

Matthew 4:23-25

Next week we are stepping away from Matthew and beginning a new series I am calling Essentials. Why are we doing this series? Plateaued, dying churches and an uncertain future...

There are 5 or so things that we must keep in the forefront of all that we do and are if we are to flourish as a church in the future. And we must not only keep these things in the forefront of our minds...we must embrace them.

1. Global Missions
2. Local Disciple Making
3. The Gospel and Biblical Salvation
4. An Expectation of Suffering
5. The Importance of Love for God

These are Essentials for the future of FBC...and I believe any church for that matter.

With that said, let us get into our text today...our last message in the "Beginning" series.

READ/PRAY

Have you ever worried that you will get to the end of your life and find out you wasted it?

1. Maybe you poured your energy into increasing your power or your popularity only to discover you will soon be forgotten.
 - a. And we will
 - b. Looking at pictures at my parents of people no one even knows anymore
2. Maybe you pursued pleasure...only to find out it left you lacking
3. Maybe you poured yourself into making lots of money and gaining material possessions only to leave them to someone who will waste it all
4. No one wants to waste their one and only life...right?

Jesus set the example for us on how not to waste our lives in this text. 3 Main things characterized Jesus' life and ministry in this text. 3 Things that we can learn from and emulate if we want our lives to count.

I. Jesus was Teaching

23 *Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues*

Teach—to instruct, to inform, to communicate to another the knowledge of that of which he was before ignorant. (or of what before he was not obedient!).

1. Jesus is going through Galilee, and opening the eyes of those who are gathering in the synagogues.
2. He is bringing the Scriptures to life!
3. He was a teacher.

Teaching is vital to the advancement of the kingdom...and it doesn't have to be complicated!

1. 1 Timothy 4:13 *Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.*

- a. READ
- b. TEACH
- c. EXHORT

2. It is just this simple. Because it is this simple we can all do it!

- a. Some better than others
- b. But we can all do this!

II. Jesus was preaching

23 *Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom,*

We are all supposed to be preachers.

1. We have our cultural understanding of what it means to preach, but what does the Bible say?
2. 74 times this word is used and most of the time it refers to proclaiming the good news in the streets.

a. This is God's plan for the advancement of His Kingdom.

b. 1 Corinthians 1:21 *For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*

We don't define it this way...but what if we did?

1. If 1 person would win 2 people to Jesus each month and his 2 would lead 2 each month and so on it would take us just a little more than 9 months to lead the entire city of Tullahoma to Christ.
2. It would take just a year to lead all of coffee county to Christ.

2 Timothy 2:2 *The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*

III. Jesus was healing

23 *Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.*

It is clear, even with a cursory reading of the Gospels that much of Jesus' ministry was characterized by social ministry, doing good, physical, temporal works for the good of other people.

1. If there is any doubt that doing good to others is of great importance to Christ, we have overlooked a powerful part of Scripture.
2. Matthew 25:31-46

I want us to see a few things from this text, as we think about the healing, horizontal ministry of Jesus.

1. The Seriousness of this Scripture v31-33

“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another; as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

- a. Please notice the seriousness of this Scripture!
- b. This is eternal life and eternal death!!

2. The Distinguishing Marks of Sheep and Goats

What is it that distinguishes, in this case, the sheep from the goats? v34-36

34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’

- a. They gave Jesus something to eat!
- b. They gave Him something to drink
- c. They invited Him into their homes when He was a stranger
- d. The sheep clothed Jesus when He was naked, visited Him when He was sick, and came to Him in prison.

The goats on the other hand v41-43

41 “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’

- a. Gave Jesus nothing to eat, nothing to drink, and failed to invite Him into their homes
- b. They failed to clothe Jesus when He was naked or visit him when he was sick and in prison.

These are distinguishing marks of the righteous!

1. I don't believe Jesus is teaching salvation by works. He is teaching the reality that a faith that saves works!

2. James 2:14-17 *What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*

3. This is should be the norm for the righteousness

- a. Isaiah 58:6-7 *Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? 7 “Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?*

- b. Hebrews 13:1-3 *Let love of the brethren continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.*

3. Heb 13:3 *Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.*

3. The Recipient of the Actions v37-40

Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

a. Acts 9:5 *And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,*

b. As he sends his disciples to do his work he says this Matthew 10:42 *And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward*

c. Matthew 12:50 *For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."*

44 Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' 45 Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

We should be a healing people...bearing one another's burdens and meeting the needs of the least of these.

Conclusion:

Teaching/Preaching/Healing. That was Jesus method! And the news spread! v24-25

24 The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

1. It is still spreading and will continue to spread until every nation, tongue, and tribe is represented before the throne of God.
2. Revelation 7:9-10 *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb*

Do you understand that this is the only thing that really makes life worth living if we are believers?

1. Young people—have you written God a blank check with your life?
2. Senior adults—have you written God a blank check with your retirement?
 - a. Average senior adults lives 20 years after retirement.
 - b. What are you going to do with that?

From John Piper's sermon at Passion in Memphis TN in May of 2000.

Three weeks ago we got word at our church that Ruby Eliason and Laura Edwards had both been killed in Cameroon. Ruby was over eighty. Single all her life, she poured it out for one great thing: to make Jesus Christ known among the unreached, the poor, and the sick. Laura was a widow, a medical doctor, pushing eighty years old, and serving at Ruby's side in Cameroon.

The brakes failed, the car went over the cliff, and they were both killed instantly. And I asked my people: Was that a tragedy? Two lives, driven by one great vision, spent in unheralded service to the perishing poor for the glory of Jesus Christ — two decades after almost all their American counterparts have retired to throw their lives away on trifles in Florida or New Mexico. No. That is not a tragedy. *That is a glory.*

I tell you what a tragedy is. I'll read to you from Reader's Digest (Feb. 1998) what a tragedy is: "Bob and Penny . . . took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast five years ago when he was 59 and she was 51. Now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their 30-foot trawler, play softball and collect shells."

The American Dream: come to the end of your life — your one and only life — and let the last great work before you give an account to your Creator be, "I collected shells. See my shells." *That is a tragedy.* As the last chapter before you stand before the Creator of the universe to give an account with what you did: "Here it is, Lord—my shell collection. And I've got a good swing. And look at my boat."

That is a tragedy. Ruby and Laura dying in Cameroon at 80 after a life of missions and ministry to others. That is a glory. What do you want to characterize your life?

1. Seashells, softball, and 30 foot yachts?
2. Or teaching, preaching, and healing for the glory of God?

"Only one life, twill soon be past /
Only what's done for Christ will last."
C. T. Studd

"Don't waste your life."