

What's your story? When you are all alone is Christ enough?

Sermon Notes

April 10, 2022

Cancel culture- punitive public policing of correctness based on prevalent social codes of behavior. Once canceled you are alone. Will Smith heralded actor and Hollywood elite is on the verge of being canceled. Two weeks ago, people were clamoring to be a part of his circle and now many have withdrawn, and few would now stand with him. Quickly life becomes a lonely place. In this instance he made a mistake, yet sometimes being canceled or being withdrawn from is the result of choosing to do something honorable. Consider WWII corporal Desmond Doss who is the only conscientious objector to have received the Medal of Honor. He refused to carry a weapon due to his understanding of scripture, yet he wanted to help. The US Army, his platoon leader, and many of his fellow soldiers were not kind to him and even tried to "cancel" him. He was completely isolated with no advocates. In this story, Corporal Doss goes on to save the lives of 75 men while being wounded himself. We celebrate him now, but in his darkest moment with no advocates, he testified that he drew his strength from his faith in Christ.

Have you gone through something where you felt isolated, being withdrawn from, and alone? Was it from a mistake or for choosing the right thing?

When all alone, where do you draw your strength from?

Christ faced such isolation, doubt, and rejection from even those closest to him. Where did he draw his strength from?

Jesus chose to do the right thing knowing the relational cost.

Matthew 26:31-35

- His followers closest to him will withdraw from him. **Zechariah 13:7**
- He knows there will be a return and better relationship later, but for now... (32)
- Even the exuberant Peter will rise only to fail miserably. (33-35)
- The risk of relational loss = pressure.
 - No one wants that and will go to great lengths to avoid it.

Under intense pressure, Jesus drew more closely to the Father while others withdrew from him. **Matthew 26:36-46**

- Gethsemane (def)- Aramaic for oil press. A place to apply pressure to extract the substance of the olive.

- This is where the pressure was applied to Jesus to extract the substance of his character and commitment to his purpose.
- It was a testing 10x the wilderness testing.
- Relational arrows under pressure reveal where you draw your strength from.
- At this time, it revealed Jesus was truly dependent upon his relationship with the Father.
- It also revealed that the disciples were still dependent upon the “safe play” and their own self-preservation.
- As the pressure builds, so does the lethargy of the disciples. (41-46)
 - 3x Jesus appeals to the Father.
 - 3x Jesus is disappointed by the disciple’s failure to stand with him.
- The time comes and Jesus says, “Let’s go!” (46)
 - They follow briefly until it gets too perilous.

Jesus’ pursuit of his purpose was superior to any relational loss. Matthew 26:47-56

- He states that he must keep going to fulfill the promises of God. (54, 56)
 - The prophecies all said why, how, and in what pattern he was to be utilized as the Lamb of God.
 - Every prophecy must be fulfilled. No short cuts or adjustments to appease others.
- He was completely abandoned and left alone—prophecy fulfilled. (56)

Take aways from Jesus’ example:

1. God’s plan will happen—both the revealed and unrevealed plans.
2. Pursuing God’s plan can lead to immense pressure, especially from others.
 - Sometimes intense pressure whether or not we are aligned with God.
 - Do you want to go through the pressure with God or presuming upon his mercy when putting your strength somewhere else.
3. We must draw our strength from the Lord, not from others.
4. Forgiveness trumps resentment when going forward with others. (32)
 - Jesus kept the door open by the way he handled the relational failures of his oikos.
 - Even Judas he called friend. (50)