**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Doing What You Know Is Right**

John the Baptist was a prophet of God. He, as a prophet was given the responsibility to speak the word of God. The time came when John had the opportunity to speak the word of God to Herod concerning his marriage. You see, Herod had married his brother, Phillip’s wife. This was contrary to God’s will. John, no doubt, knew that Herod may not receive well what he needed to say to him. But John made the decision to speak to Herod that which was the word of God concerning this situation. He said to Herod, *“It is not lawful for you to have her.”* (Matt. 14:4). He decided to speak the truth and let the consequences come as they would come. The consequence was that Herod put him in prison. Later, at the request of Herodias’ daughter, John was beheaded. John lost his life because of his decision to speak to Herod what Herod needed to hear. I ask you, do you think John handled that situation well? Do you think he did the right thing?

In Acts 6 we read of Stephen being brought before the Jewish council. Here Stephen had the opportunity to speak to them the truth. He knew at the beginning that what he was about to say would probably not be received well by these Jewish leaders. He had to make a decision that day whether he would speak the truth to them or not, knowing full well that he may be put into prison or maybe even executed. He decided to preach the truth and let the consequences come as they would come. They stoned him to death. He did not preach to anyone else after that day. I ask you, do you think Stephen made the right decision?

I am working from the presupposition in this lesson that it is always right to do and say what is right, always. We know this to be true, but sometimes we struggle and vacillate about doing what is right. The struggle is usually not determining what is right (most of the time we know what is right), but it is the struggle in our decision as to whether or not we are going to do it.

In this lesson we want to emphasize the importance of doing what we know is right.

1. We want to talk about some things that hinder us from doing what we know is right.

2. We want to talk about four things to keep in mind when the time comes to do what we know is right.

First of all, let’s talk about some thing that hinder us from doing what we know is right.

*The illusion that talking is the same as involvement* may hinder us. Talking provides an illusion of involvement. If we talk about doing what is right enough, we may eventually convince ourselves that we are actually involved in doing what is right. A person may 1) believe what is right, 2) approve what is right, 3) support what is right, 4) defend what is right, and as a result think he is right without doing what is right. James points out the fallacy of this illusion in James 2:14-17. He says, *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”* In the illustration that James gives, the person says the right words toward the brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food - “depart in peace, be warmed and filled.” One may say the right words, but what is the profit in saying the right words if there is no intention of doing anything? In serving God the Bible makes it clear that saying is not the equivalent of doing. Jesus said in Luke 6:46, *“But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?”* In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, *“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”*  I may believe Jesus is Lord, even defend the truthfulness of His lordship before those who are unbelievers, but if I am not DOING what He says, then my verbal defense of Him means nothing. When a brother was asked the question of someone else, “is he a Christian?” he said, “No, but he leans that way.” In other words, this person knows the truth about Jesus, he will defend the truth, he leans toward Jesus, but he does not obey Jesus.

Sometime churches have evangelism meetings where they talk about the importance of doing evangelistic work, and learn how to do it. They talk about the commands of our Lord to carry the gospel to a lost world, and how we all need to be involved in this great work. But sometimes this is an activity that is aimedtoward the soothing of the conscience through the verbalization of truth without theaccompanying response of obeying that truth. The church feels good about the fact that they are talking about saving the lost, but that is as far as it goes. You see, it is not enough to just get together for strategy sessions as Christians, we need to be seriousabout implementation. James says in James 1:22-25, *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”*

Also, *The potential cost of doing what is right* may hinder us.

Sometimes choosing to do what is right involves risk on the part of the person who makes that choice, just like John the Baptist and Stephen. Jesus never tried to hide the cost factor in discipleship.Jesus made it clear that to be His disciple it will cost us our lives. Jesus said to the multitudes in Luke 14:26-27, *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”* In verse 33 He said, *“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”* Being a disciple of Jesus means that if ever there is a conflict between what Jesus commands and what my family desires of me, I must obey Jesus. Sometimes that will bring division in the family. Jesus warned us of this. He said in Matthew 10:34-37, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”* Some people are not willing to pay that price to be a disciple of Christ. This family risk paralyzes some people. They refuse to obey Jesus to keep peace in the family.

But notice Jesus also says, *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate… his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”*  Being a disciple of Christ sometimes means we have to make a decision between obeying Jesus and our physical life. Sometimes obeying Jesus means we must give our life for Him. Jesus said to the church in Smyrna, *“Be thou faithful unto death* [that is unto the point of death], *and I will give thee the crown of life.”* (Rev. 2:10) Some are not willing to pay that price to be a disciple of Christ. They know what is right, but the cost of discipleship hinders them.

When it comes time to do what you know is right there are four things to keep in mind.

First, in doing what is right you are showing your love for the Lord. John said in 1 John 5:3, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”* Taking risk for the Lord, sacrificing for the Lord – this is what love for the Lord does. Isn’t that what Jesus did when He gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin? His sacrifice was an expression of His love for the Father and for us. When you do what is right, even in difficult circumstances you are expressing your love for God.

Secondly, when an opportunity comes to do good and you know this is what you must do, pray about the opportunity that is before you. Pray that God will give you the strength and courage to do what you now is right. So often our failures are not that we do not know, but it is because we lack the conviction and courage to do what we know. Pray that God will help. Paul asked the church in Ephesus to pray for him. He said, *“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints -- and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”* (Eph. 6:18-20)

Thirdly, seize the opportunity that God provides. God opens doors of opportunities to do good. Paul said in Col. 4:3, *“meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ…”* If we are praying for opportunities to do good, we need to be ready for them when they come. Seize them. Ephesians 5:16 says, “redeeming the time.” Redeeming the time means to buy up the opportunities. Take advantage of every opportunity to do what is right. Look for the opportunities to do good and seize them.

Fourthly, prepare yourself for conflict. When you make the decision to do what is right, Satan will oppose you. 1 Peter 5:8 says, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* Satan has his ministers in the world, doing his work. Paul says in 2 Cor. 11:13-15, *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”* Satan’s ministers will oppose you when you do what is right. Don’t let it discourage you, but expect it and be prepared for it. Actions that are based on convictions of what is right must become increasingly independent of the reactions of others.

Dear listener, are you willing and ready to do what you know is right? To those of you who are not Christians, it may not be so much a matter that you do not understand what you need to do, but it just may be you have NOT DONE what you understand. To those of us who are Christians who need to make a decision about the sin that is in our lives. We have played with it, toyed with it, and have lost our relationship with God. We know we are not right with God. I’m asking you, are you willing and ready to do what you know is right?

Our time is gone for today. We thank you for listening.

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