

Today we are continuing our sermon series called *Questions You May Have Asked*. Today we are going to talk about, what does God expect of me? What does God really want me to be like?

As I begin to think about this question, I find myself thinking about some of the old Flip Wilson routines. Do you remember Flip Wilson? For those of you that don't, he is a comedian who was popular quite a few years ago. Someone once asked him what religion he was. He replied by saying, "Me? Why I'm a Jehovah's Bystander."

"A Jehovah's Bystander?" remarked his friend. "I never heard of a Jehovah's Bystander." Flip looked coy and said, "Well, they asked me to be a Jehovah's Witness, but I didn't want to get involved."

Are you ever afraid of getting too involved? When we wonder, what does God expect of me, some here secretly hope the answer is not much. We have learned how to become good bystanders.

As a culture we have bought into the notion that life is pretty much about us. We should be able to get what we want. We should be able to get it when we want it. We should be able to walk away from it when it no longer meets our needs. We have learned from our culture that we should be concerned with taking care of ourselves.

But our scripture for today offers us a different perspective. It offers us a glimpse of what God wants for us, what God expects of us.

In this scripture, Jesus is approached and asked a question, designed to get him in trouble. "What is the greatest commandment of all?"

His response is, "The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your

mind, with all that makes you, you. And the second commandment is this; you should love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments, hang everything that is in the scriptures.

What Jesus is really saying is that we should love God with everything that makes us up, and we should put our love for God into action by loving others as well as loving ourselves.

Our culture tells us life is all about you. Our faith tells us life is all about God and putting our love for God into action by how we treat other people.

If you are going to take God seriously, what do you need to do let God's love flow through you on the way to someone else? What do you need to do to begin living your faith?

Some of you are here because life hasn't been going well. You have been living for yourself and you have realized that it isn't working out too well. You have bought into what the culture has said that life is about you. And what you are discovering is that life is pretty lonely. In fact, you are here because of a recent challenge in your life and you want to get back on track by beginning a life of faith.

For you, the process is simply about beginning to live for God. Here are a few suggestions I have. First of all, make coming to worship a priority for your life. Determine right now, today, that you will begin coming to worship regularly, so you can be reminded how much God loves you. That is what worship does for us, it reconnects us to God.

Second of all, begin today to make daily prayer and reading of scripture a priority for your life. On our website we have different methods of prayer listed to help people begin the process to praying.

What praying does is that it connects us to God and allows us to grow in our relationship with God.

Some of you here are already doing these things. You might be sitting here and saying, 'Scott, what else is there to do? Is there anything else I can do for God?' My answer is yes. There is more to do for God. My question for you is, are you willing to get involved in some type of mission experience? Are you willing to share your faith with this world? Are you willing to let God's love flow through you to other people?

I came across the story of Joe a long time ago. Joe was a drunk who was miraculously converted at an inner city mission. Prior to his conversion to the faith, he had gained a reputation of being a dirty wino for whom there was no hope, only a miserable existence in the ghetto.

But following his conversion to Christ, everything changed. Joe became the most caring person that anyone associated with the mission had ever known. Joe spent his days and nights hanging out at the mission, doing whatever needed to be done. There was never any task that was too lowly for Joe. There was never anything that he was asked to do that he considered beneath him.

He cleaned up the vomit left by some violently sick alcoholic or scrubbed the toilets after careless men left the men's room filthy, Joe did what was asked with a smile on his face and a seeming gratitude for the chance to help. He could be counted on to feed feeble men, who wandered off the street and into the mission, and to undress and tuck into bed men who were too out of it to take care of themselves.

One evening, when the director of the mission was delivering his evening evangelistic message to the usual crowd of still and sullen men with drooped heads, there was one man who looked up, came down

the aisle to the altar, and knelt to pray, crying out for God to help him to change. The repentant drunk kept shouting, "Oh God, Make me like Joe! Make me like Joe! Make me like Joe! God, Make me like Joe!"

The director of the mission started to feel uncomfortable. Finally he leaned over and said, "Son, I think it would be better if you prayed, 'Make me like, Jesus!'"

This man just looked at the director with a quizzical expression on his face and asked, "Is he like Joe?"

The repentant man understood what he saw. He saw the love of God expressed in Joe. He didn't know Jesus, but he knew Joe.

You and I are called to share the love we have experienced from God, so that others can see God in us. That is what I believe God expects of us.

Sadly, too many of us have settled for being bystanders. God calls us to be active participants. Are you willing to be active?

May God help us live lives of faith.

Amen.