

1st Century Church connecting with a 21st Century World Part 3: Willing

****BUMPER VID Unwilling Lines**

In Matthew 26 Jesus takes 11 of his 12 disciples to a garden called Gethsemane. The 12th disciple, Judas, had gone to betray Jesus. Jesus asked his disciples to watch over Him as He prayed... His disciples fell asleep.

They fell asleep during the most amazing prayer meeting to ever take place. Jesus prayed so hard he sweated blood... he takes the cup of sin in this garden. The entirety of human history hinges upon this moment in the garden.... They were there for it... but they were asleep. #convicting

Matthew 26: 41 (NIV) ...The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

Jesus doesn't speak this in anger. He speaks it as simple fact. He understood that His disciples, although they were following Him, although they were committed... there was a part of them that was not willing... There was a part of each of those 11 disciples that wasn't able to stay awake. There was a part of them not willing to watch over Him as he prayed.

But Jesus... He's always Willing. 2 Peter 3:9 says He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

He tells the disciples... Part of you is willing... but part of you isn't...

BUT aren't you glad that ALL OF JESUS IS WILLING. He was willing in Spirit. He was willing in His body. He wasn't arrested against His will... He willingly surrendered. They didn't beat Him against His will... He willingly received those stripes for your healing. His life wasn't taken from Him...

John 10:18 (NIV) No one takes it from me, but I lay it down...

He is always Willing! Every part of Him is willing.

You ought to view the Bible through the Lens of Willingness. Mankind messed up in the Garden of Eden – But He was willing... Israel was one rebellion after the next... But God was willing. Jesus was sent into the world but we rejected Him... God remains willing.

God is willing today! The question is... are you willing? ARE YOU **<completely willing>**.

...The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

We all know what it feels like to want to do something... Perhaps you have seen someone in great shape and thought... I wish I looked like that. There is a part of you that is willing to look like that... but there is a part of you that perhaps is unwilling... Unwilling to eat healthier... unwilling to go to the gym...

Part of you is willing... but part of you is unwilling...

This will preach to a lot of areas of our life...

We are willing to get out of debt... but are we willing to put away the credit cards?

We are willing to have a better relationship with our family... but are we willing to spend the time?

<Where is your unwilling line?>

The disciples of Jesus were willing... But there was a point where they weren't willing in the garden...

I am talking to people today that are willing to live for God... I don't think you would be here if you weren't... but is there a point where you aren't willing today?

We put unwilling lines at funny places sometime...

Peter was willing to leave behind his profession and follow Jesus. That is gutsy!

He was willing to step off a boat that was being thrown around by a storm and attempt to walk on water when Jesus bid him come. That is pretty willing right?

He took a sword and cut off the ear of a Roman soldier in order to protect Jesus... That's some serious commitment... it was misplaced commitment, but regardless ... who can argue that this guy was willing...

But then there is this funny line drawn... Jesus has been taken by the Roman soldiers and is placed on trial. Peter is trying to figure out what is happening to Jesus but he doesn't want to be recognized... so he's perhaps covering his face a little... hanging out in the dark shadows of the city streets...

Then a young girl... I imagine a 9 year old... looks at Peter and says... Aren't you one of Jesus' followers?

Peter who could face dropping his fishing nets...

Peter who could face the storm...

Peter who could kill a man...

Could not face a 9 year old.

We place just as funny lines!

You are willing to make Jesus the Lord of your Life. Jesus I want you to be Lord of your destiny here on earth and in eternity. This is some serious willingness...

...But you aren't willing to trust Him with your finances?

You are willing to hear the Word of God and declare it to be true... ...but you aren't willing to forgive that 1 person even though God's word has been telling you to forgive.

You are willing to come to church... ...but not willing to serve in the church and not willing to BE the church... not willing to share your faith...

You are willing to believe God can do anything... ...yet there are some things you don't believe God would ever do for a no good sinner like yourself.

What terribly oddly placed lines of willingness.

Aren't you glad Jesus doesn't have oddly placed lines of willingness?

....

So we picked on Peter... We pointed out how he was unwilling... BUT THAT WAS BEFORE Acts 2. That was before he was born again by the power of the Holy Spirit.

When he is faced with the charge of being crazy drunk in acts 2... he is willing to stand up and testify of Jesus.

In acts 4 he is beaten for speaking Christ's name... he receives that punishment willingly

He is imprisoned... God breaks him out... in and out of jail he is willing

Acts 10 God confronts his belief system with a vision of animals that no decent practicing jew would eat.... he is unwilling... god keeps asking... then the knock at the door and there stand gentile men... gentiles where no better than unclean animals in his current paradigm... was Peter going to be willing? Yes!

This peter who at one time was unwilling to stay awake for Jesus... to face a young girl's question... now is willing to go to the ends of the earth for Jesus. He was willing unto death. He died on a cross... he had them turn it upside down...

He let God's Holy Spirit erase his unwilling line.

Not just him but but the other disciples and many who came after.

The Command of Jesus was simple... GO & tell the Gospel.

Matthew 28:19 (NIV) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name...

Mark 16: 15 (NIV) Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

Are you **<Willing to Go>**

The 1st Century Church was SENT... Jesus said in John 20:21 As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.

They went into areas where no one knew Jesus. They went to difficult people. They went wherever God told them to go. In Acts 8 God tells Phillip to go to the middle of the Desert... Didn't tell Phillip why... Just said GO! It was there in the middle of nowhere he found the Ethiopian Eunuch...

These followers of Jesus were WILLING to go... Do we have any followers of Jesus in the house today?

They were willing to leave the comfort of what is known and GO into the unknown for God. They found a Jesus that they were MADLY IN LOVE WITH. They were willing to Go for Him.

- **Are you willing to go?**

Chances are God isn't asking you to go too far... He might be asking you to walk across the room and share the Gospel with a family member, coworker, or classmate.

_____ Church, have we met a Jesus that we are madly in love with? Let's remove lines of unwillingness... Let's be willing to Go!

I HATE LOOKING STUPID... Anyone else feel that way? I can't imagine the Apostle Paul felt great about looking like a fool. He was a VERY smart guy. Highly educated, well read, and nothing short of brilliant...

1st Corinthians 4:10 (NIV) We are fools for Christ...

I want you to think about what that means... The genius, Paul was mocked and called names by people who couldn't read... Think about that...

These followers of Christ were **<Willing to be Fools>**

There is an element of foolishness when following God's command. Are you willing to look foolish? The Bible says God takes the FOOLISH things and shames the wise... SCIENTISTS LOOKING AT ROCKS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE PLANET

The 1st Century Church was willing to be God's foolish thing. They were mocked in Acts 2... Many times they were laughed at... We read terrible stories of martyrs who died in public coliseums. They were killed as entertainment... To the world watching – They were such fools to die for Jesus...

They were willing to die! They were willing to be looked at strangely. They were willing to be criticized and laughed at.

Paul in the Courtroom... He is being held on charges of preaching Jesus... What does he do... he further incriminates himself...

The world is NEVER going to applaud you for following Christ. They will always call you a fool for following Christ. This is 1 thing that hasn't changed from the 1st century to this 21st century. They treated Jesus like this...

- **Are you willing to look foolish?**

Are you willing to take a chance? Are you ready to stop thinking about what others think?

Some of you in this room right now... sitting inside a Christian Church... you haven't made moves toward Christ because you are worried what

others will think and say... Worship, tell your testimony, be baptized, come to this altar...

Break free of that today! Someone needs to remove an unwilling line in this area today.

I've always been amazed by this verse... Acts 2:45 (NIV) Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Let's talk about this...

Who was doing the selling?

- Brand new Christians! They just were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2!
- They weren't all rich? Some of these people lived meager lives. Yet they still found ways to contribute. They didn't let their lack of abundance effect their willingness.

They were <Willing to Help>

Who were they willing to help? Let's look at that verse again...

Acts 2:45 (NIV) Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

In a world that is all about Money...

Jesus was all about people...

The Church was all about Jesus and people...

If someone needed help they were willing to help.

We are thankful for those that are willing to give to Tabernacle of Praise. Your tithes and offerings enable us to help those in need.

Thank you so much for giving your tithe and offering. We couldn't operate at our current level without your willingness to give...

We receive phone calls very often from people needing help. Many of these people we don't even know, we've never met them, we have never seen them... The help they usually need is financial.

What should a 1st Century church do when someone needs help?

Acts 2:45 (NIV) Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

They Gave to ANYONE as they had need...

I have answered phone calls needing assistance. You and I have seen people on street corners in need. It's always so easy to say "Sorry, but we can't help..."

As a followers of Jesus we should never utter the words "SORRY BUT WE CAN'T HELP..."

We will help anyone as they have need. When someone asks us for help here is what we should say... "YES! We want to help you." WE ARE **<WILLING TO HELP>**

It's incredibly difficult to given financial constraints... but let's not use that as an excuse. **Excuses are unwilling lines! We need a willingness that goes beyond difficulty.**

We aren't always able to give to the extent of the need... Sometimes people ask for more money than we have. It might be impossible to give them the amount they asked for... but that doesn't mean we can't give them something.

Don't let what you don't have, keep you from offering what you do have.

You have a lot to offer! A LOT MORE than money!

Peter in Acts 3 was asked for money from a beggar...

Acts 3:6 Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.

Peter didn't have the money... But he didn't let what he didn't have keep him from offering what he did have!!! What Peter had was a lot better than money!

What you have to offer is better than money! What Tabernacle of Praise has to offer is better than money. If you need something today you are in the right place! Our answer is YES WE WILL HELP YOU, but even better than that God's reply is YES! He is your ever present HELP in the time of NEED!

If you need help today we want you in the altar in a few minutes. We want you in the 1st 2 feet.... Get in the prayer zone and you will receive something better than money!

When people need help... our answer is yes.

We don't just give hand outs... We reach our hand out. We don't just throw some money at the need and walk away... We invite those people in need to join this community. That is best for them.

What is so sad isn't the need they are experiencing... it's that they aren't in such an amazing vibrant passionate caring community... A community like that is only found one place! The Church of Jesus Christ!!

We are Willing to Go

We are Willing to be Fools for Christ

We are willing to help!

You ever know you are supposed to do something? I mean, you know that God wants you to do something. You see someone and you know.... I should help them... Maybe you know you should start a business. Maybe you know you should step up and become a volunteer here at Redemption or at the countless opportunities all around us. Maybe you know that you should start tithing... maybe you should be baptized...

Ok... Chris I hear what you are saying... but... I know there is stuff that each of us should do... and we know it... but...

Chris... I need to think this out before I do this...

This drives me crazy!

Did you think it out when you were at the club looking to hook up?

Did you think it out when we you charged up your credit card beyond it's limit on Christmas gifts that no one is using 2 months later?

Did you think it out with all the other terrible mistakes you made...

What you call "thinking it out" could be an excuse... It could be placing an unwilling line in front of you.

AS I CLOSE... I want to talk to you about **<The Next Step>**

● **MUSICIAN**

A guy named Abram met God. God told Abram to leave his current life and follow God... God said I want you to leave your family and go to a land you don't know about that I will show you... I will make the father of many nations...

Abram was in your exact position... He wanted to think this out also... That's human nature

You are thinking there are all these steps I need to make... Some are easy but some are really hard... I don't think I will be able to take these steps... I'm not smart enough... I'm not trained... I'm not good talking to people... I don't have the money or the time to commit...

If Abram had to think out every step of his journey he wouldn't have been able to make the journey. He is called the Father of Faith but at this moment where God is asking him to go he's not thinking out the step where he would beg God not destroy Sodom & GOMORRA, He's not thinking out the struggles of

having a child, he is definitely not thinking out the time he is going to take a knife in his hand and offer his only son as sacrifice... These were steps he would take... but they have nothing to do with his current choice.

God doesn't give you the Faith you need to take the last step... He gives you the faith to take the next step!

You may not have the faith to take the last step right now. But do you have the faith to take the next step.

HEADLIGHTS

Are you standing in front of an unwilling line that is keeping you from taking the next step...? Today as these altars are open... I invite you to reach down and rip up an unwilling line and take that next step...

COMPLETELY WILLING

MADLY IN LOVE