Caring About the Things that God Cares About

Read: Matthew 21:28-31a

Text: Matthew 12:50 “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

**Introduction:** This week I was reading about Jonah. I asked myself this question: “What was his problem?” I thought about the older brother of the prodigal son. “What was his problem?” Reading about Baalam caused me to come to the same question: “What was his problem?” The answer to all three is the same. It is a problem that many Christians have as well. Our scripture reading today has the answer in a question: “Whether of them twain did the will of his father?”

**Jonah:** Aren’t you amazed by the response that he has to the revival in Nineveh? He goes to a horrible city which is filled with sin and degra-deation. These people were worshippers of false gods and the hated enemy of the Israelites. Jonah was glad to hear that they were going to be destroyed. God said to go and he ran the other way. All he had to do was to hide out for 40 days and his hated enemy would no longer exist. Within a matter of hours he was in the ride of his life and crying out to God. He was repenting, and promising, and committing. God extracts him from the fish and he runs to preach the promise of destruction. The city responds with excessive repentance. They don sackcloth and even put it on the livestock. Jonah goes outside the city and waits for the judgment of God. He actually gets mad that God gives them the same mercy that he has.

**The Prodigal’s brother:** We read about the return of the prodigal son

and we all are thankful for the Father who has taken us back from our

life of wandering. What about his older, wiser brother? He was really

angry. His comments reveal that he knew more about where and what

his brother had been doing all along. This is what he said: “But as soon

as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots,

thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.” All the while his father had

been pinning for his lost son and the elder brother either knew, or had

a pretty good idea, where he was.

*In both the situation of Jonah and the older brother the real pro-*

*blem was that they knew what the Father cared about and it differed*

*from what they cared about. Both Jonah and the older brother were*

*more concerned about their comfort than what God wanted.*

**Daniel & company:** When Nebuchadnezzar captured Israel and pres-sed Daniel and his three friends into service; they expected them to be grateful for a job in the palace. They expected them to be grateful for a diet fit for the king. They did not think that they would hold on to any allegiance to a God who allowed them to become captives. They did not count on men who cared more about what God thought than their own personal comfort. From the diet controversy, to the fiery furnace, to the lion’s den these men demonstrated that they cared more about what God thought than their own safety.

**Paul:** When Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the Damascus Road he was a self-centered, greedy, hateful man. After He met Jesus; he so changed that even his name had to change. Where he once lived to inflict pain, discomfort and death; he now lived to help, heal, and bring new life. In Acts 26 He says: “…many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them.* And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.” Later he writes to the Corinthians of the things he suffered as a servant of Christ: “…Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered

shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; *In* journeyings

often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own*

countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in

the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; In

weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in

fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are with

out, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”

What happened in this man’s life? He began caring about what God

cared about.

**Conclude:** What is God’s call on your life? It starts with caring about

what God cares about. If you and I can get that in our priority list then

we will be well on our way to hearing: “Well done, thou good and

faithful servant.”