

October 23, 2016

I Want to Know Jesus

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Philippians 3:10-11

"But I tell you who hear me: Love you enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you."

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven..."

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

Luke 6:20-49

There are lots of ways that we can know Jesus. We can know him as our Savior. We can know him as our friend. We can know him as God, and the Son of God, as we saw last week. We can and should know Jesus in all of these ways and more, but the one way that we must know Jesus is as our Lord and Master.

Some of our number have served in the military and they can attest to the first and most important lesson they probably learned in basic training. "Do what you are told!" For young recruits that has to be one of the hardest lessons that they must learn..."Do what you are told!" Of course the reason for that strict discipline is the reality of the battlefield. Following orders might well save your life in battle.

For most of us, even those who have served in the military, doing what we are told does not come easy. We are, by our very natures, a stiff-necked and rebellious people. We like to follow our own orders and do our own thing.

But we cannot do that and still be a disciple following Jesus. He must be our Lord and Master, or we can have no relationship with him at all. So in our lesson today from Luke 6, sometimes called the 'Sermon on the Plain', Jesus asks, *"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"* Jesus, and later those who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, give us many direct and specific commandments. *"Love your neighbor as yourself..."; "Love others as I have loved you..."; "...do to others what you would have them do to you..."; "Do not judge...Do not condemn...";* or *"...do not worry about your life..."*

These very specific commands and all of the others we find in Scripture, are given by our Lord and Master. They are not advice, they are not issues open to discussion, and they have no loopholes. If Jesus tells us to love others, all others, then that is what he wants and expects us to do. If he tells us to pray for those who treat us badly then that is what he wants and expects us to do.

He doesn't put exception clauses in these commandments. He does not say, "...do to others what you would have them do to you..." except when you don't like them, don't agree with them, or don't trust them.

The thing about commandments from our Lord and Master is that they are very specific and very individual. I am commanded to love others, treat others well, and let God have my worries. These commanded behaviors are specific to me. They are not dependent on what others do. My obedience to my Lord and Master is personal. I am commanded not to judge



and not to condemn. If everyone else in the whole, wide world is judging and condemning is immaterial. The command is to me and either Jesus is my Lord or he is not.

Why learn to obey? Why does it matter so much? Jesus uses this well known parable to help us understand. Ultimately it is all about outcomes. If I follow his rules and keep his commandments I will survive when the storms of life come. If I don't obey then I won't. It really is that simple.

So, Jesus would challenge us, *Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"* That challenge is ours, personally and individually, to answer, and answer to him we will. M