

## The LIFE... *You're Statement of Faith...*

What we believe says a lot about who we are. Let me give you a few examples. If I believe that people are for the most part "good", then I tend to be a positive person. If I believe that people are for the most part bad, then I tend to be a negative person. If I think the Red Sox are the greatest team in baseball, then there is no way I'm ever going to pull for the Yankee's. It just doesn't make sense. If I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, then it doesn't make any sense to live a life that doesn't honor Him. After all He is Lord.

We're people though and sometimes we don't make sense, which is why Jesus reminds us and teaches us through His word. You see Jesus understands that there are some of us out here that struggle with, who is really God, who is really Lord, who is really in charge. Some of us are like a fan of one team on the surface, but deep down we know that if another team started winning we'd jump on the bandwagon. It's sort of like walking on a balance beam. There's something about the other side that interest us, maybe it tempts us, and maybe it just looks fun. We're really not into whatever "it" may be and even though it might not be sin it's not in our best interest. So we get out on this beam and we sort of see how close we can get to it without falling. The thing is when we get out on the beam, or the fence, we are just as far from where we should be as we are from where we are thinking of going.

As people we wrestle with this stuff all the time, that's why it's important to wrestle through what you believe about God, about the bible, and why you believe that way. So when the thought of getting out there on the fence comes to mind you know where you stand.

There are a couple things that we need to keep in mind tonight as we get into the lesson. The first is this, whatever we do, whether word, action, or thought is all done for someone or something. There's a purpose behind it. Think about going to school, or to practice. You go for a reason. The reason might be to get someone off your back, the reason might be to get a good job, and the reason might be because you like it or you just want to play. But there's always a reason. Sometimes that reasons hidden from us or beyond our understanding but it's there. This is why the apostle Paul wrote,

*Col 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

*Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,  
Col 3:24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

So how do we get there, how do we get to a point where whatever we are doing is for God? The core key is really found in Romans 12:1

*Ro 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*

Scripture tells us first to view God's mercy. So what does it mean to view something? It means to see it and put it in perspective. That's really what we did last week. We took what God has done for us, and put it into perspective. As a quick recap, let's go over that...

The scripture tells us that, in view of God's done for us, offer ourselves as living sacrifices. There are two parts here. The first part I want to center on is the "sacrifice" part. What comes to mind when you think of the word sacrifice? A sacrifice is something you give up for the sake of someone or something else (ex). In the OT as sacrifice was given for the forgiveness of sins. The killed animal was a picture of what Christ would do. Once Christ came there was no longer a need for that type of sacrifice. What God calls us to now, is to be a living sacrifice. A living sacrifice is to give of ourselves for the sake of someone or something else. Scripture tells to offer our bodies, ourselves, as living sacrifices to God. The passage tells us that our bodies, our beings should be holy. To be holy means to be set apart and pure for God's purposes.

Let's look @ some examples of what this would look like practically speaking....

The passage goes on to tell us that this is worship. Worship is what we bring to God, what we give to God and it has three main elements and sometimes 4. The first is adoration, whenever we worship anything it's because we recognize its value. When we adore we are saying this is important, it's more important than anything or anybody else. The second element of worship is thanksgiving. Yes, this thing, this person is more valuable to me than anyone or anything else and you know what I'm thankful for it, I'm thankful for this person. The third element is what we give because of our adoration and thanks. What we give flows out of our adoration and our thanksgiving. We realize that it's so important, so valuable, we're so thankful for it that we have to do something. We have to give something. Scripture tells us in this passage that we're to give ourselves, whatever we are, whatever we have we are to lay down for Christ as a sacrifice and allow Him to do whatever he wants with it. The fourth element is that of our needs. In view, in perspective of this thing, this person, this God that I worship, I am coming to you and I recognize who you are, I'm thankful for who you are, you can have all of me, will you help me with this\_\_\_\_\_ you fill in the blank.

Let's pause for a moment and in your hearts ask the question, "Is this how I feel about God?" (recap)

Once we have a proper view of God, the following question then is this. In view of all that God's done, "why do I want to get out on the beam?" Why do I want to get out on the fence? Some of us are going to answer that question, like this, "I don't". I don't want to go anywhere near that beam anymore, I want to stay as far away as I can. The rest of us are going to lean one way or the other. Some of us are going to be like, "I don't really care about any of that stuff, I don't care what God's done, and I don't care what He wants. I'm going to forget about the beam, forget about the fence and just walk right over it". As much as I hate the consequences you'll face for that decision. At least you know where you stand. The second group here will think something along the lines of "I don't know why I would want to go out there, but I'm going to go anyways. I'm going to hang out on the fence as long as I can and see what happens. How close can I get without falling?" The problem with that way of thinking is this; you don't really know what you want. You sort of want the best of both worlds. The thing is if you are on a beam, a fence, a window sill, a rooftop edge, how long are you going to be able to handle it up there? How many times can you go back and forth on the fence or rooftop edge before you fall? Maybe you're good at it and you know just how far to go out. Maybe you're smart enough to get off every once in a while. But there are only so many times you're going to get out there before you fall. The other thing is this too, the more we do something the more we get comfortable with it. The more comfortable we get, the more cocky/arrogant we get, the more cocky/arrogant we get, the more prideful we become, the greater chance we have of falling. Scripture says it well,

*1Co 10:12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! (context)*

That's why Jesus says,

*Mt 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.*

This is why what you believe matters, what you believe about God says a lot about you. What's your view of Him (Rom 12:1, recap)? It's that view which will ultimately lead you onto the fence, over the fence, or away from the fence. You can only serve one master; you can only worship one god? Who/what will it be/

Before we close tonight I want to share with you a true story... Joshua 24

Discussion Concepts

Discuss some of the reasons people go on the "spiritual fence", what are some reasons, why might those be attractive? Then discuss how often students see a person walking back and forth on a physical fence, a windows sill or a roof edge (getting out as close to the edge as possible). More than likely it doesn't happen often. Talk about why (narrow, thin, and dangerous). Talk about the similarities between the danger, narrow, thin lines between spiritual fences and physical fences.

Use the balance beam; see how long you can go back and forth on it before you fall. If the beam is unavailable try on one foot, if it gets too long try having them hop on one foot? Use this as connection to walking on the fence between doing what is right and what is wrong.

Go back to the section on Rom 12:1. Is this what comes to mind when you think about worship and when you think about God? Why or why not, what would it take for you to view God and worship in this manner?