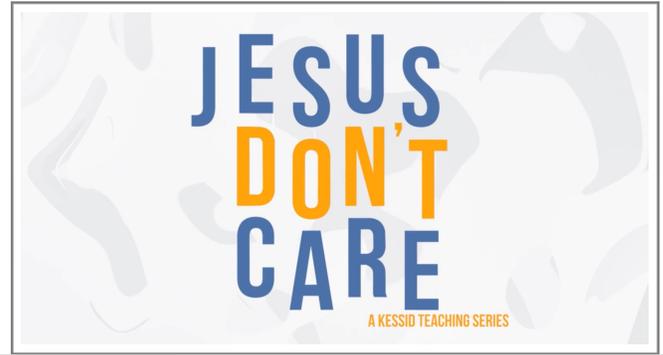


“JESUS DON'T CARE WHAT'S IN THE WAY”

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Speaker: Danny Clinton



Today we're going to talk about Doors...

- The Bible is filled with text and illustrations about doors.
- Jesus famously described His very person as a doorway...

(Vs) John 10:7-10 – So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

- He is teaching a great truth:

“That He (Jesus) is the only mechanism we can pass through to get from a disconnected existence to an intimately connected experience.”

- This is helpful to understand because He later goes on to say that this means He is “The Way.”

(Vs) John 14:6 – Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

- He says that He is The Way for those hoping to escape the great thief of destruction and death...

(Vs) Matt. 11:28-30 – “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”

So, it should be easy then, right? Nah...

- Everyone in this room knows that even with this understanding... believers in Christ will still face obstacles and blocked paths...
- Some of its self-imposed through our own broken choices, and some it is pressed upon us by the broken choices of others around us...
- So, then... Accepting the truth that, in spite of these things, God is still the Door of Hope and The Way of life...

“How should we go about getting from where we are today to where we feel God calling us to be?”

- **In other words:** Even if I spent the next year digging deeper into all the things God does and doesn't care about... How do I actually overcome these obstacles I see all around me?
- My own... Shame, Heart Ache, Apathy, Doubt, Addictions, Laziness, Hatred, Selfishness, Greed and so on...
- How do we reach Jesus with how burdened we all are?
- The Answer is “Doors.”

The Bible is funny sometimes... because the way it's been delivered to us you can clearly see that God knew we would come to the place we are all at today...

- So, He has built into the text clever and refreshing ways of getting our attention and allowing us to see the answers to these important questions...
- And, seeing as Jesus talked so much about doors and doorways, it would make sense that after His time on earth was done, He would continue reminding us of this inside other real time examples.

There are two wonderful Biblical Characters that I believe best illustrate how we are supposed to allow the Doorways of God to bring us through obstacles. One of them is...

- “Peter the Rock” and “Rhoda the Teenager”
- **Peter:** Most of us know about The Disciple Peter... He's mentioned almost 200 times in the New Testament.
- Jesus said to him... (Vs) Matt. 16:18 – “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
- **Rhoda:** Rhoda is only mentioned one time in the Bible, in Acts 12.
- In the days of the early church, both the Jews and the Romans were hostile toward Christians, so they often met secretly in houses for prayer and worship. One such house in Jerusalem belonged to Mary, the mother of Mark.
- Certain tradition states that Mary's was the same house where the disciples celebrated the Last Supper with Christ.
- Rhoda was a servant girl in this house, which was a hub for the growing underground church... and, one of Rhoda's jobs was to watch the Door.

Acts Ch. 12 is where their two stories collide...

(Vs) Acts 12:1-17 – About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. ² He killed James the brother of John with the sword, ³ and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. ⁴ And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. ⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

- **Thought:** One of the most underutilized ways we can overcome the obstacles in and around our lives is with ‘Earnest Prayer.’

"The first reason for prayer is the simple need we all have to know God. There is no way to draw near to the Lord apart from prayer. It is in prayer that we express to the Lord our love for Him, our faith in Him, our worship of Him, and our surrender to Him. If for no other reason, the desire for intimacy with Christ ought to bring us daily to our knees."

- Dave Butts

- This is a critical truth presented throughout scripture.
- If we want to know what God does and doesn't care about, we must be in relationship with Him. But, without a willingness to tell God what's in our hearts through prayer, we are instead choosing to ignore talking with Him at all...
- **Question:** "How can any relationship be fostered when one party refuses to speak with the other?"
- **Side Note:** I know prayer can be scary, especially if you've never tried it. Consider setting a side even 5 min for prayer this week. Start there!

Back to Peter and Rhoda...

(Vs) Acts 12:6-11 – Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. ⁷ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. ⁸ And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." ⁹ And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. ¹¹ When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

- Sometimes God opens doors all on His own.

(Vs) Acts 12:12-14 – When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. ¹³ And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴ Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate."

- Sometimes we need other people's help to open the doors before us.
- You cannot do this without community, no matter how spiritually mature you are!

(Vs) Acts 12:15 – They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" But Peter continued knocking...

- Sometimes we are the ones keeping the doors closed in our lives.
- These people were praying earnestly for an open door, yet they did not believe the answer to their prayers when it came.
- They forgot an important part of prayer, which is looking for an answer.

(Vs) Acts 12:16-17 – "... and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. ¹⁷ But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers."^[a] Then he departed and went to another place.

The last book of the Bible is the book of Revelation.

- It gives one last description of Jesus at a door; except this time, He is standing at the door knocking...

(Vs) Rev. 3:20 – "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him, and he with me."