

The Hardest Thing You Will Ever Do, pt.2

- Mark 12.29-31, 11.27.16

Introduction:

1. It isn't – dying for your faith, standing up for your faith, submitting to a very unpleasant circumstance to the will of God, seeking or giving forgiveness, resolving conflict, rebuilding relationships, breaking an addiction, going through deliverance, dying to your will, putting up a boundary in a relationship, etc.
2. Scripture – today you will see it in a new way. 'love your neighbor like you love yourself.'
3. Review last week's message
 - a. "1 Cor.13.4-7" – Is that the way God loves us...is that the way we are to love each other...and, is that the way you love yourself?
 - b. I believe I am to love others the same way God loves me (unconditionally) and I am to love myself the same way God loves me (unconditionally).
 - c. It's not narcissistic - false, grandiose, selfish; nor self-esteem linguistics– positive attitude, "I'm great and you're great" jargon; nor self love – take care of yourself, watch your relationships, take care of your body.
 - d. Benard of Clairvaux said one of the highest degrees of love was simply that we love ourselves as God loves us – in the same degree, in the same manner and with the very same love. We love the self that God loves, the essential image and likeness of God in us that has been damaged by sin.
 - e. Our unrenewed mind rebels against that thought b/c we consider how inconsistent, apathetic, and judgmental we are and it reveals how little we believe in the power of Jesus' blood which makes me pure and whole though and through whether I feel it, live it or fully believe it or not.

Loving yourself the way God loves you

1. You cannot do this fully without receiving/abiding in God's love – 1 John 4.16-19.
2. It is possible b/c of the blood of Jesus. The image of God is in me...his dna. Paul refers to Jesus as the second Adam; the first Adam brought sin, brokenness and death; the second Adam brings restoration, wholeness and life.
3. Sin corrupted and broke everything. We began working for love based on effort and performance. We come to believe: God loves me if I'm good; you love me if I treat you right and I'm good; I love myself if I am doing well. It is a conditional love.
 - a. What did the first Adam do to receive God's love – nothing.
 - b. What did Eve do to receive Adam's love & vice-versa – nothing
 - c. What did they do by the end of day six so they could love themselves – nothing.
 - d. God loved them perfectly; they loved him perfectly; they loved each other perfectly; and they loved themselves perfectly.
 - e. You say, "Yeah, b/c everything is perfect" and I am telling you the second Adam has made it all perfect again. I can walk under the unconditional love of God through faith in Jesus; it is possible for me to love you unconditionally; and it is possible for me to love myself unconditionally.

4. This isn't a call to mediocrity or compromise or justification...just accept who you are...sin is okay...you don't need to worry about changing... I see those things, but I accept myself unconditionally just as God Does.
5. We struggle with this idea, b/c we know the inconsistencies, hypocrisy, internal battles, old lifestyle, old patterns, disobedience but so does God and a WHOLE lot better than you do or ever will and He still loves you unconditionally. The HS is absolutely aware of your scars, lies that you built your life on, cultural beliefs contrary to God's truth, unhealthy family of origin issues, sin patterns, unrenewed beliefs, and ungodly behavior and all the while He is constantly reminding you of the Father's unconditional love as a dearly loved child.
6. Love what God loves – yourself; the way God loves – unconditionally and without reserve; with the same intensity - fervently. **Love yourself fervently, unconditionally and without reserve.**
 - a. **Are we not to love what God loves...the way God loves it?!**
7. It has to be: "God loves me unconditionally, wholeheartedly and without reserve and so I love myself unconditionally, wholeheartedly and without reserve." Say that in the mirror every day and see what goes off in you b/c it's an indication of what needs to be renewed!

Learning to Love Yourself

1. Alissa to share
2. I see myself as I truly am in the eyes of Jesus – Mk.10.13-16
 - a. Compared to Jesus, I have a 53 year old body and a three year old spirit. When compared to Jesus, the most mature of us in this room is nothing but a four year old in the eyes of Jesus. (the reason we're only use 10% of our brain is b/c we'll need the rest when we enter eternity!)
 - i. Toddlers and small children don't live in regret. If loved properly, they say they are sorry and then go on with life knowing that they are loved. They know they are loved, they love others and they love themselves.
 - ii. The way I read this passage is that for me to fully live in the Kingdom, which is here and now, I must approach it with childlikeness. This means I must accept and love myself as I truly am – just a child in the sight of my Father.
 - iii. Elaine Winniford thoughts: As you were sharing I was thinking in my life it has been pride that has kept me from just accepting myself and the total grace God gives. I want to somehow earn this. But when I in humility, surrender to this total grace and acceptance of the Father I find it is easy to also give grace to others. Not by gritting my teeth but simply from the overflow that I am experiencing from the Father. To me this all about accepting my status as a little child. I am a beloved child. Nothing to boast about. But it is glorious!
3. Seeing myself as I am in eternity – unconditionally loved by God, others and unconditionally loving myself. Love permeates the atmosphere of Heaven and therefore it permeates earth's as well. I am fully persuaded that what they are experiencing there is possible for me to experience here in a whole lot greater measure than what I am now. If they are experiencing it at 100% capacity in eternity, most believers on earth are experiencing at 5%, so I go a whole lot of room for growth.

Why loving yourself is important:

1. You become united with the Spirit of God inside of you – Rom.8.15-17.

- a. The Spirit is affirming my identity and thus making it possible for me to truly love myself unconditionally. He is affirming that I am loved, enjoyed and I am incredibly valuable to God and by loving myself I am agreeing with that reality.
 - b. When you say, “I’m bad...I’m a awful person...I’m so...” You are out of step with the Spirit. All condemning, guilt laden and shame based negative self talk is a clear indication that you are absolutely out of sync with the Spirit of God. **He convicts to restore not to destroy.**
 - c. By loving yourself unconditionally you are in agreement/harmonizing with the Spirit of God inside of you and you are able to live from a place of rest and peace.. The reason some are so miserable is your unrenewed mind is saying, “no, no, no” and the Spirit is saying “yes, yes, yes” and there is all this tension. You need to give in to the work/flow of the Spirit. Have you ever been at 180 degree odds with someone? But, then the lightbulb comes on and you see you completely misunderstood and now you are in agreement.
2. **Your love for others is an overflow of how well you love yourself.** I can restate “Love your neighbor like you love yourself” this way “You will love your neighbor like you love yourself.”
- a. I tend to judge you like I judge myself. This may be why some of you struggle with pessimism and negativity about life situations b/c we are pessimistic and negative about ourselves. You don’t believe the best about yourself.
 - b. We tend to give what we are. When I love myself unconditionally is a whole lot easier to love you unconditionally.
 - c. When I am kind and patient with myself, I tend to be kind and patient with you. Sometimes people say to me, “Pastor, I know you are disappointed in me or you probably think bad about me b/c...” . **Please don’t project upon me and assume that I am judging you the way you judge yourself.** I tend to show people a whole lot of grace, b/c I show myself a whole lot of grace b/c I have received a whole lot of grace..
 - d. How would you describe your self-talk when you fail and those closest to you fail? Maybe the reason you find it so difficult to forgive others or move past pain is b/c you find it incredibly difficult to forgive yourself. you haven’t really forgiven yourself from past failures and regrets and you find it difficult to forgive others

How can I love myself when I have caused so much pain to others or myself?

1. You must live from your current and permanent identity in Jesus – John 1.12

- a. You are His child now and forever; you are forgiven, whole and restored – whether you feel it or completely believe it. Heb.10.14 is the state of every believer – He has made perfect forever those who are being made perfect. This establishes my identity (perfect child) and the renewal process affirms my identity (in other words, the fact that he is renewing me is evidence that I am his child).
 - i. You cannot let the people you hurt or the damage you caused define you.

2. You must stop image management, self hatred and self flagellation.

- a. You try really hard to let the other person know that you have changed by overcompensating. You want them to feel good about you, so you’re in apology mode or self depreciating or false humility. You’re looking for their approval that all is well.
- b. Some are constantly beating yourself up with excessive negativity and anger. You’re like Christians or Muslims who beat themselves with lashes. Jesus took your lashes so stop beating yourself.

3. Take responsibility for the hurt, but do not take responsibility for the person’s healing!

- a. Do your part of restoration – seek forgiveness, recompense. When you try to do anything above this you begin to interfere with the work of God in that person’s life.
 - b. Their healing is only possible when they cooperate with God’s work in their lives. I can make it easier by taking responsibility, but even then it is no guarantee the person will be restored b/c it is completely up to them.
 - c. Some of you are victims and have gone through terribly hard things and healing is possible when you cooperate with the work of God’s Spirit in your life.
4. You have to accept that some things will never be fixed in this life.
- a. The person you hurt is now dead or you are completely alienated. You can’t do anything but turn it over to God.
 - b. The person may continue to jab at you and try to make you pay. At this point, it is out of your hands.