

## Live Deeply-What do you want?

I John 2:12-17

October 8, 2017

What do you want?

What do you want out of life?

I came across an article titled, *"The most important question of your life,"* written by Mark Manson. Naturally it caught my attention so I took the bait and read it. After reading the article on line I discovered it was a part of his bestselling book, whose title is not appropriate for me to mention, for fear of the wrath of my sermon vocabulary monitors. :)

The most important question of your life is...

"What do you want?"

"What do you want out of life?"

Let me share some thoughts from the article:

*"Everybody wants what feels good. Everyone wants to live a carefree, happy and easy life...to fall in love and have an amazing relationship...look perfect...make money...be popular and well-respected and admired..."*

*Everyone would like that --- it's easy to like that.*

*A more interesting question, a question that perhaps you've never considered before, is what pain do you want in your life? What are you willing to struggle for in your life? Because that seems to be a greater determinant of how our lives turn out!"*

I was so challenged by this article.

What do I want in life?

What struggles am I willing to go through to get what I want in life?

What risks am I willing to take to get what I want in life?

Do you want money? Are you willing to sacrifice enough long hours of hard work and live in your budget?

Do you want a loving relationship? Are you willing to give enough unconditional love to others?

Do you want a great, magazine cover, body? Are you willing to put in enough gym time and proper nutrition diet to achieve it?

Do you want friends? Are you willing to reach out enough to others?

Most of us want the reward of money, relationship and physique without the struggles and risks.

We come to the third part of our message series on "live deeply." In our bible reading we find the most important question being asked of us:

"What do you want?"

We live in a world of wanting...wanting...wanting!

In our bible reading we find that there are only two possible answers to the question: "What do you want?"

Do you want the world's way...what the world wants you to want?  
Or...

Do you want God's way...what God wants you to want?

How do we know the real answer for this most important question?

Let me throw out to you three questions for you to answer in the private honesty of your own heart:

1. What are the things in life you are most passionate about? What are the things in life that get your attention the most...that you think a lot about? What is there in life that when you talk to others about gets your heart pumping with enthusiasm and joy?
2. If your life had absolutely no limits, what would you choose to have and what would you choose to do? If money and time were no issue what would you want to do with your money and time?

3. Who in life do you admire the most?

What do you want in your life?

Jesus talked about what people wanted in life.

He reminded them of the choice of either wanting the world's ways or God's.

He told them there is not enough room in one's heart for both of them.

***"You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and money both."*** Matthew 6:24 Message bible

Jesus contrasted wanting God's way or the world's way...God's values vs. world's values.

He explained that our choice should be that of wanting what lasts forever. He warned that we should not want the wants of the world for fear the possessions will possess us...the pleasures will addict us.

It is here that we need to be reminded about the reminders given to us in our bible reading. John, the disciple, reminded the people that they are a forgiven people. That they are a people in whom the word of God, his promises, abide in their hearts and that they are part of the winning team! vss. 12-14.

Then he went on to remind us to recognize the rival. vss. 15-17. One of my favorite weeks is "Rivalry week" in college football and basketball. There seems to be a greater energy and passion from both teams when they are facing their rivalry. They try their best to beat their rivalry. Their season may have tanked but if they can beat their rivalry that brings some hope.

I'm not sure of all the teams we have left to play but as a Gator fan I do know who we face the Saturday after Thanksgiving...and I'm sure there are some Noles fans who are just as excited as we are for that rivalry game!

Our rivalry in life is Satan. He has been the rival to God's ways from the very beginning. This rivalry takes place on the playing field of our hearts. There are basically three attitudes or wants involved in wanting the world's ways vs. wanting God's way:

**CRAVINGS:** the preoccupation with satisfying the physical desires and addictions in life.

**LUST OF THE EYES:** See it got to have it. Bowing down to the god of materialism.

**BOASTING:** look at me and what I have and who I am...one's status of importance...even if it is only self-proclaimed and not recognized by others!

It is interesting to see how Satan used these three areas to tempt Adam and Eve to want them above wanting God. Do you want to be like God? Eat the fruit! (Genesis 3:1-13)

Satan continued this temptation of wants with Jesus when He was tempted in the wilderness. However, Jesus resisted the attacks with God's playbook...God's promises from his word. (Matthew 4:1-11)

Satan is still using his same playbook with us to choose the world's wants.

What do you want?

Do you want God or do you only want what God can give you?

I want to lift up some of the truths God's word gives to us who say we want God's wants in our lives.

Are you willing to suffer for God's way in your life?

Jesus told his disciples, including us today, **"you will have suffering in this world."** John 16:33

He told them he was sending them out into the world like **"sheep among wolves."** Luke 10:3

If we want to walk in God's ways we have to **"deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow him..."** Luke 9:23

John the Baptist told the people when he saw Jesus, **"My joy is complete...He must become greater; I must become less."** John 3:29-30

Jesus asked the question: **"What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and lose their soul?"** Mark 8:36

Many people spend a lot of their time, money and energy seeking their wants of the world. The wants of the world are centered on possessions, position or power which are ultimately worthless. They may provide pleasure here and now but they will not last... they are temporary. You can work hard at getting the wants of the world, and you may have some pleasure, but sooner or later you will discover they are hollow and empty...of no real lasting substance.

The opposite is true of wanting God's ways in your life. He promises that life in Jesus will bring eternal and lasting joy and peace.

Jesus asked this most important question in a time of agonizing prayer. He asked the question not of his disciples but of God.

**"Father, remove this cup from me.**

**But please, not what I want...What do you want?"**

Luke 22:42

The scene was one of temptation and struggle in the garden that evening he was to be arrested and the next day crucified.

Jesus asked the most important question: **"Heavenly Father, what do you want?"**

Are we willing to prayerfully and honestly ask our Heavenly Father that most important question? "God what do you want?" If we do ask that question are we willing to hear what he says to us?

Jesus warned the disciples earlier that evening to **"get ready for trouble..Look to what you'll need; there are difficult times ahead."**

Luke 22:36 Message bible

Do you want Jesus?

Do you want to live deeply for Jesus?

Do you want what God wants?

Jesus told us that if you do this is not a guarantee of no struggles or suffering in life.

In fact he said, **"I've told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world."**

John 16:33 Message bible

A week ago we witnessed yet another tragedy of evil. There is no rhyme or reason for such suffering and death that occurred in Las Vegas. We have heard the story line over and over and still no reason for such evil. We have heard the stories of sacrifice as loved ones shielded their loved one with their own body. We heard the life stories of the lives that unjustly died. We have heard the question, "Why?" asked over and over.

As followers of the wants of God we find ourselves in the painful yet hopeful silence of suffering. In that suffering silence we hear the whisper in our hearts that Jesus, the scarred Savior, is with us...he grieves with us. He whispers to us of a love that has conquered evil, sin and death.

One who was unjustly killed understands the struggles and grief. He calls us to persevere through this dark time to a rising hope of His resurrection presence and love. Fragile unity is to be found in this time of struggle and sympathy. It is a good thing to take a break from all the divisive hatred in our country and to come as one against evil and recall our common vulnerability and humanity. We need to allow this tragedy to turn our hearts to those we love.

It is an uncomfortable truth that we live in a world of evil... tragedy and suffering.

However, we are also living in the promise of God's truth that there is no evil tragedy that can ever separate us from his love which is ours in Christ Jesus. Listen to these words of a God who wants us to want Him:

***"I'm absolutely convinced that nothing---nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable---absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us."***

(Romans 8:38-39 Message bible)

The most important question in life: What do you want?

What do YOU want in life?

Live deeply! Ask God, "What do you want?"

Live deeply! Live in the want of God for you in your life!

