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Sermon 484 - Revelation 3:14-22 - For Risen Savior, March 24, 2019

Indifference

In the name of the one to whom belongs all glory and praise. The one to whom every knee shall someday bow. The one who was and is and is to come our. He is our reason for joy, and hope and peace, his name is Jesus. Good morning church family, I am Pastor Dustin Blumer the younger son of Pastor Steve Blumer. A little about them. It is true I stand on the shoulders of my Father - for he taught me to love Jesus and serve others. My mother too who wears her faith on her sleeve - whose love for Jesus is evident. They are evidence of the grace of God in my life.

And as we get things going here there are many things in life that people take seriously. Some people take their musical preference really, really seriously. They will tell you about the band or musician, and even if you'll allow them have you listen to a song. If you're in a car or at home they may say, "You've got to listen to this." And whether you liked it or not you were subject to how seriously they took their music. Anyone ever show you their favorite song? Maybe this week there are some taking their brackets for March Madness seriously, UCF is still in it. And when it comes to sports there are also serious Cowboy fans, Dolphins fans, and the ones you really have to watch out for - a new level of serious - Packer fans. But then in life there are other things we don't take seriously enough. I grew up in an age where we didn't take ingredients to food seriously. What's in a hot dog, ahh who cares - I just know it tastes good and heats up quick. Or consider the perception of soda. We weren't as seriously concerned with the amount of sugar when I was growing up. But that's when we made Kool-Aid with 2 cups of sugar. We don't always take seriously the doctor's orders or doctor visits, or advice from a financial planner when we are young. And so we live in a world where we take certain things too seriously, and other things not seriously enough.

Well as we've gathered this morning we're continuing our series What Would Jesus Undo. It's a spin off of WWJD. If you were alive during the 90s you may have remembered this phrase. Does anyone remember seeing the WWJD bracelets? But it prompted many people to consider situationally what would please God, what would love look like? So this series is a spin off of the concept, and see not what are things that please God's heart, but the things that break his heart. And when it comes to the things that break his heart.

And what breaks his heart as we consider today? Indifference. Oh. Indifference is described as someone who is clocked out and could care less. People today would say they are meh. And there are a lot of things you can be indifferent about. You can be indifferent about what you pack for lunch, or where you go out to eat. Be indifferent about the car you drive and the house you live in. You could be indifferent when it comes to music and sports. But you shouldn't be indifferent about God. Take it or leave it, neutral a little too unconcerned should not be the case.

In fact the goal of our walk is to be all out and all in - completely sold out to the cause of Christ. I consider D.L Moody who said, "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him. By God's help, I aim to be that man." By God's help what if we all

aimed to be that man and that woman. In fact as a scholar of Martin Luther and looking at his life a time or two one of the things that he is constantly praised for by those who studying his life is simply this, *He took God seriously*. Friends gathered today - worse things could be said about us, and perhaps no better than that we took God seriously.

But where do we stand as a people, or as Christians in America? It was a couple year back that I went to a conference and there the speaker was talking about threats to Christianity in America. He talked about indifference. He compared us to the soil with thorns in the Gospel of Mark, “18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.” (Mark 4:18-19) Then having had some time as a pastor I had experiences. I would share the Gospel, hoping they saw the beauty, the power, the majesty of salvation as a gift of God. And the beauty of the Gospel would light a fire in them. But what I found at times was that people knew the Gospel, they just didn’t care. But what about my own heart. Can I say that I have completely sold out for the cause of Jesus - not there yet.

And so what would God think about this and what would God say to us? I’m glad you asked because there is actually a letter written to a church facing the same spiritual diagnosis. The letter was to a church not in America but in Laodicea. And God speaks right into indifference and we get to learn from these words today.

When you don’t have a lot of money, you don’t have a lot of options. My daughter was telling me about someone she watches on youtube who is 1 of 12 kids, and when asked about her favorite restaurant she asked if the dollar menu at McDonald’s qualifies - because that is the only place they can go. It’s something my wife can relate to she was 1 of 7 children and she remembers when she was given the option to go to any restaurant she could, and she also chose McDonalds - it’s the only one she knew. I don’t know if you can relate to the experience of having your options limited because of your income. Options not just for going out to eat, but where you are going on vacation, or what clothes you can afford, or what activities you can be in. Maybe it was buying a house and the lender told you the options you could consider. But as income increases so do the options. Not just McDonalds, now Wahlburger. Where to live, what activities to be in, where to go on vacation and where to eat.

And in a world of options with increasing income, is it possible that God just becomes another option? Not a need, not a pressing issue just an option. Consider the options when we have a bad day. We could do retail therapy, buy a book on the subject from an expert, go to the spa, escape through a never ending plethora of entertainment options - whether binging Netflix, going to Disney, playing Fortnite. We have options. And perhaps what is so tricky in the day and age we find ourselves is that we know God is there, we perhaps just don’t know if he’s the right option for what we are going through, or there’s always another option for our activity.

As we consider the subject matter of money, let’s get our bearings. Let me ask a yes or no question. Is it sinful to have money or be rich? No. If that was the case Abraham, Job, David, Solomon were all more sinful because they were believers with money. If that were the case every American would be more sinful, for we are among the richest people who have ever lived.

But let me ask another yes/no question. Is it a temptation to be blessed with riches? Absolutely it is. This reminds me of a rich young ruler who went up to Jesus wanting to be saved. And Jesus said it very directly, take the world and just have me. But he said it this way, “go and sell all your possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” (Mark 10:21) Give up your options for food and clothing, options of where your earthly tent will be. Just have and trust in me. And some of you know how this story ends. “22 But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.” (Mark 10:22) It’s so hard to give up the world for the sake of Jesus.

Now this applies very much to the words of Jesus to those in Laodicea. For this is what they were saying, “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” (3:17) Now a bit about the congregation. They were very rich people. In fact in the early 1st century an earthquake in 60AD devastated them and instead of taking a government bailout - they rebuilt themselves. Roman historian Tacitus reported, “Laodicea arose from ruins by the strength of her own resources, and with no help from us.” That sounds like a very American approach, look what we did for ourselves pulling ourselves back up. And they may have been rich in an earthly way, but spiritually they were poor.

So friends there is a warning to us. Warning to rich Americans. *Beware of apathy fueled by affluence.* Beware of making God an option instead of the only thing. Beware of the idea of a self-made man or woman who has no need of God. Beware of loving the world and the things of this world more than the one who made the world and us as well, and letting good things come in the place of God. For this is sin and God says this doesn’t just annoy me, it nauseates me to the point I want to spit you out of my mouth.

And why? Because indifference has nothing to do with his love for us. In fact I believe he loves you more than what you know right now. You have yet to track down just how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. And we see that in his cross. Tell me what is meh about the cross of Jesus Christ. He was all in and sold out. What is meh about sweating drops of blood in the Garden. What is meh about leaving heaven and coming to earth for you and me? Nothing. His activity was an all in, can’t stop me, you have no clue how far I am willing to go type of love. And perhaps the reason he can’t stand apathy, is because apathy had nothing to do with his activity and his love for us. See there is this unrelenting, unfathomable, unfailing love.

We get a sense of it when gift giving. For have you ever had the experience where you were trying to the find the right thing for someone you cared about? And you were just hoping they might light up when they got the gift? My family does such a good job of this for me in the past. My mother would use the phrase I would give you the whole world if I could. And they have illustrated it more than once. I remember Christmases filled with incredible gifts. I remember one Christmas as a child with a ping pong table and Badger Basketball tickets.

Now it’s one thing to give a ping-pong table or sacrifice for tickets - it’s another thing to give your life. See Jesus put in more than we can imagine. Hoping we might see his heart. Hoping we might get that his love is not just lip service. Hoping we would know to the very depths of our soul exactly what he says. That we are the apple of his eye, that we are his beloved children, that he would move heaven and earth to save us. That he was, and is, and will be all in.

So how do we become not lukewarm - but all in? I have a theory on how. Are there any history buffs in the building? I like history, I know you can learn from history. I just wish that my brain was more of a hoarder, but it is so good at purging what I do not need. But in studying history I've studied enough to realize what historically happens when the church is persecuted. When the church was persecuted in the early ADs under Nero and Rome - it thrived and grew strong. People said you can hurt me, rob me, kill me - Jesus is worth and by the way he conquered death so there really isn't much you can do to me. There was no room for indifference. Constantine changed things, making it socially acceptable to be a Christian and used his influence - and now Christianity was popular and there was a mass veneer of Christianity, but a lot of apathy. Christian in name 'cause it's popular, but not necessarily passionate as time went on. We are not hugely persecuted for the faith in America, but how is Christianity doing? It's been in decline for years. Compare that to China where it is illegal to be a Christian? The Gospel is spreading like wildfire. Because there is no room for apathy.

So as we talk about regaining passion and the solution for apathy. *The solution for apathy is often adversity.* So glad you have me as guest preacher. I hope your year is filled with adversity, take care. I know it's not that easy a thought. But consider with me what the lesson says, "I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich." And I had to think how do I get this gold? Can I Amazon Prime it from God. What is he talking about? In research, there is one other clear Scripture that talks about gold refined in the fire. "These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire." (1 Peter 1:7) A proven, persistent faith is what God is talking about. That's gold in God's eyes. But how is this faith refined and what came first? "Grief in all kinds of trials." (1:6) Aka. See adversity doesn't let us off our knees praying for what only God can do. Adversity does not allow us to be wishy washy but clinging to God for support. There is no apathy when times are bad, there is only HELP! Which helps us reframe perhaps what God is doing.

Here again we see the love of Jesus. Did he not face adversity and produce gold? Yes, he is the one who set out resolutely for Jerusalem, knowing what was waiting for him there. When feeling the adversity in the garden cried for help yet fought for not my will but yours be done. The one who persisted to the point of death so that through his loss we could win.

Consider this. I know there are some parents in the room. How many of you want only comfortable situations for your child? That they go to school but are never challenged. That they live at home only comfortable all the time. Now hopefully there are periods of comfort and ease, but a lot of training a child is pushing them, challenging, coaching them to do the things they might not want to do. And sometimes you love them enough not to make life easy on them.

Something we need to consider is that perhaps our Heavenly Father operates with a similar outlook. Perhaps *God loves you enough not to make it easy.* Now at the same time he is the one close to the broken hearted, the compassionate and gracious God. He is not just out to get us. But consider v 19, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent." And perhaps this reframes a little of what we go through. He doesn't hate you he loves you enough to make you come to him often and cry HELP. I'll do anything. I don't want my will, I want your will - just help!

During a hospital visit this year I met a doctor who was anything but apathetic. He told me of his life as an atheist living in sin. He told me how grace broke through to him. That though he tasted hell, he knew the goodness of what it is to walk with the Lord. He is studying a branch of theology called apologetics and just wrote a book of poems called Carry On. He infused the room with such a testimony about God and his goodness that it refreshed me and us all. He said he would not shut up about God. He couldn't. Here was a guy who took seriously his relationship with God, and found an outlet for that passion. Here was a guy who I could tell would not take for granted the Lord's discipline and loving rebuke, and it led him to repentance.

So what about you. Is it possible that some of the adversity you face was there to lead you to continual dependence and passion for the only solution. And should not our response be the same as that doctor, as the goal of DL Moody, as Martin Luther. To sell out, to give it all. To take our faith seriously. For this is the heart of God over us. He is not meh about you, his love for you is so fierce it led him to die. By the power of the Spirit may that intense love for you, drive you to intense love for him. Amen.