

RIGHT ATTITUDES

I Thess. 5:12-18

Good morning! We again want to welcome you to the West Side church of Christ. If you are visiting with us, we want you to know that you are our honored guest and that you are a great encouragement to us. This morning I want to suggest that it is a good thing for each of us to check our attitude from time to time.

Both the hummingbird and the vulture fly over deserts. All vultures see is rotting meat, because that is what they look for. They thrive on that diet. But hummingbirds ignore the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, they look for the colorful blossoms of desert plants. The vultures live on what was. They live on the past. They fill themselves with what is dead and gone. But hummingbirds live on what is. They seek new life. They fill themselves with freshness and life. Both birds find what it is looking for. We all do.

When we had children at home there were times when we would make some correction and the child would display a bit of attitude that was inappropriate. Joyce or I would simply say to the child, “attitude!” That would generally adjust their attitude quickly as they knew what followed if they did not adjust would be unpleasant for them. As they got older this became a more often used expression – so much so that each of them said they would never say that to a kid of theirs!! Fast forward to each of these children with children of their own. In each case we have heard our child say to their child – “attitude!”

God tells us as Christians that we should have a positive attitude in life. There is nothing for us to fear – He’s got our back and will take care of all our needs if we let Him. The outcome of that knowledge? It should create in each one of us a great attitude about this life.

Think of someone you know who has the Eeyore thing going on in their life. This is the donkey in the Winnie The Pooh series. Eeyore is the Pessimist’s Pessimist. As you think of this person, think of how he/she sees daily life. The ones I know could be given a hundred-dollar bill and complain that it wasn’t 200. Or they might say about the money, “it would have come in handy a week ago”. That’s Eeyore!!

Earl Nightingale wrote of attitude, **“A great attitude does much more than turn on the lights in our worlds; it seems to magically connect us to all sorts of serendipitous opportunities that were somehow absent before the change. Always keep that happy attitude.”**

Folks, the attitude we possess each day is purely a matter of our choice. John Clark said, **“I get out of bed each day happy or exceedingly happy. Or I don’t get out of bed!”**

Medical Science has shown that a positive attitude creates better health. People with a family history of heart disease who also had a positive outlook were 1/3 less likely to have a heart attack or other cardiovascular event than those with a more negative outlook. That's the finding from Johns Hopkins expert Dr. Lisa R. Yanek and her colleagues. The finding held even in people with family history who had the most risk factors for coronary artery disease, and positive people from the general population were 13 percent less likely than their negative counterparts to have a heart attack or coronary event.

Yanek and her team determined “positive” versus “negative” outlook using a survey tool that assesses a person's cheerfulness, energy level, anxiety levels and satisfaction with health and overall life. But you don't need a survey to assess your own positivity, says Yanek. “I think people tend to know how they are.”

Good attitudes, positive attitudes are critical to quality of life. Those traits are also critical to the health of the local church. That is why Paul talks to us about attitudes in our text this morning.

There Are 4 Groups For Whom We Must Have A Good Attitude.

1. Elders

1 Thess 5:12-13 *“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”*

Some things Paul tells us about elders:

- They “have charge over you” – speaks of one who is out front leading; one who rules; an overseer.
- They “diligently labor among you” – speaks of hard, strenuous, continued labor.
- They “give you instruction” – admonish; have a serious, straight forward talk with someone either to advise them or warn them.

The attitude that we are to have toward those who lead:

- a. “Appreciate them”; vs. 13.
- b. “Esteem them” – think highly of them; vs. 13.
- c. “Live in peace with one another”; vs. 13.

2. Those Who Are Struggling.

Vs. 14: And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

“Brethren” – this is something that we all as Christians are to do.

“Admonish the unruly”: ***“Unruly”*** – speaks of one who is “out of step” or “out of line”; the brother in Christ who is not walking as a Christian should. ***“Admonish”*** – warn him; this word has a note of seriousness behind it; it is sitting down and saying, “Jesus is coming again and you need to live in a way to be ready.”

“Encourage the fainthearted”: ***“Fainthearted”*** speaks of one who is timid; ready to give up; the tired; the weary. ***“Encourage”*** – stand by His side; come along beside and take them with you.

“Help the weak”: ***“Weak”*** speaks of those who are not very strong. (Didn’t grow up in a Christian home; Lacking in Bible study; Meeting a lot of resistance; Not sold on the idea; Not mature in knowledge.) We are to “help” them or support them.

“Be patient with all men” – the unruly, the fainthearted, and the weak will try your patience, but we are to keep on admonishing, encouraging, and helping as long as there is still hope.

Why should we do this? **First**, because it is commanded in the passage. **Second**, because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ; love for one another. **Third**, because the Lord is coming again.

This kind of attitude toward our brothers and sisters in Christ will make the church healthier.

3. Those That Injure You.

Verse 15 ***See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.***

Persecution and trials have a way of wearing on our patience. Paul says, “Don’t retaliate; don’t strike back even if a brother wrongs you.” Instead, seek after that which is good for all men.

4. God

Verses 16-18 ***“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”***

- Rejoice in the midst of suffering by recognizing that one day, when the Lord comes back, there will be no more pain.
- Rejoice in the midst of sorrow by recognizing the hope of the resurrection.
- Rejoice in the midst of sin by recognizing the hope of forgiveness.
- There should be no reason for us as Christians, even in the worst of times, to not find joy because of the hope that is our in Christ.

- That joy then finds its expression in talking to God: ***“Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*** We can find something to be thankful for in every circumstance. Every circumstance can help us to grow and be more like Christ and to let His light shine through us.
- ***“This is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*** It is God’s will that you rejoice always, that you pray without ceasing, and that in everything you give thanks. In short, it is God’s will that you have a right attitude.
- In chapter 4:3 Paul says that it is God’s will that you abstain from sexual immorality.
- If you are critical, grumpy, and have a sour attitude all the time you are as much out of the will of God as someone who practices sexual immorality.
- God intends for us as His people to have a proper attitude toward all and in all.

CONCLUSION

The Lord is coming back.

How is your attitude?

Are you ready?