

Hang on! 5-24-01

What a great year we just had! Think of all that you accomplished by God's grace, all the trials He saw you through, and another year of your education completed. God is good. Can we give him some applause? Are you still Crackpots? For Jesus! (See Gideon and the Crackpots, Youth Sermon)

I know you've heard me say it before, but I gotta remind you again, God hand picked 40 kids out of the Verde Valley to get a Christian High School education! He invested in you – the Bible classes – the chapels – the teachers who really care that you grow up to be the man or woman of God that He is calling you to be. He's called you out to the front and started training you to be one of his leaders for the sake of His glory. That ought to humble you so low you're sniffing carpet dust. I mean it! Think about it. Sovereign God who determines what will be from the beginning, the One who inhabits eternity, who blueprinted you DNA before time and space began has singled you out. I don't think we are capable of really grasping what a privilege that is. That is as high a calling as it gets for a teen in the Verde Valley. I know there are Christian teens in the secular schools, and they have a call too. But you have that extra investment of the Word of God each day.

When I was growing up as a teen in Sedona, I can't think of one other teen that was as serious about God as I was. Now that is not saying an awful lot, in fact it is a sad statement. I was often tempted and often gave in. I still am handicapped by what I allowed my mind to dwell on during those years. Do you hear that? I formed such deep ruts in my thought life, refusing to take every thought captive, that today, a number of times every day, I have to grab my thoughts and toss them to my Savior who is a consuming fire to that wood hay and stubble. Why am I telling you this? God let me go through that to tell you today to take your thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ! Do you believe that? Or do you think I just made this up? The way you answer that will have a lot to do with what I tell you today. You are here today for such a time as this.

God is looking for men and women who will be set apart from the ways of the world, vessels for Him to inhabit and live through, but He won't work through a vessel that is often used for garbage. He is holy. Will you be a habitation of God through the Spirit? That is what He is asking you today. Each of you, personally and individually, will you?

That means this Summer will you be first and foremost His? Heb 10:11-18 (NIV)<sup>11</sup> Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.<sup>12</sup> But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.<sup>13</sup> Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool,<sup>14</sup> because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

<sup>15</sup> The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:<sup>16</sup> "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in

their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."<sup>17</sup> Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."<sup>18</sup> And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

They used to offer sacrifices for sin daily – but Jesus only needed to offer Himself once for you and after He did He sat down at the place of power, the right hand of God. He made you holy before God and He is making you holy in your everyday life. But that means letting his word live in your heart and mind.

That is what He died for – to make a new contract with you. Instead of a bunch of rules to keep He wants your heart and mind to be his – a place for Him to live and work. It is more like a marriage contract than a business contract. He will be in you and live through you if you will let your heart and mind be his.

I have to ask you to take a look at what you've set your heart on this Summer. Is it of God? Is it pure and holy? Will it glorify Him? Or is it something you think you will find satisfaction in – but the Word of God declares to be a lie? Let's get right to business with God. Has the enemy of your soul tricked you? Then give it up right now to the consuming fire of God and ask Him to help you never go back there. Does He deserve any less? Do you want his life freely flowing through you? Then let any lies go! Be a holy vessel for Almighty God.

Heb 10:19-23 (NIV) <sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,<sup>20</sup> by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,<sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God,<sup>22</sup> let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.<sup>23</sup> Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

You can walk right into the Heavenly Holy of Holies and ask for strength this Summer to keep your thought life pure and your desires godly. Draw near to God, don't pull back. Draw closer and know Him in a greater way than you ever have. Draw near with a sincere heart, not a half heart or one that is mixed with desires. And if you do, God will cleanse you from a guilty conscience, and wash your life with His Word. And look at 23 again. Grip with all you got the hope you profess. That means white-knuckle hanging on to the hope of God's rewards for those to whom He says, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord." Unswervingly – not even veering off course for a moment. That means you have to keep your eyes on where you are headed and not get side tracked. He promised to help you, and He is faithful to when you ask. But you have to be willing to ask. So I ask you again – is that your desire? Do you want to be His? Then HOLD ON-keeping your eye on your destination - grip your hope tightly.

What happens when you draw near to God and resist the devil? He flees. He can't stand the presence of God. David told us how he hung on in Psalms 16:8 (NIV)<sup>8</sup> I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be

shaken. David put the Lord was in front of every action he made. Whatever he went to do – he recognized the presence of God. He set the Lord always before Him. ALWAYS If he had done that when he was walking on the wall and saw Bathsheba, think of the heartache he would have been kept from.

I'm challenging you to let God save you from heartache in life by believing his word. By setting Him before you, keeping Him at your right hand, hanging on to your hope with white knuckles – you'll let Him keep you from the evil that would scar your life.

Now I have a word for you who are stronger in the Lord. You have friends here at Cornerstone and your youth group and you know they need to be encouraged to keep going forward and not backward in their walk with God. Look at the next verse. Heb 10:24 (NIV)<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Your friends are going to be tempted to not love their brothers and sisters, to not walk in the good God has planned for their lives. You need to consider how you can spur them on. How can you challenge them to surrender to all God has for them and not listen to they lies of the world? Consider that, and act on it.

Next verse: Heb 10:25 (NIV)<sup>25</sup> Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Don't slack off on youth group because it is Summer. That is the time you need fellowship more than ever. You get together to encourage each other to let God have his way in your life. Heb 10:35-39 (NIV)<sup>35</sup> So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.<sup>36</sup> You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.<sup>37</sup> For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay."<sup>38</sup> But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."<sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

I believe you have a heart to please God. I believe you will not throw away your confidence. Confidence in the Greek implies boldly expressing exactly what you believe without compromise. Don't shrink back this Summer – persevere so you can receive all God has promised you. Put on the altar right now anything that would distract from that. Let God show you by His fire that it was not something that would last or even really satisfy. And take instead a whole heart and mind focus on the One that will satisfy forever and ever. Commit to be surrendered to Him this Summer, by his grace. Will you do that right now? I know you want to hear "Well done good and faithful one, way to let me reign in you through the Summer and through the rest of your life." He is more than worth it – a thousand times over, worth it. Say "Yes" to His love.