Doing and Saying – a Christian Pilgrimage

The Path has many steps – Week 6

The choices we make always have consequences. This week, we look at more of the choices which Jesus calls us to make.

Day 36:

Change your ways. Join the revolution.

In the Bible book of Matthew, Jesus is quoted as saying: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!" You could re-phrase that to mean "Change your ways! Join the revolution, for the time of God is here!" Jesus invites those who are in need into His country **and** challenges His followers to help those very same people. These are not just words, but most importantly, actions. *What if I want to help someone, but am unable to because of my own hurt?* Sometimes the person doing the ministry and the person needing the ministry are the same person. It is only by the grace of God that we can do this. Sometimes also, we need to ask others for help – this can be a sign of humility and meekness, not weakness. Before we look at other commands of His, let's review what Jesus has told us so far:

- Encourage the poor yet faithful person, and be encouraged.
- Strengthen the person in mourning, and be strengthened.
- Welcome and encourage the humble and meek, and be welcomed.
- Be humble and meek, not arrogant or aggressive (note: there is a difference between assertive (even gently assertive) and aggressive).
- Show mercy, and receive mercy.
- Make peace, and receive peace.
- Strengthen the persecuted, and be strengthened.

Looking back over the things that Jesus said to do, what opportunities have you found, and what results have you had? How did you feel before you acted, and after? How did the person you interacted with feel, before and after? Did anyone ask why you did what you did? What was their reaction when you told them? Have you identified ways you could do each type of interaction better (for example, did you talk to God and ask His help each time)? What do you think about the suggestion that Jesus brought in a revolution?

"Jesus' revolution is a slow burn…"

"Jesus driving people out of the temple."

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 37: Have integrity. Join the revolution.

Jesus said, "…let your light shine before people, so that they can see your good deeds and give honor to your Father in heaven." In other words, let your goodness be in public not just in private – let others see who you are (an Image of God), and whose you are (Christ's). Try to live this with integrity (alignment in what you say and do, in private and in public). Do things not to glorify yourself, but to glorify God.

Do you feel differently about doing or saying things privately or anonymously vs in public where everyone knows what you are doing or saying? Why? What about the idea of not glorifying yourself, but glorifying God?

If you still do not view yourself as an Image of God, or as belonging to the Family of Christ, why would you do a good thing for another person? Why wouldn't you? Do you think your behaviour would be different from a person who has decided to follow Christ? Why or why not?

If you have decided to follow Christ, why would your behaviour be different (or not) from someone who has not made that decision?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 38: Your words and actions have consequences. Join the revolution.

Jesus said, "…anyone who is angry with a brother will be subjected to judgment. Whoever insults a brother will be brought before the council, and whoever says 'Fool' will be sent to fiery hell. … if your brother has something against you, be reconciled to your brother and then come (and give thanks to God)." In other words,

a.) be careful that what you say and do doesn't harm another,

b.) what you say and do will have consequences for yourself as well as whoever you are saying or doing them to; these consequences may come from other people or from God, and

c.) do what is healthiest for those you have harmed.

Why would you be subject to judgment just for being angry? Why is it wrong to insult another or call them disparaging names? Why is it important to be reconciled with those you have harmed? Why would God care how you act and what you say?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 39: Even your thoughts have consequences. Join the revolution.

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." In other words, be faithful to your spouse, and do not lust after others. Do not put yourself in the position where you might be likely to view or think about a person (or thing, for that matter) in a lustful manner.

What do you think about being sexually faithful to one person only? What do you think about the idea that even thinking about something makes you guilty of it? Do our actions necessarily follow our thoughts? Can our thoughts have impacts of their own, even without explicit actions to reinforce them?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 40: Unintended (or possibly, out of our immediate control) consequences. Join the revolution.

"... I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." In Jesus' time, an unmarried woman was destitute – a woman was either married and lived off the income from her husband and family, or a prostitute. Jesus was therefore making two comments:

a.) Divorcing a woman makes her destitute, where she faces death from hunger and deprivation, unless she
b.) remarries or becomes a prostitute, both of which mean she then must have sex with a person different from her original husband.

Part a.) was also a huge concern if someone became a widow, which is why the bible frequently encourages people to take care of orphans and widows – both classes of people which were totally dependent on others for their survival.

Are there ways today we (individually or society at large) cause people to become destitute? Can you share examples where people are forced into situations where they must do what is not healthy for them, or break some rule or morality, to survive? What can you do about this?

Are there behaviours you can change because of unhealthy consequences which occurred afterwards?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 41: Let your word be your word. Join the revolution.

"I say to you, do not take oaths at all—not by heaven, because it is the throne of God, not by earth because it is his footstool, and not by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. Do not take an oath by your head because you are not able to make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no.' More than this is from the evil one."

Other than the legal requirement of "swearing an oath," have there been times when you have sworn or said an oath to emphasize what you are saying? What do you think about Jesus' words above? Explain.

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 42: Rest

We come again to the seventh day, so today we rest. Reflect on the past week and care for your needs (body and spirit). In the evening get together with a group you trust and share what you would like to from the previous week – good points, hard points, what you've learned, what you've struggled with, etc. Decide again if you wish to continue journeying together or want to stop.