

Sermon Summary – March 1, 2015, Pastor Alan Smith

“Human Point of View”

There are many times we question the things that happen in this world. Why is there so much suffering? Why do the immoral seem to succeed? Why does God allow the terrorists to exist? Why do the innocent have to die? Why is there hunger, disease, cancer, etc.? We tend to look at the world from a human point of view and not God's point of view. In our scripture this week we see Peter reprimanding Jesus because of the prediction of Jesus' death. Peter was looking at Jesus from that human point of view, not from God's point of view. In **Mark 8: 31 Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. 32 As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.** In early verses we see Peter declaring Jesus as the Messiah, but he didn't fully understand what Jesus had to do.

The world doesn't understand the things of God and sometimes we don't fully understand the things we are called to do. The world tells us that we are to gather as many riches as we can. If it feels good, do it. The world doesn't understand the fact that we must deny ourselves to follow Jesus. There is wisdom in self-denial in **Proverbs 25:16 (NLT) — 16 Do you like honey? Don't eat too much, or it will make you sick!** Yes aren't we all guilty of eating a little too much and then later feeling uncomfortable?

There are many in the Bible that practiced self-denial. Daniel in **Daniel 1:8** and John the Baptist in **Luke 7:33** to mention a few. Self-denial is a requirement to follow Jesus **Mark 8: 34 Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me.**

Philippians 3:7 (NLT) — 7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.

Romans 12:1 (NLT) — 1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

Acts 20:24 (NLT) — 24 But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus — the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.

The reason why we need to deny ourselves is we can't serve ourselves and God at the same time. If God has called us to go somewhere to serve Him and we didn't like that idea, do you think we would go against our own desires if we are not denying ourselves? Another question is how can we serve others and ourselves? **Philippians 2:4 (NLT) — 4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.**

Esther 4:16 (NLT) — 16 “Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.”

Esther was going to speak to the King uninvited and the King could have killed her but she was willing to lay her life down to save her people.

I watched a video where a teenager was acting like he was homeless on the streets of New York City and for two hours people walked by and only glanced at him. It was five degrees and he had no coat or shoes. Then a man came up to him and hugged him. He gave him the coat off his back, his gloves and money for food. What was truly touching was that this man was homeless too. He gave when he had nothing to give. The people filming this went to the homeless man and gave him back his coat and five hundred dollars. The homeless man was willing to deny his own comfort for a stranger.

We must choose to deny ourselves. Jesus denied Himself for us. He laid down His life for us. Are we willing to choose to deny ourselves? Joshua put it this way to the Israelites; **Joshua 24:15 (NLT) 15 But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”**

Are we ready to make that choice? Stand with Joshua and say this day I choose to serve God!