

St Martins C3 – June 4, 2023

Fill Your Life with Jesus - Overflow

Sermon Notes:

So far in this series, we have done the journey of digging deep into ourselves, acknowledging what is broken and repenting from it. As we are going to see from Jesus Himself, it's not just as easy as stopping the bad. You need to fill yourself with the good and have that overflow.

Read Matthew 12:33-35, 4:7-10

John warned the Pharisees about producing bad fruit. Jesus also warned them about being a tree with bad fruit. He tells them that from the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Once we are aware of that overflow we can then repent of it, which is what Jesus encourages.

Read Matthew 12:38-42

His listeners need to have enough humility to look inside their hearts, see that they are evil and leave those ways behind. But then they need to fill their life with something better, otherwise, they fall into the same trap.

Read Matthew 12:43-45

These verses are not just about the behaviour of demons but they are about ensuring that we don't remove one bad thing from our life and replace it with something else just as bad.

The religious leaders had a blind spot and it is one we need to be aware of. They replaced their sinful attitudes with attitudes of self-righteousness.

It is easy for us to do the same thing today. Watch out for this. You stop sinning. You remove the temptations of the world and live a life of purity. But in so doing you might make “moral behaviour” the foundation of your self-worth. People also do this with religious activities or with social justice issues.

These are good things, but they should be the overflow of something else, if they become the source of our behaviour instead of our relationship with God then we will twist them away from God and they will twist us away from Him.

Instead, we need to fill our lives with our relationship to Jesus. Doing good to others must be an overflow of our identity before God not the source of our identity. Then loving others becomes completely authentic. Doing good to others will serve them and show them transforming love. Social justice will bring God's Kingdom on earth, bringing love, joy, peace and hope to all people.

Read Matthew 13:31-33, 44-46

This week we want to encourage you to spend time in God's presence, focus on the mighty things He has done for you and place Him in the central part of your life. This is something we need to do all the time. We need to remind ourselves of what Jesus has done for us so we can make the core of our life and have everything else overflow from it.

Questions for Connect Groups:

How would you recap the first two weeks of the series?

What stood out to you from this week's sermon?

What is the significance of Jesus being the new and better Moses, Jonah, and Solomon?

Why do you think Jesus was so harsh on the religious leaders?

Have you seen someone try and replace a bad habit in their life only to add another one?

The Pharisees were religious and moral people, so what was so wrong with what they were doing?

How can good things like moral behaviour, religious activities and social justice become destructive if placed in the centre of our lives?

How would you feel about your life if you only had Jesus?

- *No reputation, no sense of uprightness, no people who respect you, no pleasures, no money, no position, no achievements*

What does this say about our relationship with God?

How do we know if Jesus is at the centre of our lives?

How can we place Jesus at the centre of our lives?

Monday Devotion: Justified

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:1-11

This week we want to explore the scriptures that reveal who we are before God. These verses are fundamental to our identity in Christ. As we prayerfully meditate on these scriptures, we can place Jesus at the centre of our lives.

Through the week we will meditate on the truth of what Jesus has done for us. To do this we are going to explore some big churchy words that we sometimes use without understanding them.

The first one is the word justified. This is best described as “just as if I’d” never sinned. It is the truth that God has reached out his hand and said to you and me, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

The grace of God has met the enemy sin and as the two greatest powers of our world have collided there has been only one winner. The power of sin has exploded leaving only its dying whimpers as reminders in our lives. As 2 Corinthians 5:21 teaches us the sacrifice of Jesus has made us righteous in the eyes of God.

Activity:

- Read these scriptures three times. Each time ask the Holy Spirit to reveal something fresh to you. Praise Him for what He has done for you.

Tuesday Devotion: Regenerated

Read Titus 3:3-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:3

On day one of our creation God spoke and said let there be light and there was light. Fundamental to our belief in God is our belief that he has the knowledge and power to perform miraculous acts of illumination and life creation.

Yet when it comes to our own lives sometimes it is hard to believe that God could really change us. In doing so we believe that our sin is more powerful than God's ability to overcome it. Thus, we fill our lives with our good works to compensate.

However, through regeneration we are a new creation; we have experienced new birth through the power of His Holy Spirit. We do not have to live in the shadow of the past; instead, we can live in the power of His Spirit.

We can be truly free of the past because in his eyes we don't carry it anymore. There are consequences we still have to deal with, but we don't need to carry that weight anymore.

Activity:

- Become quiet and breathe in God's love, breathe out your self-recriminations. Slowly read the scripture, adding your name in. Pause at any time when you feel God reaching out to you and be still in His presence asking Him to reveal what He is doing.

Wednesday Devotion: Reconciled

Read Romans 5:10-11; Acts 3:19; Colossians 1:15-23

You were an enemy of God. A sinner, a person soaked in evil and distasteful to him. All the wrong things you carry could not enter into his presence, if you tried you would have been dissolved like the shadows of night when exposed to the brilliant sunrise.

Through the almighty sacrifice of Jesus, you have an opportunity to do something about that problem. Every person is called to repent and have his or her sins wiped out. The result is that you can now enter into God's presence. The breakdown has been cured and your relationship with Him has changed. This truly is good news!

Paul, when reflecting on this fact, tells the people of Colossae they must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it (Colossians 1:23). Paul knows we tend to fall back to old ways of thinking, but we must resist them.

As we bask in our new relationship, we can enter his presence and feel the shame from the past fall away.

Activity:

- Write down what it means to be friends with someone. Apply these things to your relationship with God. Try and do one of the activities on your list with Him today.

Thursday Devotion: Adopted

Read John 1:12-13; Galatians 4:4-8; Romans 8:14-17

Think of the most defining relationship in your life. The person who has left their mark either good or bad in a permanent way. Often this person is a close family member. That is why our relationship with God is described as one of the closest possible relationships that of a parent and a child.

We do not live as outcasts any longer; instead, we are brought into His presence. He does not condemn us for our wrongdoings instead he welcomes us in as one of his family.

Many voices speak to us today. There are the voices that tell us we are unworthy, the voices that tell us we have to try harder to measure up to be accepted, and the voices that tell us that we are nothing if we don't please other people.

If ever we have a voice that tells us we are unlovable and unworthy we only need to look at our new relationship with Christ to speak truth to the lie.

Activity:

- Find a quiet place and sit comfortably before God. Ask Him to reveal to you the lies about yourself you have believed. Ask Him to replace them with the truth about your new relationship with Him.

Friday Devotion: Sanctified

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Colossians 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2

We have seen a lot in this devotional about our new relationship with God through Jesus. We are justified, regenerated, reconciled and adopted by him. Hopefully, you have been filled with joy and new freedom just by meditating on the truth of who you have been saved to be.

Now we can begin to step into who God has called us to be, we can live out of a new authentic self in Him.

“The simplistic cultural narrative is that we should simply express our deepest desires. In reality, we know that there are some deep things in our hearts that will thwart us from becoming the true selves we should be. The process of sanctification, of growth into the likeness of Christ, is also, then, the process of becoming the true self God created us to be.” Timothy Keller, Preaching

To be “sanctified” is to give yourself daily to God asking him to renew your mind and behaviour, to live in the freedom he has won for you. God wants to use you for special purposes and this happens as you step away from shame and instead live a life that is fit for his purpose.

Prayer:

- Spend time asking God to do his work of sanctification