

Reawakening 2020 / 3: Dragging them to heaven / January 19, 2020

Key Texts: Matthew 28.18-20; 2 Peter 2.20-21

Key Words: Drag to heaven, Prone to wander, Drift, Settle. Once saved always saved, Worship, Connect, Grow, Serve

Summary: In this sermon we lay out our strategy for growing Christ-Driven 24-7 Christians. We also discover that how we pursue life with God forms the foundation for how we “drag those we love” towards Jesus.

Bring Aubrey on stage ...

This is my grand-daughter, Aubrey. She is incredibly precious to me ... in fact, she's perfect! I want her to have a great life here on earth, and I want her to spend eternity loving God, and being loved on by God. Isn't that what you want for your kids, and grandkids? Now, I won't be able to choose Jesus for her ... unfortunately. She'll have to make that call herself. But I will be an influence on her ... whether for good or for bad. And my most powerful influence on her will not be in what I say to her, it will be my model. How will she see me do life ... and how she see me finish? You see, how I do life is not just about me ... me and God. It's also about Aubrey, and Kaden, and Jaxon, and Steven, and Morgan ... Andy and Alatheia, Tommy and Monica ... Julie. I cannot imagine an eternity without any one of them. So, I want to be willing do whatever I can to drag them to heaven with me. Wouldn't you?

And it's not just about “heaven.” I genuinely believe that doing life with God, for God, God's way is the very best way to live – right now. And I genuinely believe that doing living a God-honoring life will make Aubrey's life way ... way better! I'll be unpacking the “why” a little later this year. For now, let me leave it like this: I want her to have the best life possible on this world, and I want her to spend a perfect forever with our God. So, I have a job to do. You see, it's not just about me and my God. It's about her too, and all the others I love so deeply.

Give Aubrey back.

You see, becoming a fully devoted Jesus follower isn't just about making my life better and my making it to heaven, it's about dragging as many with me as I can. And that is huge! Some of you guys know exactly what I'm talking about. You have kids, grandkids ... and there is nothing you want more for them than that they do life with God, both now and forever. And if you are a Jesus follower and you don't want that more than anything else for your kids, something in you is broken. And some of you guys are hurting right now, because you have kids, or grandkids who are blowing God off. And you wish – you wish there was something you could do to straighten them out. But ultimately you can't choose Jesus for them. I wish you could, but you can't. But you can influence them by who you are and what you do. There are things you can do to ... to try to drag them to heaven.

And guys ... I wish we felt just as passionately for those who are not our kids, or our grandkids, or our closest friends. I wish we felt just as passionately for each other's kids. You see, our problem with sharing Jesus is really not a problem of training, it's a failure of ... love ... isn't it? Jesus said, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and ... and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. In fact, Jesus says, love each other in the same way I have loved you. That's a whole lot! And if we could just live that out ...

Now here's what makes it scary for me. Sometimes my model is not that good, not that God-honoring. You know that song we sang a few minutes ago? That was me. That describes me: "Let thy goodness (God) like a fetter (like chains) bind my wandering heart to Thee; (because, I'm) Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it (I feel it); (I'm) Prone to leave the God I love; (So) Here's my heart (God), oh, take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts above." I get that song; I feel that song. Do you? I know a lot of Jesus followers feel it. Do you know how I know?

- Because it is stunning how many Jesus followers actually quit. Usually it starts with a drift, but way too often they end up quitting. They may still call themselves Christians, but there is very little evidence that Jesus is still the Lord of their lives. Do you have any idea how many of those we baptize walk away from Jesus? It breaks my heart! Did you know that the majority of our kids walk away from Jesus ... at least for a time? You see, it's not enough just to start well.
- And perhaps ... even worse: it is stunning how many Jesus followers settle. How many of you guys have settled? You are still following Jesus, but, if you were honest, only half-heartedly, begrudgingly, grumpily. And when we settle, we forfeit the strength, and the peace, and the joy our God is trying to give us.

Bottom line, guys: We don't believe in eternal security here at Capital City Christian. We don't buy "once saved, always saved." We don't think it's biblical, and it's certainly not what we've observed. The apostle Peter put it like this. He says, "When people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (they have escaped the corruption of sin, they became Jesus followers) and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before (than before they were Jesus followers). It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life." (2 Peter 2.20-21) Holy cow! That's quite a warning, isn't it? A flat-out serious warning.

Now listen, God's grace is stunning. And God will hang on to you way tighter than I could ever hang on to my grandkids – as hard as that is for me to get. But God won't force himself on us. God values our freedom, even more than he values our obedience, because he wants our love. So, God won't force us to become Jesus followers, and he won't force us to stay Jesus followers. He loves us too much to overpower us ... now.

So, we have a job to do. Jesus says, "I have been given all authority (all authority) in heaven and on earth." Which means, "What I am about to say is not a suggestion." He says, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (That's piece 1; then) Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." (Matthew 28.19-20) So ... that's our mission from God! We put it like this (it's out on the wall in our foyer): "Go and make Christ-Driven 24-7 Jesus followers."

You see, it's not enough just to help people start following Jesus, our job is to help them keep following Jesus, and keep following Jesus, and keep following Jesus. And that's not going to happen by accident. Helping each other persevere, helping each other fully mature as Jesus followers, helping each other discover what life with God is really all about won't happen automatically, accidentally, without a strategy, a plan. So, we have one here at CapCity – a strategy for dragging each other to heaven. It's on the wall out there in our foyer. Here it is: Keep worshiping – make it part of who you are. Seriously connect with other Jesus followers. Keep growing your understanding of God and your intimacy with God. And find a way to serve – to live for something bigger than yourself, something worthy of dying for. Do those things, and you'll do great!

It's really not "our strategy," we think it's in our New Testament, our new covenant with God. It's about keeping on doing the things a Jesus follower does, keeping on doing life with God, for God, God's way. And life here will be better ... way better. And you'll find more and more peace about what happens next, after you die. And you'll be doing the best you can do at dragging those you care about to heaven with you. So ... let's take a little closer look at these four pieces.