

Sunday, July 5, 2020 am

FIRST PRINCIPLE LESSONS

“Who Am I?”

Exodus 3:11

A while back, I decided that I would devote the first Sunday of each month to presenting first principle lessons, giving us a break from our intense study of our yearly theme. And while over the past few months we have seen extraordinary things that have prompted changes in what we preach, I want to get back to this format as much as possible. So this morning, I want to share another first principle lesson. We will continue with my theme – The Teachings of Jesus – when I return from vacation in 3 weeks.

Our text for this lesson is taken from Exodus 3:11. Moses has been away from Egypt for about 40 now, having fled after killing an Egyptian taskmaster who was abusing one of his Israelite brethren. He is about 80 years old and is tending flocks for Jethro his father-in-law. He sees a burning bush that is not consumed. As he investigates, the Angel of the LORD appears to him in the flame of fire and calls him to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses is hesitant, and likely uncertain about himself, and thus begins to make excuses believing he is unqualified. His first inquiry is to ask God, “Who am I...?” Moses saw himself as insignificant, but the Lord answered, “I will certainly be with you...” He then proceeded to give him signs to present before Pharaoh.

We could devote more time to that account, but this morning, I want to and talk about the expression, “Who am I?” It is a worthwhile question that we OUGHT to ask ourselves and we need to find answers according to God’s word.

I. “Who Am I?”

- a. The expression is found 6 times (NKJV), all in the Old Testament, and it always showed humility as one realized his standing before others – 5 of the 6 times that humility is directed toward God
- b. Exodus 3:11 – we have our context, where Moses is speaking to God at the burning bush.
- c. Spoken by David before king Saul as he is given a daughter to be his wife – 1 Samuel 18:18. David sees his unworthiness to be a part of the King’s family.
- d. NOTE: The final 4 times are all associated with David’s desire to build a permanent house for God. 2 Samuel 7:18 as David is told by the LORD that his throne would be established forever. (Also 1 Chronicles 17:16)
- e. 1 Chronicles 29:14 – as David, later in his life makes preparations for Solomon to build the temple and receives great offerings from the people to do the work. He praises God acknowledging his unworthiness to be shown favor by Him.
- f. 2 Chronicles 2:6 – as Solomon makes preparations to build the temple, he acknowledges his insignificance (realize this is a king with wisdom from God).

II. Who am I?

- a. These examples show one who humbly acknowledges his place, especially before God. When we consider who God is and our insignificance it ought to humble us.
“Who am I?” IS A QUESTION we ought to be asking to keep ourselves humble before Him. So, as you examine your life, what is the answer to that question? We could go many directions with this, but I want to briefly focus on some things that apply to all of mankind (a first principle application”).
- b. ***I am created by God*** –
 - i. Genesis 1:1 tells us that God created the heavens and the earth. He created all things
 - ii. Genesis 2:7 tells us that the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. So, man became a living being.

- iii. Zechariah 12:1, *The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel. Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him*
- iv. Colossians 1:16 speaks of our Lord being the firstborn over all creation and notes that all things were created by Him, both in heaven and on earth.
- v. Many today struggle with the idea God created man or anything whatsoever. They declare we are nothing but the product of natural forces. This despite the fact, that the laws of nature contradict so many things necessary for life to begin, AND nothing that explains our essence and humanity. But it is the way of the world that refuses to retain God in its knowledge (Romans 1:28). To me, everywhere I look I see design and that calls for a designer as David said in Psalm 19:1-4 notes that the heavens declare the glory of God, 8:3-4 where he said, *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?*
- vi. BUT, if we are to have spiritual meaning and realize who we are, we need to know that God created each of us as He said in His word.

c. *I am made in God's image –*

- i. Not only are we created, we are created in God's image.
Genesis 1:26-27. This is important to understand as this is what sets us apart from the rest of creation, including every living thing.
Think about what makes man different, even from animals – the ability to reason and formulate coherent and exact thoughts, our ability to philosophize, to calculate and understand the laws of nature and to use those laws to develop technology that can improve our quality of life, our ability to appreciate beauty, and our ability to worship.
Our depth of intelligence, feelings for one another, etc.
I am convinced ALL OF THESE are part of how we are created in the image of God.
- ii. Job 32:8, *“But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.”*
- iii. I have a dual nature – an outer and inner man – 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:2. Scripture clearly teaches that I have a soul that will live on beyond this life (Ecclesiastes 12:7)
- iv. That is why I seek to ask the question, “Who am I?” and “What am I going to do about it?”

d. *I am loved by Him –*

- i. While there are many religions in the world, Christianity is very unique. One of those qualities is the fact that God loves each of us personally. And He has shown that love.
- ii. John 3:16 – He so loved us that He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus.
- iii. Salvation is available to EVERYONE – Romans 5:6-8, even though we are unworthy. And that includes me!
2 Peter 3:9 tells us that God is longsuffering and not willing that any should perish.
- iv. Many struggle with this today for many reasons – personal disappointments, the influence of the wisdom of man and worldliness, doubts, etc. But it all boils down to this: THEY don't know God as He has revealed Himself to us.
- v. But I need to realize that God does love me and has proven that. Study His word and consider what He did in giving His Son!
- vi. Because God loves us, we need to love Him – 1 John 4:19.

e. *I am subject to God's laws*

- i. IF, as we have mentioned, we are created by God, created in His image, and loved by Him. We need to realize that we are subject to Him. That He has a right to establish “the rules” that we are to follow.
- ii. Far too many today balk at the idea of following God’s laws – many out of rebellion and others out of selfishness. And all I can say is, LOOK AT THE MESS THIS WORLD IS IN! Much of its brokenness is a DIRECT result of rejecting God and His ways!
IF we want a better world, let me recommend that we follow the standard God has outlined for us in His word – it involves loving and respecting one another, living with self-control, being humble and unselfish, and so many other things. Who can HONESTLY deny that this world would be much better if we would ALL follow the moral pattern found in scripture? BUT, to accept this is to acknowledge we are accountable to Him – something far too many are unwilling to do (more on this in a moment).
- iii. God calls for us to be obedient to Him – Romans 10:13-16, “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”... but they have not all obeyed the gospel.
Hebrews 5:9 tells us that Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. John 14:15, Jesus said, “*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*” Tie this in with what we have addressed thus far.

f. I am accountable –

- i. Related to the previous point, I must realize that I am accountable to God.
- ii. When we break God’s laws, we are sinners – 1 John 3:4, Romans 3:23.
When we sin we are accountable to Him – Romans 6:23.
Vengeance will be meted out to those who do not obey the gospel – 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9
- iii. Scriptures teach that one day I will stand before God and give an accounting for how I have lived my life – Romans 14:10-12, 2 Corinthians 5:10
- iv. Because of this, I need to prepare. I need to take care of my sins by obeying the gospel and resolving to faithfully live for Him.
Which brings me to my final point:

g. I am what I make of myself –

- i. Throughout life, we are presented with many choices. On a daily bases we come to crossroads where we must decide which direction we are going to take.
- ii. Joshua 24:14-15, as he gave his farewell address he observed this fact, “*Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*”
- iii. As Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount, He did so by noting there are two paths – one that leads to destruction and one that leads to life eternal (Matthew 7:13-14). You need to choose which one you will go down. He further illustrated this with a parable about two men that built houses – one on a solid foundation, the other on sand (Matthew 7:24-27) – the one who chose to build on the solid foundation – with Jesus as that foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11, cf. Acts 4:12)
- iv. So, what will you make of yourself? And when we do stand before God, will it hold firm?

These are some fundamental thoughts as we ask the question, “Who am I?”. We could take this question in a different direction and address who I am AS a Christian, but this morning we have presented this for everyone with the hopes that you will become a Christian, and then resolve to live for Him. Think about it!