

St Martins C3 – May 22nd, 2022

Stand Strong – Resisting Entitlement

Sermon Notes:

Today, we are looking at how we can stand strong against entitlement in our lives. People who feel entitled take for granted what they have and keep asking for more, and the more they get the more they expect. It is seen in the stuff we own, the opportunities we want, and the pleasures we crave.

Here are some phrases an entitled person would use:

I am owed ...

I deserve ...

You ought to give me ...

It would be unfair if I didn't have ...

Read Genesis 3:6-7

Adam and Eve had everything they needed in God, they were called to be wise stewards of the world but they wanted *more*. Now human nature is twisted with a desire for more, for self, for what pleases us rather than what is best for the world.

This sense of entitlement begins in babies, and goes through our childhood years but is still trying to take hold of us as adults. We often believe it is the case for younger generations but it is a temptation for us all.

How would you complete the statement: **I have to have ...**
What do you have to have in your life? More than just the basics, but the extras? This tells us how entitled we are.

When Jesus came he addressed this head-on. He set about a new way of acting and behaving that cuts through a culture of entitlement and shows us how we can stand strong in His way.

1 – Be aware of Entitlement’s grip on your life

Read Luke 12:13-15

Entitlement is trying to hook into us and we need to watch out for it. For us to stand strong we need to see the places we have entitlement in our life and reject it.

2 – Rely on your rich relationship with God

Read Luke 12:16-32

The only thing that matters is having a rich relationship with God. In this passage, Jesus says it is about having faith in Him. Faith that He will look after you. Faith that you will have everything you need to live a Kingdom-focused life.

3 – Give yourself to others

Read Luke 12:33-34

I am not owed I am owned. I am not owed a nice house or a comfortable life instead I am owned by God and give all that I have to Him and the furtherance of His Kingdom. Jesus says that instead of focussing on what you have to have we must focus on what we have to give.

It’s time to stop hoarding, complaining, and being selfish with our stuff and become more generous, grateful and purposeful.

Questions for Connect Groups:

Sermon Reflection:

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

How do you see sin's effect on the way we treat our stuff?

When Jesus asked His disciples to sell their possessions He didn't mean to sell everything, but what did He mean?

Life Application:

Tell a story of a time when you saw an entitled attitude in you or someone else?

What makes it so difficult for us to see how we are entitled?

Do you think following Jesus means you can't desire nice things? Discuss.

Complete the phrase "I have to have ..." How bad would it really be if you didn't have those things?

Why do we feel we are owed anything in life?

What steps are you taking to resist entitlement in your life?

How can we use what we have to bless others?

How do we stop our children from becoming entitled?

Monday Devotion: Creation

Read Genesis 1:26-30; 2:18-25

John Stott has a helpful framework for evaluating the current culture from a Christian perspective.¹ He asserts that by exploring the fullness of scripture we can discern a truly Christian way of thinking about an issue. To do this he splits scripture into four time periods: creation, fall, redemption and consummation. This week we will use this framework to explore the issue of entitlement.

When we speak of the creation period we can reflect on the way God created the world. This was a place where humanity was spiritually, relationally and emotionally whole. Humans were created as spiritual beings who found satisfaction in their relationship with God. In the beginning, it was a relationship with God and not things that brought pleasure and meaning.

Humans were created as responsible beings (exercising dominion over nature). It was God's original intention that humanity would responsibly be steward over all things. This creation story shows the goodness of all things and how God created everything for our good. Considering the original design of human responsibility this issue of entitlement was minimal.

As we consider the way that He made us let us give thanks for this world filled with joy, pleasure, and many good things.

¹ John Stott, *Issues facing Christians Today*, 49.

Tuesday Devotion: Fall

Read Genesis 3:1-13; Joshua 7:1, 16-26; 2 Samuel 11:1-25; 1 Kings 21:1-19

“Original sin means that our inherited human nature is now twisted with a disastrous self-centeredness.” John Stott

Adam and Eve took the fruit. It was the sense they could have more was that caused the sin of Adam and Eve. Even though they had a perfect relationship with God and a garden of plenty, they wanted more. Now human nature is twisted with greed and inequality that should bring shame considering God’s original design.

Think about some of the Old Testament stories that reflect this attitude and their disastrous consequences. Think of Achan going into the promised land and instead of setting the plunder apart for the Lord he sees they are beautiful and says, reflecting Genesis 3 like a mirror, “I wanted them so much that I took them”.

Or David when he sees Bathsheba and murders her husband so he can take her as his wife (2 Samuel 11). Or the story of Naboth who owned a vineyard that King Ahab wanted and so he told his wife, Jezebel. “Are you the King of Israel or not?” she says (1 Kings 21). In other words, you are entitled to this! On each of these occasions, the result is death.

Do you see this same desire rising in you at times? Is there a desire to have more despite its effect on others? Be honest about this and bring it to God in repentance.

Wednesday Devotion: Redemption

***Read Matthew 6:1-4; 19-33; Philippians 2:6-8; Luke 9:23;
John 4:7-14***

God is redeeming the world through Jesus. Through His sacrifice on the cross and His teachings, we can see a new way of living.

Redemption is the next step in the process and Jesus confronted our entitlement in meaningful ways. In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus encouraged giving to the needy. This was one of His key messages, and it is contrary to the sense of entitlement. For Jesus satisfaction and service are synonyms.

Jesus also told his followers not to worry about their clothes or what they ate but to seek first God's kingdom reality and God would take care of these things. This requires us to trust God more than ourselves for our things.

Jesus showed His trust in God by laying down His rights and dying on the cross. He asks His followers to take up their cross, even laying down their rights, and the things they feel entitled to. The challenge for us as followers of Jesus is to begin to live by His kingdom values and to find our satisfaction in Him alone.

Jesus' new way of living is one for all His followers to embrace as they seek to see His Kingdom come into the world now.

Pray today about your journey. Give to God your failures and ask Him to help you surrender more to Him.

Thursday Devotion: Consummation

Read *John 14:1-4; Revelation 21:4; 22:1*

One day when the gospel has been proclaimed through the whole world Jesus will return and usher in the New Heavens and the New Earth. As we see what the world will be like then we can begin to make it a reality now.

When Jesus talked about heaven He used the image of a house with many rooms, speaking of a kingdom open for everyone, and painting a picture of a place with all needs fulfilled. Jesus goes on to say that He will come back to take His followers there so they may be where He is. He emphasizes that this place is about a complete relationship with Him. There will be no sense of entitlement here because Jesus will meet every need.

The book of Revelation states there will be no death or mourning or crying or pain “for the old order of things has passed away.” This city will have a river of life flowing through it that will completely satisfy. Once things are perfected there will be no want therefore there will be no sense of entitlement. This completion will be a greater version of the responsibility and satisfaction found at the beginning of creation.

Why would we wait until we die to come alive? Let us begin today by embracing the new Kingdom life that God offers us. Let us go to Him for complete satisfaction, and let us bring that same life to others.

Friday Devotion: What Now

Read James 4:1-10; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

What we have seen this week is the goodness that God created to make something beautiful in the world. Compare this with our sinful desire to get more for ourselves.

Being countercultural means being dead set against entitlement in our lives. And to do that, we've got to work to develop the muscles of sacrifice and service. The Scriptures point the way. We must decrease so that Jesus can increase (John 3:30). The first shall be last, and the last shall be first (Matt. 20:16).²

The cure for entitlement is generosity. Instead, of wanting more for ourselves, we use what we have to bless others. This is the best response to what Jesus has done for us.

David Livingstone said: "People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa.... I never made a sacrifice. We ought not to talk of 'sacrifice' when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us."

This week look at your possessions in a new way. Consider how you can use them as resources to bless others. In the process, you may find what you were created for and who you are destined to be.

² Kinnaman, David; Matlock, Mark; Hawkins, Aly. Faith for Exiles (pp. 185-186). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.