

The Impact of the “Normal” Christian Life on Those Around You - Mark 3 – 6, 7.10.17

Intro

1. Jesus was the first normal Christian. The Book of Acts shows us how normal Christianity looks in both the lives of individuals and the local church.
 - a. Examples of Normal Christians – examples in Guidepost July 2016 – [image of Bryan Anderson](#), veteran with no legs and one arm; [image of Shaka Senghor](#), convicted murderer given a second chance and now helping others experience forgiveness.
 - b. [Image of Todd White](#) – listen and watch this guy! Extreme background – drugs and hard life.
 - c. This is what I have noticed – people who have experienced huge brokenness and forgiveness; huge problems and then major breakthrough; huge setbacks and then incredible advancements have an intensity of love and devotion to Jesus b/c as Jesus said in Luke 7, “the person who has been forgiven much loves much.” They are making a huge difference in the lives of others, b/c God has done so much for them.
 - d. It can be more of a challenge for us who have not come from that extreme edge of life. The impact we make possibly is not as large b/c we are accustomed to the American version of Christianity, which is filled with a lot of compromise and half commitment.
 - i. Le Cowan’s word about, “Casually dating God.”
2. Big Idea: When I live the “Normal” Christian Life, I will cause heads to shake.
 - a. Shake their heads in amazement, disbelief, anger, disappointment, joy, etc
 - i. Is what I believe provoking anyone? How are my beliefs provoking those around me?
 - ii. How is my love changing those around me?
 - iii. How are my actions making a difference in my sphere of influence?
 - b. There can be both positive and negative answers to those questions.
 - c. You say, “I’m not sure.” One way to know is to notice how people are responding to you.
3. Notice how people respond to Jesus as He lives the “normal Christian life.”

When I live the “normal” Christian life:

Family members may think I am crazy - 3.20.

1. This is especially true when you make a radical departure from your family’s religious background, i.e., a Muslim becoming a Christian. They see it as a rejection of the faith and a major deception.
2. It’s also true when you rock the boat of the family’s Christian status quo. **Homeostasis is the tendency of the body to seek and maintain a condition of balance or equilibrium within its internal environment, even when faced with external changes.** A simple example of **homeostasis** is the body's ability to maintain an internal temperature around 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit, whatever the temperature outside.
3. Many of us live homeostasis Christianity. We seek stability over radical obedience and when a family member begins prodding the edges of the Christian faith the family members especially feel the need to shoot down any what they consider excessive or extreme behavior.
 - a. Ex of families who discourage children from going into the f/t ministry b/c they will not make money. **Our moniker is “Live a sensible life” when it should be “Live a supernatural life.”** Be it a supernatural engineer, teacher, stay at home parent...a life that is characterized as “normal” in the sight of God, not in the demographics of Brazoria County.
4. We always need to be careful to not be carried off by every wind of doctrine, but none of us need to settle in our Christian walk. The depths of God, the riches of His Word and the activity of the HS are far beyond anything we could ever fully experience in this life. Therefore, we should never settle with where we are!
 - a. **When it comes to the things of God, we should be pioneers and not settlers!**
5. Appl – I always want to be growing in my knowledge and experience of Jesus. I don’t want to settle into the familiar. One of the characteristics of children is that they are always curious and learning. As His child I should have the same characteristics!

I am misunderstood and even falsely accused - 3.22.

1. Jesus scared them. His teaching, power and lifestyle were at odds with their’s. He did not limit His pursuit of the Father’s will based on what others might say or do. This led the religious establishment to attack Him. He would not be tamed by them and so they attacked Him.
2. Appl for those who have been stung by this approach and sting using this approach: When we’re scared or unsure about person, movement, teaching...we often go on the attack and get into a defensive posture without fully pursuing truth. We make blanket statements and quickly pass judgment.
 - a. This has happened to some of you; you have been misunderstood and falsely accused by important people and it hurts. What did Jesus say? **“Mt.5.10-12.”**
 - b. All of us have done this to others...we have jumped to conclusions, been territorial about our beliefs, been restrictive or liberal where God is not, etc – study the teaching,

person, etc, pursue love, and follow the truth of Mt.11.19. They accused John the Baptist of being demonized and Jesus being a drunkard and Jesus said: Wisdom is proven to be right by her children.

- i. I don't always want to be the guy who is in the middle of the road telling everyone to slow down.

People are moved/astonished at my boldness and faith - 4.41.

1. This is the story of Jesus rebuking the wind and waves. They had no chart for this. It was an off the chart moment that rocked them
2. Appl – He's given me the authority to do the very same things as He did. Most of us just think it's a random miraculous event that only Jesus can do. I want to challenge that thought. Jesus understood the Kingdom of God. He brought the government of God to earth which means everything is now under His control and there are laws that run his government. We can learn those laws. Jesus knew these laws and he taped into them.
3. Ill – Recent visit with my dad and him telling us the story about a severe line of thunderstorms headed to a city where they were holding an outdoor evangelistic meeting. Thousands were gathered outside and they were told to get under the stands and field house. They watched in amazement as the sky parted, the sun shone and the thunderclouds went around the stadium and then rejoined.
4. How do people describe your faith? I don't want to be defined as a conservative, Bible believing, seminary educated, middle-class, American Christian...that spells BORING! I want to be defined as a radical, Holy Spirit empowered, faithfilled follower of Jesus. One who is bold in his faith and expects great things from God and attempts great things for God.
5. Are people shaking their heads b/c of your lack of faith ("This guy says he's a Christian?!") or b/c of the boldness of your faith ("This guys lives like a Christian!")?

There is real authority in my prayers and I do not fear the demonic - 5.7.

1. I have already talked about this topic and Cliff is addressing it next week.

You walk with the assurance of God's presence while others doubt and even laugh - 5.22f, 35f, 38-40.

1. This was a huge. The emotional spectrum is all over the map – parents pleading; crowds pressing; unexpected news; weeping and wailing. It is a chaotic commotion and then they did not take Jesus serious..."you gotta be kidding me, right?!"
2. When you are walking with the assurance of God's presence, you can enter any situation without hesitation or overwhelming fear.
3. Illustration from God Reports about JP getting the release of 4500 Christians from slave labor
 - a. Show images of the children & families making bricks & the joy of being released

4. What challenges has God brought your way that is giving you opportunity to declare your assurance of God's presence – financial, relational, work related, etc – that causes others to shake their heads?

Those who have known you the longest cannot adapt to the person you are becoming – 6.1-4.

1. They had placed around Jesus certain expectations as a carpenter's son, as a member of a particular family, and a citizen within that community. They were shaking their head in contempt and unbelief.
 - a. Sometimes it can be hard for us to adjust to the move of the Spirit in another person's life.
2. When God begins to move in your life, your identity as a person, citizenship in a country and membership in a family changes. You begin to reflect different dna, values, and family of origin.
3. **Three areas to judge who you are becoming – 1 Cor.13.13**
 - a. **Is my love for others more radical?**
 - i. 1 Cor.13.4-7 is the standard
 - ii. Are you seeing people through Jesus' eyes?
 - b. **Is my faith in God more powerful?**
 - i. I am fully persuaded in the promises of God.
 - ii. I am fully persuaded in the goodness of God
 - iii. I am taking God directed risks.
 - c. **Is my hope in the future more pervasive?**
 - i. This is the one I have seen a lot of American Christians surrender. They look at the condition of the world or hear some dire message or listen to a negative prophetic word and their hope is dashed. It is dashed because our hope is too closely linked to our nation rather than to God's Kingdom. I pray that America will be great again, but even if it is not, His Kingdom has no end and He will reign forever and ever.
 - ii. The more I know Jesus, the more hope that I have that the kingdoms of this world are becoming the Kingdoms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - iii. The more I know Jesus, the more I know that no one is a lost cause, b/c His mercies are new every morning.

Conclusion

1. Who wants to be defined as a normal American Christian?
2. **I want to be known as a "normal" Christians whose life, love and faith make people shake their heads.**
 - a. **Is what I believe provoking anyone to pursue Jesus more?**
 - b. **Is how I love changing anyone's perception about our Father's love?**

c. Is what I do in the power of the Spirit making a positive difference in my spheres of influence?

3. How normal are you?