

Devotional Thoughts :: A new heart and a life changing vow. Let's be "church"

A new heart and a life changing vow. Let's be "church" - posted by CofG (), on: 2019/2/17 19:36

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house.

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.

And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. - 1 Samuel 18:1-4

Jonathan was joined soul to soul by God to David and loved him as his own soul. So much did Jonathan now love David that he forsook his rights and future to be his own king. Jonathan made a covenant with David and gave David everything concerning his life. He gave him the clothes off his back, his sword, his future, his rights and eventually Jonathan sacrificed even his relationship with his father in loyalty to David. Jonathan made a covenant pledge of loyalty, love and devotion to David based on or created by a united heart with David. Jonathan forsook all he possessed for the sake of David and his kingdom.

Jonathan did all this and committed his life for a man who had done nothing for Him.

The obvious question is does God require and expect a similar covenant commitment and similar level of devotion from us for Jesus when we are united to Jesus?

If Jonathan would do all this for David and his kingdom what about King Jesus?

By an infinite measure, Jesus has done far more for us than David ever did for Jonathan. How much more loyalty, devotion, forsaking and sacrifice of our future on earth deserve from us to Jesus? If the knitting of Jonathan's heart to David's caused such love, devotion, loyalty and sacrifice from Jonathan for David, how much stronger and more passionate should our devotion to Jesus be when we have been united to Him as one spirit?

Jesus explains the answer to that throughout the Gospels. He made clear the level of commitment required of those who would like to come under His Kingship and was very clear that when we follow Him we must make a covenant vow of total devotion, love, loyalty and forsaking of self interest in this life for the sake of Jesus and His Kingdom. I know of very few who would even assert that Jesus expects a covenant vow of 100% devotion of life to the advance of His Kingdom and His Kingship from those who would follow Him.

Far too many calling themselves followers of Jesus or members of His Kingdom have yet to make this covenant vow. Or, if they once did, they now are backsliding or toning down from the zeal of their devotion and are renegeing on their covenant vow.

Where is the heart of Jonathan in us? If he was completely and sacrificially faithful to David and his covenant vow to David, how much more ought we to be to Jesus?

The Lord has impressed on me for a while now that what will revive the church is not first a change of form, but rather a return to total devotion to Him of His people and to His Kingship in all the earth. The reform of gathering will follow the substance of a covenant vow of His people to a complete devotion to Jesus. The presence of God with His people depends far more on their complete daily devotion to Jesus than it does on the form of their occasional gatherings. Once God is present in their lives on a constant basis, then He will be present as Lord in their occasional gatherings. When He is then present as Lord in their gatherings, then He will be leading those occasions and not men and the form will thereby grow out of His substance and His clear direction.

In many churches, there are three groups of people. The first group is totally devoted to Jesus and His work. The second group are those on the fence with regard to "total devotion". The third group have little to no devotion and go and participate in church for a variety of the wrong reasons. The third group tend to be a distraction and discouragement to

the first group and are divisive and destructive with respect to the middle group.

Jesus had a remedy for this problem. He told anybody wanting to follow Him up front that they could not be His disciple, ie. a part of the body or church, unless they were 100% devoted to Him and signed up and lined up to lay down their life (sacrifice and suffer) for the cause of His Kingdom and for His other disciples. He didn't want to have to sort out the problem from Sunday to Sunday in worship gatherings. He just made sure people knew and counted the cost before they crossed the spiritual threshold of the church.

When is the last time you ever heard anybody in church tell people they needed to dedicate and commit 100% devotion to Jesus or not even come? Jesus invited all to come but made clear that the only fitting attire for coming was a supremely devoted, faithful, loyal and committed heart to Him and His people above all else. Salvation requires a complete trusting in Jesus for salvation as Savior and Lord. You can't be 50% sure that He's Savior and Lord and consider yourself saved. Question is, does salvation also require that you are 100% devoted to Jesus with your heart and life (affections, plans, future, possessions, time)? Not just have you received Jesus, but also, have you given yourself to Jesus.

Jesus said you cannot be my disciple unless..... at the root of it, the "unless" is defined by Jesus in various ways as 100% devotion. We never hear that preached. Not to seekers and not even to professors. Thus, our churches are filled with tares and as a result, the wheat is being choked out and starved. We need to start making sure the word "church" is actually known only as the true body of Christ that is 100% devoted of heart and life to Jesus and His Kingdom. If we aren't comfortable with that method, we should have a long talk with Jesus about His apparent harsh but very clear demarcation of what a disciple is as He spoke to unbelievers and professing believers. I'm not suggesting that we cease to evangelize at every turn, opportunity or cost. We should as followers of Christ follow Him with 100% devotion to salvation of mankind by the acknowledgement of His Kingship in all the earth to be worshipped, adored, glorified and obeyed by every creature. What I am suggesting is that "church" has a special and very exclusive meaning in Jesus' vocabulary and heart. It is defined more by 100% trust in Jesus and 100% devotion to Jesus. Out of this trust and trustworthiness or faith and faithfulness, that His church is known. Not 100% sanctification but rather 100% devotion.

The immediate reaction is "we can't be perfect". Throughout the Gospels Jesus made clear that 100% devotion was a criteria to begin following Him. Our concerns can't defeat that claim Jesus wants and clearly made on His followers' life BEFORE they could be considered His disciples. Persecution and the temptations of the world will take down those who are half hearted in devotion to Jesus. The parable of the soils teaches that. Jesus is literally and overtly stated to be disgusted by half hearted devotion. Revelation teaches that. Who are those who endure to the end? Those who are faithful. Faithful is defined by Scripture to be trusting in Jesus 100% no matter what and being trustworthy to Jesus 100% no matter what.

I'm not suggesting we do devotion tests or kick people out of attendance at church. I'm just suggesting we eliminate the grey safe space we provide to people because we are reluctant to say what Jesus said.

Before anybody blows this off as too demanding or offputting, think through the Scriptures. There are tons of Biblical support for what I am suggesting. If you think there is no "grace" in what I am saying then you are suggesting that Jesus likewise had no grace towards unbelievers and those who weren't totally all in with Him. Likewise, the most gracious and loving thing you can do for someone is help them figure out what a disciple truly is so that they can be one in the first place and not remain deceived inside a makeshift half way church that allows them to remain comfortably deceived in their lack of devotion and faith.

If persecution increases in the US, all this that is put forth will make much sense for "churches". Persecution will empty the pews of those who lack 100% devotion to Jesus. There will likely be a huge departure and falling away. We can't wait for that. We should care more now about those who are deceiving themselves and make the doorway or threshold into the body of Christ clear or more clear so that real choices can be made by those who really are outside the church even if they are in the building.

If we get the church more proportioned with truly devoted, I also think the power of the church in its unity and purpose and in its ministry through and expressions of true brotherly love will generate an outpouring of the Holy Spirit like we have never seen.

Re: A new heart and a life changing vow. Let's be "church" - posted by jochbaptist (), on: 2019/2/22 3:38

Dear Brother

I really witness with your post.
Such a need for this message at this time.

"As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

I was wondering what exactly transpired to cause this knitting of souls between David and Jonathan. So I read the end of the previous chapter

1 Samuel 17:57 As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head.

58 "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him.

David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

So, that was Jonathan's first impression of David. A young lad who just killed a giant, standing before his Dad STILL HOLDING THE PHILISTINE'S HEAD.

But it was not David's bravery or faith, but his humility that sparked the incident.

"I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

Blessings