sustenance was to do His Father's will. Therefore, He did set out to preserve Himself but to extend patience to those who needed it most.

"How is it that you didn't warn us?"

Noah warned the world that the floods were coming... and so is Jesus.

"How is it that you claim you love and know Jesus but live no different than me?"

Nick Holden