

LET HIS KNOCK BE OUR HEARTBEAT

Revelation 3:20

Matthew 26:36-46

My oncologist at Moffitt said something to me in our initial consultation that I want to share with you. His name is Dr. George Simon and this is what he said, “Mr. Frink I want to encourage you to not give “cancer” the center stage in your life, but rather let it be a “side show.”

I think that he has a point. For the past 2 Sundays, I felt it important to deal with my condition in my preaching and our decision as a family and church to “choose faith” in God’s Word to us through this trial. I now think it is time to push cancer aside (not that I will not refer to it again in my preaching) but I want to put it in it’s place...a small part of my life...and I want to turn the spotlight of Jesus Christ...the One Who deserves all our attention, all our praise and all the glory in all our lives each and every day!

As we turn the focus on the Lord Jesus...let’s look at these 2 passages from God’s Word and see how they connect to bring us our truth today...”Let His Knock Be Our Heartbeat”

In Matthew 26, Jesus will soon face the cross of Calvary, where He will die for the sins of man, be buried in a tomb and 3 days later arise from the grave paying for our sins and offering us eternal life through faith in Him and His sacrifice.

He takes His disciples to a garden where He often went to pray, rest and have fellowship with His followers. The name of the garden is “Gethsemane” which means “olive press.” It was a walled garden on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. There was a press there to squeeze the juice from the olives harvested on the mount.

It is no accident that Jesus went to Gethsemane as He faced the darkest valley of His earthly life...the cross. Jesus knew what was coming...that He would become sin for all man so that He could bear our sins, save our souls when we call upon Him and give to us His own righteousness so that God could accept us as His children. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:21 “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

We read in verse 39, 42 and 44 that He prayed about the awful cup of sin He now had before Him and how it grieved His holiness as the Son of God to drink it. But we also read that He humbly submitted Himself to the Father’s will to drink the cup of sin for us...and to drink it all! Just as oil was pressed out of the olives on the mount, so our Lord was pressed into submission to His Father’s will on Mount Calvary...not that He wrestled with submission to His Father...but that we might have it written before us as a testimony.

I want you to notice something Jesus did in the garden that day. In verse 35, Jesus instructs 8 of His disciples to wait at the garden's entrance (Judas is already gone to betray Jesus) and then Jesus takes 3 of His disciples with Him deeper into the garden. These 3 are Peter, James and John and they were chosen to accompany Jesus on several other special events. Jesus asks these 3 men...His inner circle...His closest disciples...His 3 close friends to do something specially needed - verse 38. It was a simple request. It was not difficult. Verse 40 says He asked for an hour of their time to watch and pray for Him in His time of great sorrow.

The Bible tells us in verse 39 that "And he went a little further..." The cross was something no one except Jesus Christ could do. Jesus is the only One Who ever walked this planet Who was without sin...He is the holy Son of God...He is very God, Himself!

Man cannot save himself from his sin and sin's penalty, which is eternal death in Hell...but Jesus, God's Son gave Himself as our sacrifice to save us when we believe on Him. Thank God He went a little further...where we could not go!

The sad thing is what His 3 friends did. They could have kept watch and prayed for our Savior. They could have held Him up as sin lingered to bring Him low. They could've kept their gaze upon Him as He walked a stone's throw and knelt before the Father and prayed for God's hand of grace upon their Lord. But they did none of these things...instead...they fell asleep.

Not once did they slumber while the Savior suffered agony of heart with the Father, not twice did they close their eyes in sleep giving in to the temptation of their flesh instead of the willingness of the Spirit...but all 3 times Jesus went to pray. Each time He returned from His prayer He found them sleeping when He needed them most.

"I come to the garden ALONE" - this was His song, yet it carried not the sweet message of the hymn which talks of our joining with Jesus in sweet communion through prayer and His Word.

We have the opportunity to fellowship with Jesus in an intimate way each and every day. When we enter into His presence, we are in the presence of "omniscience." Notice in verses 33-35, Jesus listened as Peter proclaimed his unbending allegiance to the Lord and the Lord's prophecy that before the night's end, Peter would betray Him three times. Isn't it interesting that Peter fell asleep in the garden 3 times and later after His denial would be confronted by Christ about his love for the Lord and it's demonstration in feeding the sheep 3 times?

Jesus is omniscient (all-knowing). He knows everything about us, from our beginning to end. He loves us in spite of our past, He forgives us and uses us in our present and He promises eternal rewards in our future. He knows it all! Why wouldn't I want to meet Savior Who knows me best every day?

We also have the opportunity to fellowship with Jesus each day Who is omnipotent (all-powerful). In 2 of the other gospels, we are given 2 details that are not in this passage of the story of Christ in Gethsemane. In John 18:3-6, we learn that when the mob comes to arrest Jesus and He asks them whom they are seeking, they answer “Jesus of Nazareth” to which Christ replies, “I am He.” As soon as Jesus says the words “I Am He”, linking Himself to Jehovah, the “I Am” of the Old Testament, the mob fell backward to the ground!

In the gospel of Luke 22:50 and 51 we see a few moments later that Peter gets so angry with arresting mob, he takes out his sword and cuts off the High priest’s servant’s right ear, which Jesus then heals. THIS IS THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD!

Jesus is omnipotent (all-powerful). He can do anything for us and through us! He has filled each believer with His power through the indwelling Holy Spirit, Who comes to live within the believer when he gets saved. He has the power to forgive our past, to work His mighty works through us in our present and to come again for us in power and glory some day to take us to Heaven and eternally abide with Him. He can do anything! Why wouldn’t I want to meet the Lord of Lords each day Who can make my life abundant, Spirit-filled and marked with the power of God?

You may say, “Well, that was then and this is now...and I would never do that. I’m too wise to make the same mistake as Peter, James and John. I know what I’ve got in my Jesus and I’m taking advantage of every moment with my Lord.

I doubt that we’re much different than the disciples of Christ’s day. In fact, they had an advantage we do not have...they personally walked with Christ when He dwelt on Earth. They could reach out and physically touch Him...they could sit down at a table with Him...they could verbally talk with Him and listen to His actual voice as He spoke to them.

After Jesus died, was buried and rose again, He ascended to His Father, where He sat down at the right hand of God...and He is still there today. Even though Christ is omnipresent (present everywhere at all times) He still resides in His glorified body beside the Father’s throne where He intercedes for us daily as our Great High Priest. We have God, the Holy Spirit living in us Who is one with God, the Father and God, the Son (stop trying to figure that out) and the Bible calls this in Colossians 1:27 “...Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Jesus still wants to meet with us today in the garden of fellowship, intimacy and communion with Him. He still longs to meet us through our hearts at the table of His Word to feed us truth that will transform our lives from day to day. He still wants to kneel beside us in the place of prayer and hear our heart’s cries, no matter how big or small.

Now the choice is ours. He awaits us but do we come?

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 God tells John to write letters to 7 churches that existed in the world of the New Testament. These churches were hand-picked by the Lord and they represent several things. I believe they represent period of church history, I believe they represent different types of churches and different types of believers who have lived in all ages, with their strengths and weakness.

I want you to notice that the Lord uses the symbol of a “golden candlestick” in Revelation 1:29 to represent the 7 churches (now that’s you and I...we are the church). Look where Jesus is when He writes to the first church, Ephesus, in Revelation 2:1: “...who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” Christ is in the middle of the church, in the center, in the focus! **RIGHT WHERE HE BELONGS!**

Now by the time Jesus writes the seventh letter to the seventh church, the church of Laodicea...He no longer in the midst of the church but look again at Revelation 3:20: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock...” He’s been shut out! He’s on the outside looking in at His people as they live their lives in a total state of apathy towards the Lord and the things of God.

Just like the disciples in Gethsemane, believers are asleep to the Lord and His knock at our heart’s door.

Consider the knock of Christ upon your heart’s door...

1. IT IS A PERSONAL KNOCK

“...I stand at the door and knock...”

This is not a salesman trying to sell you the latest thing
This is not bill collector you’re hiding from
This is not a neighbor you’re trying to avoid
Or that person who once you let them in, you can never get them to leave!

THIS IS JESUS...THE ONE WHO LOVED YOU ENOUGH TO DIE FOR YOU
THE ONE WHO SAVED YOU FROM SIN AND GAVE YOU ETERNAL LIFE
THE ONE WHO NEVER LEAVES YOU NO MATTER HOW FAR YOU STRAY
THE ONE WHO KNOWS YOU INSIDE AND OUT AND STILL LOVES AND BLESSES YOU
THE ONE WHO CAN CARRY YOU THROUGH ANY VALLEY YOU FACE AND GIVE YOU
GRACE SUFFICIENT TO REJOICE IN IT

Jesus said in John 15:5 “I am the vine, ye are the branches...” It doesn’t get any closer than that...a tree and it’s branches?

It is a personal knock...He comes in person!

2. IT IS A PECULIAR KNOCK

“...if ANY man hear MY voice...”

Christ’s knock is like no other...it has a special tone to it. I believe it is because of the nail scars in His hands...that His knock is different, unique and special. It is heard by every believer without exception...He does not leave you out of His daily rounds. And there is no “knock” like His “knock...He speaks to our hearts like none other.

Jesus said in John 10:27 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;”
* Have you ever had a personal “signal” you shared with someone special? Maybe it was a wink, or a nod, or a particular phrase or gesture. Some of you have special codes for each other on your cell phones. Tell me your heart doesn’t beat faster when you receive that special “signal” from someone you love dearly...you know that you do.

Christ’s knock on our heart’s door is the most special, sweet and spirit-lifting invitation we ever receive...and it is calling us each and every day.

3. IT IS NOT A PRESUMPTUOUS KNOCK

“...if any man hear my voice and open the door...”

Christ does not force Himself on us. He will not enter into deep fellowship with us over riding our will. He leaves the choice to us. He knocks, and He does so every single day...but He will not barge in or open the door Himself (though He could, it is He that made our hearts)
He leaves it up to us to answer His knock.

Jesus said in “IF...any man hear my voice...”
He said in James 4:8 “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you...”

Even though Jesus is omnipotent and He made our hearts and has ever right to come in...He still allows us the choice of opening our heart’s door to Him each day.

4. IT IS A POWERFUL KNOCK

“...if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I WILL come in to him...”

Christ guarantees if we hear His knock at our heart’s door, open the door to Him...HE WILL COME IN! Not might come in...not could come in....HE WILL COME IN!

What a powerful thought when you realize every day we can meet with the God Who made this world....we don't understand this world....it is under Satan's power and it gets more wicked every day...YET we can personally talk with the Maker and He will give us wisdom to make the right choices, strength to recognize temptation and overcome it's snare, mercy to show the broken hearted, forgiveness to extend to those who've wronged us, unity with those we worship and serve God with in the church and power to be a witness to the lost!

Jesus said in Matthew 28:20: "...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
Then He said in Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..."

At the door of our heart stands the One Who can give unmeasured and unfathomable power to the believer, if we'll just hear His knock, open the door and let Him come in

5, IT IS A PROMISING KNOCK

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and WILL SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME."

Christ promises if we'll meet with Him, He'll sit down to "sup" with us - in other words..."dine with us" Christ will share with us a spiritual feasts from the table of Heaven.

- He will feed us daily bread from His eternal Word, which we will see in the whole new light of His presence.
- He will bend His ear close to ours and let us spiritually whisper the prayers of our hearts to His heart.
- He will share our burdens and catch our tears as they fall.
- He will give our hearts assurance when we doubt that He is Who He says He is and He'll do all He says He'll do.
- He will fill our hearts with love, forgiveness and mercy towards our enemies.
- He will empower us with faith to believe Him for the impossible.

The choice is ours...will we hear His knock or will we let it fade lower than the noise of the world around us which beckons us to get going and get there first

- Will we hear His knock or listen to our selfish flesh which has no desire to hear Christ's knock on our heart's door
- Will we let the devil tempt us with sin and draw us away from our Savior's knock out the back door of our heart and into the sinful life Christ can never fellowship with

WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD FAIL TO ANSWER CHRIST'S KNOCK AT YOUR HEART'S DOOR?

I have a garden that we made in our front yard. It is where I like to go to pray and read my Bible early in the morning. It is a beautiful garden in a circular shape with a bench and all the plants I like set among mountain rocks. I imagine that I'm sitting there and Christ takes my hand. I can feel the nail print as He holds my hand. I put that there with my sin and it grieves me. I know He isn't literally doing this, but I imagine it and it seems to bring my devotions alive for me. I started calling "my" garden, "our" garden because I meet the Lord there. Yesterday I imagined Jesus waiting for at the entrance of the garden and escorting me to the bench. After a few minutes of praising Him and telling Him I love Him, I imagines Jesus saying to me, "Cliff, son, I want to remind you that the Father and the Spirit are here with us. I felt ashamed I had not acknowledged them before and so I prayed, "Father, God, I'm so glad You're here with me. It is You Who made this body. It's Your Temple and you will do with it as You will. I humbly ask that you heal this body you've made me of cancer." Then I spoke to Jesus and said, "Jesus, my Savior, my friend, it is You Who redeemed this body through Your sacrifice on Calvary or this body would burn eternally in Hell. Thank You for giving Yourself for me. I promise to glorify you in my body and soul and spirit as you heal me." Finally, I spoke to the Holy Spirit, "Holy Spirit, I love you for dwelling within me. I thank God that amidst all those dark cancer cells in my body, you are daily shedding abroad the love of God."

Now, how could I miss something like this. And the great part is...it's available now and every day. My prayer is that we will hear our Savior's knock on our heart's door and His knock will become our very heartbeat!