

INSIGHT

When an expert of the Law asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment, He replied: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" *This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.*" (Matt. 22:37-40) Jesus summarizes the whole teaching of God in one action word: *love!* How do we love God? By keeping His commands (John 14:15; 15:14; 1 John 5:3). How do we love our neighbor? By being selfless, kind, generous and compassionate to those around us, whether it be a fellow believer, family member, stranger or enemy. Love requires going beyond the comfort zone. The flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit. Galatians 5:17 says, "*For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other...*" In order to love God and those around us, we must be willing to go beyond that which is convenient. Jesus taught the concept of sacrificial love in His parables and teachings. Is it comfortable to love your enemies and to pray for those who persecute you and others? (Matt 5:43-48). Is it comfortable to be patient when dealing with difficult people and situations? Is it comfortable to act with kindness and gentleness when being opposed? (1 Cor. 13:4) Is it comfortable to keep anger under control? Is it comfortable to forget the wrongs of those who hurt you? (1 Cor. 13:5) Is it convenient to go out of your way to help someone who is destitute? (Luke 10:30-37; Matthew 25:34-40) Living the Christian life isn't always convenient and comfortable! We must meet our challenge to go beyond the comfort zone!

The Life in Christ

Going Beyond The Comfort Zone

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 9:26-27

"Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

Theme:

We all know that those involved in a race run for a prize. In the Olympics, all the runners in a race run, but only one can receive the gold! This is not so with the child of God. For all true believers who run the spiritual race will receive the gold, the crown of life! But he or she must keep to the path of duty prescribed: to go beyond the comfort zone! Just as those in a race discipline their bodies to endure the hardships of the race, so must the child of God discipline his body. For the body must be kept under submission, beaten black and blue, because the teachings of the Spirit are contrary to the desires of the flesh! (Gal. 5:17) Make sure the Spirit is shining through you! Love beyond the comfort zone! Live beyond the comfort zone! Go beyond the comfort zone!

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. **Get to know the unknown!** There are people within the church you don't know well. Get to know them.
2. **Invite others to your home!** Make your home a place of fellowship!
3. **Seek opportunity to do good!** Take a look around. Be aware of your surroundings! Do what is encouraging!

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

Beyond The Comfort Zone

Introduction

1 Cor. 9:26-27

--rival: the body

I. The Summary Of God's Word

Matthew 22:37-40

1. Love God (*1 John 5:3*)
 - a. Love intensely
 - b. Love beyond the comfort zone
 - love *with obedience*
 - love *with dependence (faith)*
 - love *seeking His will*
 - love *seeking answers in Him*
2. Love you neighbor--fellow human
 - a. Love intensely
 - b. Love beyond the comfort zone

II. Love your neighbor

1. Love beyond inner comfort
 - a. *1 Cor 13:4-6*
 - easier to be impatient
 - easier to unkind when provoked
 - easier to envy and to boast
 - easier to hold grudges
2. Love beyond the physical comfort
 - a. Parables: *Matthew 25:14f*
 - vs. 14-30: Borrowed talents
 1. What are your talents?
 2. How are you using them?
 3. What will He find?
 - vs. 31-40: Tested service
 1. Whom have you fed?
 2. Whom have you invited?
 3. Whom have you clothed?
 4. Whom have you visited?

III. Conclusion

Jesus--He went beyond comfort zone

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Warm-up:

Were you ever involved in some type of competitive sport? What does it take to be a successful athlete?

See To It *1 Corinthians 9:19-27*

1. What type of freedom was Paul referring to when he said, "*Though I am free..*"? What type of slavery was he referring to?
2. What was the purpose of his giving up his personal "freedom"?
3. Explain the verse "*To the Jews I became like a Jew.*" Did Paul violate his own teachings (Galatians 5:3-4) regarding the law of Christ and the law of Moses?
4. **Read vs. 21-22.** How do you think Paul became like *those not having the law* (Gentiles) and those who are *weak*?
5. **Read vs. 23.** Paul gave up his freedom so he can share in the blessings of the Gospel. What kind of blessings does it offer?

Seeing It Closer:

1. How can we apply the concept of becoming all things to all men today? Give some examples.
2. What does Paul compare Christianity with? How is Christianity like an athletic event?
3. What does strict training involve? Is it easy? What does it accomplish?
4. What gets in the way of Christian service? How do we "*beat*" our bodies?

Getting To It:

Encourage each other to become all things to all men. Pray that we will not seek what is comfortable, but that which will promote salvation and edification of souls!