

MAKING THE SAVIOR SIGNIFICANT

September 30, 2007

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John 12:20-33

Time is a precious commodity. It seems we simply don't have enough time in the day to do what we set out to do. We value our family, friends, and jobs, so we put in our time. We spend time with those things that are significant to us. Therefore we assign value when we spend our time. If we only give God time at the 10:00am service on Sunday morning, does that show God's significance to us? Why are you here at church today? Did you come to see or be seen? Did you come out of opportunity, obligation, or obedience? What difference does it make that you come here every Sunday? Maybe you came for direction. Maybe you are here just because it is your routine. Is it possible that you are here because Jesus is really significant in your life? Is that why you are here? If you came to experience Jesus and to understand why we worship and praise the Lord, you are in good company.

In the text, the Gentiles could not go beyond the inner courts of the temple. They had heard about this man named Jesus. How did they know where to find Jesus? How did they hear about him? Maybe they ran into Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the lame man, or Lazarus who spoke of their encounters with Jesus.

That is why you are here today. You ran into somebody who had a testimony so you came to the house of God hoping to see Him for yourself. We don't physically see Jesus. We see Jesus through the lens of faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Have we been so busy in worshipping the institution and not Jesus? How can we minister if Jesus is not significant in our lives?

How do we make Jesus significant in our lives?

The first step is submission that is actualized as humility. You have to realize it will never be about you. It is about Jesus. You have to humble yourself. You can't exalt Jesus and yourself at the same time. Jesus doesn't come second to anything or anybody. You have to remove yourself and allow God to be the center of your life. Jesus must be first. Therefore, we have to die to some things. We have to die to our own agendas, our selfishness, our self-righteousness, and our pride. Smile when you come to worship. Make way for someone else. Humble yourself. If you do not, God will do it for you. When you think too highly of yourself, God will bring you low. It doesn't matter how long you have been in the church or how long you've known Jesus, you have to humble yourself. Jesus said, "You are, because I am." When you humble yourself, God places you in a precarious predicament. When you humble yourself you will move into the realm of some sort of suffering.

The second step is suffering. Jesus suffered for us. Since we are children of the cross, we have to suffer with Jesus. There are some things we are going to have to do that we really don't want to do. You may have to forgive even when it was not your fault. You may have to leave your career when there are no prospective jobs in sight. God will take you from what you feel is your freedom to a place that may feel like bondage. It is in that time, when you will really find out who God is. Out of that experience, you will learn how to pray.

You must go through something to really learn how to pray. You will have to suffer for the name of Jesus; and God will be with you every step of the way. God puts you back in the valley so that you can see it is truly about Him and not yourself. When you have suffered for God, you praise God for who He is.

The third step is serving. After submission and suffering, you have to serve God. God exalted Jesus, because he submitted himself and suffered for God. God has uniquely gifted you to serve Him in His kingdom. For instance, you have to clean a chicken wing before you cook it. Then you have to season and flour the chicken wing. While frying it, you have to flip the chicken while it is cooking in the grease so both sides can cook. This is similar to the discipleship of Christians. God seasons us with unique gifts so that we can serve Him. There is no one like you. There is no one who can do what God has purposed you to do. The flouring process is God putting on His protection because He is getting ready to put you into the fire. The fire is the suffering. If you are not quite ready for service, God will flip you in the fire so can get prepared a little more. You will have to suffer to serve God but He will honor you for your service.

There will come a time after our service is over, God will honor us. God will say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." Do you want to hear God say, "Well done?" Serve Him.

Peace.

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