

"Disappointments All Christians Face"

Intro: If you remember last week we came to the conclusion that there will be times when, as believers, we will be disappointed. As we saw last week, we can soon become disappointed with ourselves because we realize that we have the same weaknesses, after we are saved as we did before we were saved.

Secondly we learned that we are also disappointed with one another because we see one another not practicing what we preach. *In other words we are disappointed with the hypocrite that is in all of us.*

Today I want to look at a couple more things that we are often disappointed in as believers and in the process try and find some ways to help one another.

Today we see that we are disappointed during

I. Trials and Temptations

Here we find that we are disappointed by the world. Things such as the pleasures and responsibilities of the world. Those distractions that often draw believers, maybe even you, away from the church and also one another

Barbara Ehrenreich hits the nail on the head when she notes that "America is addicted to wars of distraction" Americans cannot concentrate on any one thing too long. I personally fault television for that. You watch a program for maybe five minutes and are concentrating on it only to be distracted by a slew of commercials.

I find it has also crept into the church. Many people get antsy if the pastor goes over very long because their minds are distracted with the cares of the afternoon that have flooded their thought processes.

Concerning this issue of distractions by the world we see things like their job, family, hobbies all of which while, not bad in and of themselves, choke believers to the point of unfruitfulness.

In Luke 8:14 where Jesus is talking about the different types of soil he says *The thorny ground represents those who hear and accept the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity.*

Think with me a moment. Isn't it true for many Christians, there was a time when they wanted to be in church every time the doors were open. Believers were young and on fire

and then, they got caught up in the politics of the church and its unwillingness to change and the world saw its chance. It continued to offer new and exciting, ever changing opportunities and slowly but surely the Christian started missing a service now and then. Finally it got to the place that they would never miss a day of over time, or if there was a family gathering, the physical family always took precedence over the church family. ***And heaven forbid if one should miss a ball game.***

It is almost always true that the church is about 20 years or more behind the world when it comes to change in order to meet needs. I will say it again and will believe it until the day I die, that the church has confused changing the message with changing the method and

While it is disappointing that the world has influenced the church to the degree that it has, it is the churches fault. **Remember**, Those who always play catch up lose in the end

Believers are also discouraged by **unconverted friends** who want them to come back to the things of the world Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 15:33-34 that *"bad company corrupts good character."*

So if we know that the world offers us many trials and temptations and these often come to us through people we used to run with, or other friends, and if we want to avoid these potential downfalls Lets look at just

What can we do? First we can work on demonstrating what it means to "seek first the kingdom of God" Which do you seek first? Lets think about it a moment Matthew 6:33 says *and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.*

As I was thinking about this idea of seeking the kingdom and my own failures at it, I thought, I would probably seek the kingdom, as well as the king of the kingdom, more often if I would act more like the king of the kingdom once in a while.

In other words, I believe that it is because we don't act like the king that we hesitate to seek the kingdom more than we do and in that lack of seeking, we get disappointed as we have been looking, First with ourselves, then others, now the world. The world will never know any better until Christians start acting like the king they are to be seeking.

What will it take for us to do this? I would suggest the following things that we can all work on, First we can support the King's kingdom in two main ways

- First with our Presence

I am not talking about being in church all of the time, but what about, *at least a little more of the time.* **William Gladstone, at one time Prime Minister of England, once said,** "Tell me what the young men of England are doing on Sunday and I will tell you what the future of England will be."

The same thought applies to young people today. The key however is, the young person is influenced and guided by the parents. If the parents are not present on a regular basis for services, at least the Sunday services, neither will their children grow up to be present on a regular basis.

How often do you, as eagerly attend kingdom services, as you eagerly attend, not necessarily bad things, but good things whether at school or kids activities? *Now you may be saying shouldn't you support your children? The answer is a resounding YES!!*

But at least think about this. If all you do is spend most of your time with your children at all sorts of activities **other than church or spiritual times**, *what do you teach your children about the kingdom?* Does a parent not teach their children that all of their activities are really more important than the kingdom. That is why you can find the world at the worldly activities but seldom, if ever, at kingdom things.

Instead, if you are here and you are a parent, lets make this our goal using all that you have to promote the spiritual, at least as much as you do all the other things that clamor for you and your child's attention. **Think** of your job and your opportunity in the light of this poem by an unknown author who teaches us with these words.

THE BRIDGE

An old man going a lone highway,
Came at the evening cold and gray
To a chasm vast, deep and wide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim
The sullen stream had no fear for him.
But he paused when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to stem the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting your strength by building here,
Your journey will end with the closing day,
You never again will pass this way.
You've crossed the chasm deep and wide,
Why build you this bridge at ev'ntide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head,
"Good friend, in the path I've come," he said,
There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.

This chasm that's been as naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;
He too, must cross in the twilight dim.
Good friend, I'm building this bridge for him."

While there is the idea of **Presence** there is another way we can seek first the kingdom and that is with **Presents**

I was thinking a while back about the work of the church and I was thinking about what Haggai wrote in 1:4 ff

"Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins? This is what the LORD Almighty says: Consider how things are going for you! You have planted much but harvested little. You have food to eat, but not enough to fill you up. You have wine to drink, but not enough to satisfy your thirst. You have clothing to wear, but not enough to keep you warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!

"This is what the LORD Almighty says: Consider how things are going for you! Now go up into the hills, bring down timber, and rebuild my house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored, says the LORD. You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it away. Why? Because my house lies in ruins, says the LORD Almighty, while you are all busy building your own fine houses.

That is why the heavens have withheld the dew and the earth has withheld its crops. I have called for a drought on your fields and hills--a drought to wither the grain and grapes and olives and all your other crops, a drought to starve both you and your cattle and to ruin everything you have worked so hard to get."

What does the world think when Christians have some of the best toys going but they see God struggle getting finances in order to get his kingdom work done? Is it any wonder that they say, those Christians are just like us. The main thing for them is **things**, not the King nor his kingdom. C.S. Lewis once **said**, "I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare."

J.L. Kraft, head of the Kraft Cheese Corporation, who had given approximately 25% of his enormous income to Christian causes for many years, said, "The only investment I ever made which has paid consistently increasing dividends is the money I have given to the

Lord." The church is the world's visible picture of the kingdom and if we are going to try and turn things around to beat the disappointment when the world calls us

Lets say it this way:

This Is My Church

It is composed of people just like me.

It will be friendly if I am.

It will do a great work if I work.

It will make generous gifts to many causes if I am generous.

It will bring others into its fellowship if I bring them.

Its seats will be filled if I fill them.

It will be a church of loyalty and love, of faith and service.

If I who make it what it is, am filled with these,

Therefore, with God's help, I dedicate myself to the task of being

All these things I want my Church to be.

Then, due to much misinformation about the Christian life, a problem and disappointment many Christians have is...

IV. False conceptions about prosperity

Here Christians are disappointed by lack of success. Do you ever wonder why you can't seem to get ahead in your life? Do you wonder where all your money goes and why you get sick? Do you wonder why believers suffer tragedy like others even though you love the Lord

Before you get to discouraged remember, this heresy has come to be known as "prosperity theology." It is being taught by many people on television. It is the teaching that God always wants you healthy, wealthy, and prosperous— it is important, that you realize that the goal of the Christian life is financial prosperity and health, and if you are not healthy and prosperous, then you are a sinner or you lack faith or you haven't claimed these things by using the right formulas, the correct powers of the tongue.

Many Christians are being swept into this false religion by promises of financial prosperity, by claims that God always wants them healthy, wealthy, and prosperous. This "gospel message" has become idolatry by reducing God to someone who is there to give us what we want. This gospel says, "Ask not what you can do for God, but what He can do for you."

Be a Christian and get a bigger home, a boat, and a vacation in Hawaii. For all too many people, prosperity is becoming the goal of applied Christianity and the mark of true

spirituality. It is no longer, "You shall know them by their love," but "You shall know them by their material possessions."

This teaching is creating a generation of Christians who believe that God and all His universe revolve around their own personal comfort and well-being. But it isn't true. **Someone once said** that for every hundred people who can successfully handle poverty, there is only one who can successfully handle prosperity. The reason for this is that prosperity comes with its own set of problems.

If the prosperity message were truly God's way, it would put most Christians behind the Iron Curtain and in Third World countries in a pretty bad light, for their testimonies often go something like this: "I had everything: prestige, recognition, a good job, a happy wife, and happy children. Then I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Now I am in a concentration camp. I've lost my family, my wealth, my reputation, and my health. My crime was that I said I loved Jesus Christ."

So if Christians can become so disappointed when they cannot seem to have all the things they think they should, What can we do to help one another get a better perspective on the matter? We need to warn one another of the reality of living and to do that lets think about a blacksmith.

Sometimes God is like the blacksmith who takes a rusty, bent-up, twisted piece of metal out of the junkyard. He lays it on the hot coals and begins to heat it up. Then he takes it off the fire, lays it on the anvil, and beats it into a truly useful implement. After that he thrusts it into cold water. When he takes it out of the water it is no longer a rusty, bent-up, twisted piece of metal but a strong, tempered horseshoe, usable for an important purpose.

If you are seeking to grow as a Christian, life is not all health, wealth, and prosperity. Sometimes God wants to conform you to His image. Sometimes that means putting you in the fire, laying you on the anvil and putting you into the cold water. You may not understand why, but when you don't understand, trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Don't forget, Proverbs 3:5,6 says Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight There may be other disappointments Christians face, but I think you will agree that these are quite common.

In closing one of the most long lasting disappointments (forever) will be that you never trusted Jesus as your passport to heaven. To not miss this disappointment simply read then verses that follow and make that decision. You will not be disappointed.

And if you have already done this, be sure not to get too disappointed. **There is a better day coming.**

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God.
Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the _____ day of _____ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: _____

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at lapeerchurch@gmail.com Subject line: (Salvation)