

Day Nine

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

Are you ready for the test?

Jesus was very deliberate in the things that he exposed the disciples to. He was preparing them for life and ministry. He was introducing Kingdom living and getting them ready for that which was to come. He was making and forming them into the people that would birth His Church; a Church that would face extreme challenges; Christ followers, both men and women, that would eventually pay the ultimate price.

In John 15, we find the lesson from the vine. Jesus tells them that He is about to go away. He also tells them that they are going to be persecuted and killed because of Him. He says, in John 16, that their sorrow will be changed to joy. The disciples then respond. **John 16:29-33(CEV)** *“His disciples said, ‘Finally! You’re giving it to us straight, in plain talk—no more figures of speech. Now we know that you know everything—it all comes together in you. You won’t have to put up with our questions anymore. We’re convinced you came from God.’ 31-33 Jesus answered them, ‘Do you finally believe? In fact, you’re about to make a run for it—saving your own skins and abandoning me. But I’m not abandoned. The Father is with me. I’ve told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I’ve conquered the world.’”*

They say, “We believe and have no more questions.” Jesus says, “You are going to run like scared cats!” Hang with me now and follow the progression. I want you to notice: **John 17:1a(CEV)** *“After Jesus had finished speaking to his disciples, he looked up toward heaven and prayed.”* I want you to catch this. Jesus taught them about the importance of abiding, but He also warned them what is about to take place. He then demonstrates to them how to abide. Because right as He finishes His sentence, He looks towards heaven and starts praying to the Father. Jesus is showing the disciples that abiding is being aware of God’s presence. If you do this, it will enable you to bear up under difficult situations as well as testing and temptation.

Jesus demonstrated and taught them an illustrated sermon, if you will. They, on the other hand, say, “We get it and we get it so good that we won’t even bother You (Jesus) with another question. We believe!” However, Jesus is about to expose them. Understand this: God does not expose to wound or to shame. He exposes to reveal and heal. He reveals, not for His benefit because He does not need revelation, He knows. We, on the other hand, just like the disciples, need revelation. We need revelation so that we are prepared for what we might face. **The preparation always comes before the test.** Jesus told them how to overcome by doing what He does: abide. There is something about the human heart that struggles with vulnerability. We

hate to admit that we don't know something. We don't like to admit that we are wrong. We would rather protest, argue, put up a defense, give an excuse or even fight, before we admit that we might not be as smart as we think we are. We do that in relationships all the time. But what really reveals this low-grade arrogance is, we even think we can argue with God.

As Jesus and the disciples are leaving the upper room, He starts talking to them about what was going to take place. During this conversation, Peter is adamant about his commitment to Christ. He says that he is fully ready. Jesus tells him, "Peter, you going to deny me." Peter insists that he is ready, even if it means following Jesus would lead to his death. **Mark 14:26-31(NLT)** *"Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. 27 On the way, Jesus told them, 'All of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, "God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." 28 But after I am raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.' 29 Peter said to him, 'Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will' 30 Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me.' 31 'No!' Peter declared emphatically. 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!' And all the others vowed the same."*

Peter is not the only one making bold statements. Both Matthew and Mark record that it was not just Peter, but all of the disciples that were emphatic that they were ready to die for Him. Jesus is taking them to a familiar place; they are used to coming here. They spend time in the Garden; they've slept in the garden. Unlike the upper room where they had supper, Jesus takes them to a very familiar place. He knows that Judas has set in motion His betrayal and He knows Judas knew where they would be spending the night. At the foot of the Mount of Olives, stands the Garden of Gethsemane. Filled with olive trees, the Garden of Gethsemane is where Jesus spent his last hours praying to his Father just before the Roman soldiers arrested him.

Jesus is about to be pressed. Within a few moments, He will face unimaginable testing. But He is fully aware and completely prepared. This is why He came, and at no moment, will He be backing down or be looking for a way out! Jesus knows what is about to take place. He also knows that his disciples are not as ready as they think they are. Even though they have confessed their undying loyalty to the point of death, they are about to fail the test; all due to their false bravado. There is a place in our spiritual journey toward maturity that we will face testing. God does not promote those who **think** they can pass the test; He only promotes those who pass the test.

Testing always precedes promotion. Don't miss this: If Jesus was tested and faced temptation, don't you think you will face temptation? The question is not, "Will I face testing and temptation?" The question is, "Am I fully prepared?" There are times in our lives that God's will for us is not easy to understand and not easy to embrace, but there

is a way to get to the other side of it. There are seasons when the enemy of our faith releases assignments against us, but there is a way to overcome. **Understand this: arrogance produces ignorance, but humility releases grace!**

Stop arguing with God. Rather humble yourself, so that grace can be released for you to overcome. Jesus warned and tried to prepare the disciples. He did two things for them that He also does for us. The first thing He does, He offers them hope. **V28 “But after I am raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.”** He makes a resurrection statement, almost nonchalant, even telling them where He is going to meet them after the resurrection. DUH! They are so focused on defending their desertion that they totally miss out on what Jesus is telling them. He offers them hope by painting a picture of the future! He gives them the answer, but they only hear the challenge. Sometimes we protest so much that we don't hear at all what God is saying to us.

The second thing he does, He offers them a way through. **Luke 22:39(NLT)** *“Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. 40 There he told them, ‘Pray that you will not give in to temptation.’”* He tells them, “Boys, if you are going to make it--you guys are telling Me you won't quit on me and you won't run away and desert me—so, this is how you are going to be able to withstand the test that is about to be placed before you. You need to pray!” He did not offer them a way out, but He offered them a way through. There are things in your life that do not make sense to you, but Jesus offers you hope. He also offers you a way through them.

We can be fully prepared for whatever comes our way because we abide in Him, instead of argue with Him. When will we realize that our Father has our best interest at heart; that He is for us, not against us? When will we understand that growth only comes through being tried and tested? The Father knows, no matter how much we say we understand, or how many times we confess our commitment to Him, we still have to go through the press to become our best. How prepared are you?

Prayer:

- **Ask the Lord to reveal to you where you have been arguing instead of submitting.**
- **Be willing to humble yourself by simply asking the Father's help.**
- **Ask the Lord to make you aware of the enemy's devices and pray that you will not give in.**
- **Release the need to always be right and ask the Lord to help you walk in His righteousness not your own self-righteousness.**
- **Ask for forgiveness where needed, both in your prayer time and with others.**

