

Cleaving Unto the Lord

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Introduction:

1. Recent preaching, over the last two weeks, has been about Jesus the Son of God and His Lordship.
2. Previous preaching included the parable of the sower and the eight Cs that drive and sustain people.
3. If Jesus is the Son of God and Lord of all as the Bible declares, then we should love and obey Him.
4. If Christ wars began immediately by the spirit of antichrist, then we have a war to fight to be faithful.
5. If the warnings about Demas and churches at Ephesus and Laodicea are legitimate, we must be zealous.
6. If the deceitfulness of sin is as bad as the Bible indicates, then even we can be led away from Christ.
7. We do not worry about desertions to Islam or Mormonism; we worry about perilous times of pleasure.

CONTEXT (Acts 11:1-30)

1. This chapter is in the part of Acts, covering chapters 8-13, of apostles going to Gentiles.
 1. The first half of the chapter is Peter defending his preaching to Cornelius and others.
 2. The second half is Gentile converts in Antioch of Syria taught by Barnabas and Saul.
2. Ordinary ministers preached to Grecians in Antioch shortly after Peter's trial (19-21).
 1. Initially those scattered from Jerusalem preached to the Jews only as Jesus taught.
 2. Some from Cyprus and Cyrene arrived in Antioch and preached to the Grecians.
 3. The Lord showed His power and blessed a great number to believe and turn to Him.
3. Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem to check and confirm conversions in Antioch (22-24).
 1. The Jerusalem church, its apostles and elders, sent Barnabas to see things in Syria.
 2. He saw that the work was of the grace of God and exhorted them to perseverance.
 3. Barnabas was a good man with the Holy Ghost, seen earlier (Acts 4:36-37; 9:27).
 4. And the Lord continued to add to this Gentile church with the help of Barnabas.
4. Barnabas got Saul to help in Antioch; they work together to build a church (25-26).
 1. Barnabas knew Saul from presenting him to the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 9:27).
 2. Paul was in Tarsus after escaping from Damascus and Jerusalem (Acts 9:23-30).
 3. They assembled with this congregation for a year and taught many people there.
 4. These disciples – dedicated followers – were called Christians here first. Amen!
 5. Chapter 12 is about Peter and Herod, but chapter 13 takes Paul and Barnabas further.
5. The saints in Antioch send assistance to saints in Judea for a coming famine (27-30).
 1. A prophet from Jerusalem comes to Antioch and shows signs of a coming famine.
 2. Godly saints help financially when there is a need. Disciples = Christians = Givers.

3. Godly giving is for needs of the saints rather than for comfort or help of worldlings.
4. Barnabas and Saul carried this gift from Antioch to Jerusalem to the elders there.

EXHORTATION (Acts 11:23)

1. Barnabas had been around and knew that believers needed to be exhorted to continue.
 1. In spite of his gladness to see God's grace in Gentile conversions, he pressed them.
 2. He did not exhort only the foolish, young, newly converted, or weak, but rather all.
 3. Paul did the very same when Barnabas and he retraced a preaching trip (Acts 14:22).
 4. Conversion, the practical phase of salvation, requires faithfulness with God's grace.
 5. Daniel purposed in heart to avoid the king's meat (Dan 2:8), but this goal is higher.
2. Barnabas first exhorted them to purpose in their hearts, which is to choose intentionally.
 1. True conversion and continuing in the faith is not emotion without strong intentions.
 2. Feelings without faith is the weak trait of children, the emotional, and backsliders.
 3. They needed to see the goal and set themselves for conflict and effort to achieve it.
 4. Being a Christian is a choice to commit to the cause of Christ and pay the cost of it.
 5. Jesus several ways mocked professions of discipleship without counting the full cost.
3. He then identified they needed the purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord Jesus Christ.
 1. Starting but not finishing is the mark of Jehu, Solomon, Demas, and similar losers.
 2. Our flesh, the world, and Satan all hate Jesus – the main Person in God's great drama.
 3. Jesus caused divisions among the Jews on earth, we cannot let ourselves slip away.
 4. Paul did not settle to finish, for he would do even better than before (Phil 3:12-14).
 5. Cleaving to the Lord = sticking to the Lord and not departing from Him as many do.
4. Cleaving is sticking to Jesus Christ and not leaving Him or deserting kingdom duties.
 1. *Cleave* has two opposite meanings – it can mean to cut in half or to stick like glue.
 2. *Cleave* is used to describe the marital union of a husband to his wife (Genesis 2:24).
 3. *Cleaveth fast* was used by David to describe being stuck and fastened (Psalm 41:8).
 4. *Stick to it!* We do not mean persevere in a job or task as words are sometimes used.
 5. *Stick with me!* Said to children it means to remain close when crossing a busy road.
 6. *Stick with me!* Said to a wife it means to endure difficulty a husband must go through.
 7. *Stick to Christ!* Means to stay fastened to Him, His apostolic gospel, His kingdom.
5. **Cleave.** 1. To part or divide by a cutting blow; to hew asunder; to split. 2. To separate or sever by dividing or splitting.
6. **Cleave.** 1. To stick fast or adhere, as by a glutinous surface, 3. In wider sense: To cling or hold fast *to*; to attach oneself (by grasping, etc.) *to*. 4. To adhere or cling *to* (a person, party, principle, practice, etc.); to remain attached, devoted, or faithful *to*. 5. To remain steadfast, stand fast, abide, continue. *Obs.*
7. **Adhere** 1. To stick fast, to cleave, to become or remain firmly attached, *to* a substance, as by a glutinous

surface, or by grasping, etc. 2. To cleave *to* a person or party; to be a close companion, partisan, or follower. 3. To cleave *to* an opinion, practice, or method; to continue to maintain or observe.

DESCRIPTION (Acts 11:26)

1. One-third of earth's 8 billion claims to be Christian. How can it be true in any real way?
 1. Many think our nation Christian for phrases in a pledge and on money. Guess again!
 2. Many people on the street or at an American mall would surely claim to be Christian.
 3. Having a Bible in our house or even members of this church does not prove the point.
 4. We need to define the word by the Scriptures and examine our individual lives by it.
 5. If Jesus is Creator, Savior, King, Judge, there are four great reasons to be a Christian!
 6. If the world tried Christians (they will), is there clear evidence to convict you as one?
 7. Disciples, those assembling and being taught in a church, were called Christians.
 8. This name was likely from enemies of the disciples to identify them by their Master.
 9. Herod Agrippa II, king of Judea, was almost persuaded to be Christian (Acts 26:28).
 10. By its English suffix, a Christian means a person 'of or belonging to' Jesus Christ.
2. Since disciples were first called Christians, what is a disciple for us to cleave rightly?
 1. **Disciple.** One who follows or attends upon another in order to learn from him.
 2. Therefore, a disciple is the follower or student of a master (Matt 10:24; John 9:28).
 3. Jesus did not let men pretend to be disciples without lives to back it up (John 8:31).
 4. He defined true discipleship, not as believing, but rather as continuing, or cleaving.
 5. Mere followers did not mean anything to Jesus, for He knew all hearts (Jn 2:24-25).
 6. Many followed Jesus for the miracles and loaves, not Him (John 6:2,24,26,64-66).
 7. When crowds followed Him, He would raise cost of discipleship (Luke 14:26-33).
 8. Jesus taught that following Him was a life of self-denial for eternity (Luke 9:23-25).
 9. Jesus made true discipleship keeping His commands (John 14:15; 15:10); departure from apostolic doctrine of Jesus Christ is shameful belly worship (Rom 16:17-18).
 10. Discipleship begins at baptism and has change (Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3-5; II Cor 5:17).

WARNING

1. It is so easy to be deceived by sin and to depart from the living God (Hebrews 3:12-13).
 1. It is far less than joining Islam; it is rather slipping in passion and service to Christ.
 2. When iniquity abounds like today, love of many for Christ waxes cold (Matt 24:12).
 3. What if we only lose our love of Christ to 50% of before, it is also profanely wicked.
 4. Fearful times are not pandemics, protests, politics; it is loving pleasure (II Tim 3:4).
 5. Pleasure that competes with God, no matter how "noble," is profanely poisonous.

6. Demas, though a ministerial colleague of Paul, left him for the world (II Tim 4:10).
7. Jesus the Son of God rebuked Ephesus for losing their first love of Him (Rev 2:4-5).
2. There was a very real threat of danger to the most holy faith (Acts 20:28-31; II Cor 2:17; II Thess 2:1-3; I Tim 4:1-3; II Tim 2:18; 3:1-5; 4:3-4; II Peter 2:1; I John 2:18).
3. Consider three excuses some gave to Jesus Christ to not follow Him (Luke 9:57-62).
 1. Jesus' three extreme statements identify dangerous excuses hindering believers; He did reject all pillows, all parental funerals are wrong, and farmers to wear blinders.
 2. The first excuse is the choice for comfort, gain, and pleasure in this life (Luke 18:14).
 3. The second excuse is love of family or friends too much to give up (Mat 10:34-39).
 4. The third excuse is thinking like Lot's wife of the loss (Luke 17:32; II Timothy 2:2).
4. The rich, young ruler gives an example of the evil pull of covetousness (Mat 10:17-27).
 1. It is very easy for Jesus, the Lord of all, to know what you love dearly and test you.
 2. Paul taught Timothy about money's danger and dealing with it (I Tim 6:6-10,17-19).
 3. Zacchaeus knew what to do, and he did it quickly to save his house (Luke 19:1-10).
5. The parable of the sower identifies excuses that are used to turn away (Luke 8:13-14).
 1. Persecution, opposition of others, is too much for many (II Tim 3:12; Mat 5:10-12).
 2. Covetousness and cares of life, even if noble, will drown (Phil 3:18-19; II Tim 4:10).

APPLICATION

1. Pure religion is to keep ourselves, one at a time, unspotted from the world (James 1:27).
2. Jude exhorted us to build up our faith and to keep ourselves loving God (Jude 1:20-21).
 1. Love is a choice. We set our affections above, not on the things of earth (Col 3:2).
 2. We choose to not love or befriend the world, God's enemy (I John 2:15; James 4:4).
 3. We choose a single eye with love to God and put our treasures there (Mat 6:21-24).
 4. It is little different than other love: we talk about it, pray for it, think on it, read about it, sing about it, hear about it, keep friends that appreciate it, resent competitors, etc.
 5. His *but* is a sharp contrast between wicked professors and righteous (Jude 1:19-20).
 6. Rebukes *separate themselves* from churches and doctrine (I Jn 2:19; II Ti 4:3-4).
 7. They are *sensual*, belly worshippers of earthly things (Rom 16:17-18; Phil 3:18-19).
 8. They *have not the Spirit*, though they may make a fuss about a spirit (II Cor 11:3-4).
 9. True worshippers of God do not leave the grounded and settled faith of the gospel (Col 1:23), are spiritually minded (Rom 8:5), and bear Spirit's fruit (Gal 5:22-25).
3. We need each other; we must be active in this glorious team project (Ephesians 4:16).
 1. We are always edifying – building up – never tearing down (I Cor 14:26; Eph 4:29).
 2. Assemblies are to consider one another to provoke to good works (Heb 10:23-25).
 3. Members cannot stay the same – they must grow (I Pet 2:2; II Pet 3:18; Heb 5:12).

4. The apostolic goal is to know Christ better and to not move away (Col 1:9-12,23).
5. Rather than building programs (a gym), we need to build ourselves up spiritually.
6. Fathers must communicate the truth to wives and children within the church body.

Conclusion:

1. If Jesus is the Son of God and Lord of all as the Bible teaches, then we should love and obey Him.
2. If the warnings about Demas and churches at Ephesus and Laodicea are legitimate, we must be zealous.
3. If the deceitfulness of sin is as bad as the Bible indicates, then even we can be led away from Christ.
4. We do not worry about desertions to Islam or Mormonism; we worry about perilous times of pleasure.

For Further Study:

1. Committed to the Cause of Christ ... [What Drives & Sustains You?](#).
2. Ending Your Life Well ... [Ending Life Well](#).
3. Belly Worshipers ... [Belly Worshipers](#).
4. [Backsliding](#).
5. Two Lines of Bible Manuscripts ... [Antioch and Alexandria \(thegloriousgospel.ca\)](#).