

Text: Matthew 25:31-40

Title: "My Way or The High-way?"

Introduction: Alright, last week I showed you a picture of my dog, Wesley. So, let's continue on that pet theme this week if we could. How many of you here are dog lovers? How about this ... how many of you are cat lovers?

I love the story of Creation how God worked to create for six days ... the earth, the animals, the birds, the fish and humans and God said, "It is good." Later, God decided to create house cats and God said, "Cats are evil." KIDDING!

But, cats are different, aren't they ... you pet your dog, feed your dog and give your dog a place to sleep and they look at you and say, "Wow, you must be God!" You pet your cat, feed your cat and give your cat a place to sleep and your cat looks at you and says, "I must be God!"

I don't know if you know this, but dogs have masters ... cats have staff!

How many of you have a little cat in you ... I know that I do. There are times that I think that everyone around me should keep their eyes focused on MY needs and MY dreams for this life. Life is all about ME! There are times that I treat my family and my friends like staff. Do you ever do that?!?

Let's start with this. I want you to look at the person(s) you came with this morning and tell them, "I'm not your staff!"

Good Americans = Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. And we claim that, right? I Have A Dream. We all have dreams, don't we? We dream about what life will be like for us. Some of us have had dreams and kind of watched them go by the wayside... but, here's what I want us to do. Just speculating that we all had some sort of dream for our lives and maybe this is what it looked like: after high school, we dreamed...

1. A dream school with a dream degree... (PIC)
2. Then, we would get our dream job with our dream salary... (PIC)
3. Then, we would get our dream toy / car / truck ... (PIC)
4. Then, we would get our dream spouse ... (PIC)
5. Then, we would purchase our dream house ... (PIC)
6. Then, we would have our dream 2.3 kids ... (PIC)
7. Then, we would get our dream vacation (PIC) to get away from our dream kids ... (PIC)
8. Then, we would have our dream retirement ... (PIC)
9. Then, we would have our dream death, our dream casket planted in our dream plot ... (PIC)

We don't like to talk about that part, do we?!? BUT, it's as real as all of our other dreams, right!? We don't like to talk about death, but we used to talk about it all the time. Not too many years ago, our culture was not as afraid to talk about the reality of death.

There was a bedtime prayer that maybe many of us prayed before we went to bed when we were kids. See if you remember this: "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take."
Goodnight honey...

We used to pray that prayer, but we don't like to talk about our dream death too much. But, God does. That's where God picks up the story for us ... through the death and resurrection of God's Son, Jesus, you and I can have our dream life go on and on... Even though we don't dream about death, God knows all about it and it's not scary to God!

ANYWAY, we have our dreams, right?!? We have our way of how we see our life going and if it doesn't turn out that way, often we blame the people around us for not stepping up as our staff and making all of our dreams come true, right?!?

You know what else we think sometimes? Correct me if I'm wrong here, but often we think that not only is God the One who sent His Only Son to die on a cross and come back to life so that we have hope for an eternity in God's Paradise, but God also gets to play a supporting role in our Dream Life! In the epic story of STAN, God gets to play a supporting role in making sure that MY Dream Life comes together the way I WANT IT TO! Lucky God!

Isn't that the way we think sometimes?! We get mad at God when things don't turn out the way WE WANT them to! Now, don't get me wrong here, because I think that God wants us to dream in this life about having a great life.

Do you know what I learn from Scripture? It sounds like God loves us and invites us to a DREAM LIFE! I believe that God wants you to experience all the best stuff that this life has to offer. I believe that God desires for this world to be a great world to live in as we human beings live out life the way God calls us to.

With that said ... **Let's Pray!**

If you haven't already, please take the insert out of your program. You will see our Scripture for today and an outline of how we are approaching this Scripture and the subject of "Ships". After worship today, please take this insert home with you and put it somewhere where you will be reminded this week of what we've learned from God. For those of you who are listening online or IPODing, you too can download the outline off of our website and fill in the blanks!

Last week we talked about our relationship with God. We were reminded that if we move close to God, God will get close to us. The problem with that is that in order to get close to God, we might have to get outside of our comfort zone. God is usually waiting to be with us as we GO in the direction that God is going. In relationship, God says that He will be WITH YOU! In order to do that, we have to LET GOD IN and GO WHERE GOD IS GOING!

This week is "Lordship: Part II". We are going to look at where God is going and how we can experience some of what God wants us to experience in this life.

I. Shalom Means...

- A. I want to introduce you all to a word and what it means. Maybe some of you are familiar with this word ... it's "SHALOM".
- B. Today we often hear of SHALOM as a greeting that means "Peace". That's a great greeting for the people around you ... use it! It's still used often in Israel wishing peace for their guests as well as those who live there.
- C. BUT, just using "Shalom" as a greeting of peace kind of waters down the original meaning...

- D. The original meaning of “Shalom” was not as simple as “peace”. The original meaning of “Shalom” was that all things would be as God planned them to be.

II. Shalom in History

- A. The prophets shared about “Shalom” all the time. They painted a picture of what God desired to happen here on earth to encourage the people.
- B. They used a phrase ... “In That Day...” over and over again to let the people know that the day of “Shalom” was coming. It was/is inevitable.
- C. You see, God used the prophets in the Old Testament to encourage the Hebrew people (Jewish) to keep looking to God and if they would live for God, they would catch a glimpse of “SHALOM”!
- D. God’s Dream is spelled out by the prophets... They constantly said that “In that day” there will be an abundance of food and water for all people... I wonder what that would look like today?!?
1. No one would go hungry.
 2. There wouldn’t be poverty, but abundance for all.
 3. All of us could experience “Shalom” (peace and abundance).
- E. The prophets even talk about family “In that day”. They say that children will turn to their parents and parents will give attention to their children and that people would be kind and compassionate and giving toward one another. You know what that would look like?
1. Family members staying up at night thinking up ways to out-love each other.
 2. Siblings saying to each other, “No, you take the bigger piece of cake! I want you to have it!”
 3. No divorce or heartache or silly arguments that keep getting bigger.
 4. There will be talk shows with titles like, “My Husband Secretly Loves Me Twice As Much As I Thought and Keeps Showing Me in My Love Language!”
- F. Again, the Old Testament talked about “In That Day...” In other words, it is inevitable. That day is coming! Will we be a part of it?!?
- G. Remember we need to have God’s Eyes when it comes to life ... not just this (this life), but this (eternity)!!

III. The World is a Mess

- A. That’s great that “In That Day” things will be different, but have you looked at our world now?
- B. Watch the news, read the newspapers, check the internet ... not so “Shalomy”, right? ... Lives and relationships are frayed by our culture, our economy, by their own decisions, etc...
- C. Did you now that 1.2 million children every year are put into the world-wide sex trade?

- D. [Every 6 seconds another child dies of malnutrition](#) or related diseases. That's 10 every minute. That's 600 children in this hour that we have been worshipping...
- E. This world is a mess! Do you know why? Can I give you the simple answer, please? **BECAUSE 6 BILLION PEOPLE IN THE WORLD ARE GOING AFTER THEIR PERSONAL DREAM AND LETTING GOD PLAY A SUPPORTING ROLE INSTEAD OF PLAYING A SUPPORTING ROLE IN GOD'S DREAM/SHALOM!**

IV. [On Earth as It is in Heaven...](#)

- A. Did you all notice that we did not pray the Lord's Prayer this morning? There is a reason for that!
 1. Some of you will remember that we did a worship series on the Lord's Prayer last spring. Let me remind you a little of what we said...
 2. When Jesus taught the Disciples how to pray, he tried to teach them not to be like the Pharisees. The Pharisees prayed words over and over, but often did not mean or even understand what they were praying.
 3. Last spring, my argument was that we pray the "Disciple's Prayer" (Lord's Prayer is really in John 17 ... look it up!), kind of like the Pharisees prayed... without recognizing what we were even praying.
 4. That was never Jesus' intention when he taught the Disciples how to pray...
- B. One of the lines that we **DID NOT PRAY THIS MORNING**, was "[Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done ... \(where?\) ... On earth as it is in heaven](#)"!
 1. Do you know what that is? That's Shalom!
 2. Shalom means, not just 'peace', but that things are the way God wants them to be!
 3. Shalom = A point in time when all things are the way God planned them!
 4. Again, God wants you and me to have a great life here and throughout eternity ... **THAT'S GOD'S DREAM!**

V. [The Plan for BMZ](#)

- A. That's what I want to be a part of. I want to live this life to give people a glimpse of the coming "SHALOM"!
- B. Body of Christ?!? We become the hands and feet of God, not just doing what I want.
 1. If we don't and we use our energy just for our own agenda and ask God to be a supporting actor in my story ... that's not just kind of selfish and self-centered ... it is working against God's plan ... it's working against Shalom!
 2. When we are working our own agenda, we are stopping God's agenda!

3. Some of us think we are an island, but when life is about me, a lot of other people hurt! That's not God's plan!
- C. Because of our plan for our dreams to be fulfilled, we are pulling ourselves out of being part of God's dream!
- D. Here's the plan for BMZ ... be a part of God's dream. Do you know what God wants? Two things:
1. First, for us to go and make disciples and second, for us to care for those who cannot or will not care for themselves!
 2. Jesus example was to care for people until they knew that He loved them and then those people trusted Jesus enough when He said, "Let me introduce you to My Father."
 3. That's what we get to do! Care for God's kids, so that more and more people can experience "Shalom"!
- E. BMZ does not exist to be a religious shopping center for you. We are not here so you can come and get a little religion when you feel like you need it or your Mom does...
1. BMZ exists to bring "Shalom" to this world. You know why?
 2. Because I want Jesus to experience it!
 3. "For I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was in prison and you visited me..."
 4. Christianity is NOT a SPECTATOR SPORT. We are going to continually challenge you to "get in the game"!!
- F. We do something special for the orphanages of InterHope every Christmas, but once a year at Christmas is not enough... there is more to be done!
1. We have a food pantry open every month ... because someone here decided that was how he could give a gift to God. "I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty ..."
 2. Our "Help Team" is up and running and trying to help people locally with whatever needs they can.
 3. Our "Man Club" is attempting to help our church get jobs done as well as help people in the community.
 4. Our children's and youth programs are offering Christ to kids who are hungry...
 5. This summer ... feeding lunch to kids 18 and under for FREE here at the church for 7 weeks...
 6. For InterHope ... they need meds for their orphans. The company that usually donates has had to help Haiti relief.
- G. Once we are in a right relationship with God ... repentance, prayer for forgiveness and to be right with God (go where God is going and Live for God's Dream/Shalom), then we can be in relationship to other people!!!

Next Week: Friendships!

Let's Pray!!