

28. JESUS FREAKS (JOHN 6:15; 22-24) 09/30/12
 FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

IN THE INSIDE COVER OF THE BOOK JESUS FREAK IS WRITTEN, "WHAT WILL PEOPLE THINK WHEN THEY HEAR THAT I'M A JESUS FREAK? WHAT WILL PEOPLE DO WHEN THEY FIND THAT IT'S TRUE? I DON'T REALLY CARE IF THEY LABEL ME A JESUS FREAK CAUSE THERE AIN'T NO DISGUIISING THE TRUTH. THERE AIN'T NO DISGUIS-ING THE TRUTH"

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY STRANGE TRAIL BLAZERS THRU-OUT HISTORY: GALILEO. DAVINCI. SHAKESPEARE. MARTIN LUTHER. MOHANDAS GANDHI. THEY CHALLENGED SOCIETY WITH DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING. THEY WERE THE REBELS & HERETICS OF THEIR DAY. NO ONE HAS CAUSED THE WORLDWIDE STIR THAT JESUS DID 2000 YEARS AGO. JESUS WAS NOT WEAK LIKE MANY OF OUR PORTRAITS PORTRAY. JESUS WAS THE #1 REBEL OF ALL TIMES. HE TOOK THE CONVENTIONS OF RELIGION, TRADITION & LOVE TO TURN THEM UPSIDE DOWN, REALLY RIGHT SIDE UP. HE SPOKE TRUTHS NEVER HEARD BEFORE. HE WALKED IN OUR WORLD AS THE HUMAN VOICE, PRESENCE & POWER OF GOD.

JESUS WAS THE BOLDEST LEADER & THINKER OF OUR WORLD. HE IS THE ONE TRUE REASON I HAVE, YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. IN A WORLD OF FAKE LIVES & FALSE PROMISES JESUS IS TRULY AUTHENTIC & REAL!

THE FIRST JESUS FREAKS (LET'S BE ONE TOO) WERE REPORTED BY JOHN IN THIS PASSAGE. THEY WERE SO TURNED ON TO JESUS THAT THEY WANTED TO MAKE HIM KING - THEY WERE WHOLE-HEARTEDLY COMMITTED (US TOO) TO MAKING JESUS LORD. THEY DID NOT CARE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THOUGHT - THEY WERE BLINDED, LIKE FREAKS, TO SEEK OUT & FIND JESUS. THEY WERE IN A FRENZY BECAUSE OF ALL HIS SPECTACULAR MIRACLES. WHO WOULDN'T BE? JESUS HEALED THEM ON THE SPOT & FILLED THEIR BELLIES WITH FOOD. WE CAN IMAGINE THE POWER FILLING THE AIR.

MOST OF US ARE WAY TOO CONSERVATIVE & RESERVED TO EVER BE A **FREAK** FOR ANYTHING OR ANYONE. WE ARE MORE INCLINED TO NOT MAKE WAVES - TO NOT STAND OUT & BE DIFFER-ENT. WITH JESUS IN OUR LIVES WE ARE ACTIVATED TO

GET EXCITED & ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT JESUS. DO WE DARE? YES, LET US DARE TO BE SOMEWHAT FREAKISH ABOUT JESUS - AT LEAST ENOUGH TO SHOW OTHERS THAT JESUS MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE IN OUR LIVES!

THE FIRST FOLLOWERS GOT SO WORKED UP THEY WERE GOING TO FORCE (**TO FORCE**) JESUS TO BE THEIR EARTHLY KING. THEY WERE JESUS FREAKS FOR SOME **VERY WRONG REASONS**. JESUS COULD SEE THAT IN THEIR HEARTS & MINDS. THE USE OF FORCE & JESUS DO NOT GO TOGETHER. THEY HAD MISCONSTRUED & MISUNDERSTOOD THE POWER OF HIS MIRACLES. THEY WERE STILL LOOKING FOR & EXPECTED A MESSIAH WHO WOULD RESTORE JEWISH POLITICAL & MILITARY MIGHT - DOWN WITH THOSE HATED ROMANS! JESUS WAS NOT / IS NOT INTERESTED IN CHAMPIONING HUMAN POLITICS & WAR GAMES - JESUS WANTS TO BE OUR SAVIOR. HE WILL CHANGE & ALTER HUMAN POLITICS & WAR-LIKE WAYS FROM THE INSIDE OUT! WE CONTINUE TO HAVE SO MUCH TO LEARN IN REGARD TO THESE - IN MANY WAYS WE HAVE MADE VERY LITTLE PROGRESS & ADVANCEMENT - WE CONTINUE IN OUR VIOLENT & WAR-LIKE WAYS - WHEN WILL WE EVER LEARN? THIS IS REALLY VERY FRUSTRATING TO ME - HOW ABOUT YOU - THAT WE THINK WE CAN **FORCE** GOD'S INTERVENTION ON OUR BEHALF THRU VIOLENCE & WAR. MORE BOMBS & ROCKETS - LARGER, MORE POWERFUL ARMIES. PLEASE. JESUS WILL HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT - GOD HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT! JESUS IS NOT THAT KIND OF MESSIAH! JESUS GIVES LIFE - NOT DEATH.

THE CROWDS HAD SEEN & WERE MORE THAN IMPRESSED BY WHAT JESUS COULD DO. JESUS HAD MIRACULOUS **POWER**. WHAT IF THEY COULD HARNESS & USE THAT POWER TO BUILD THEIR KING-DOM VISION? NOTHING, NO ONE COULD EVER STOP THEM - THE WORLD WOULD BE THEIR OYSTER! AS AN ASIDE, THIS WAS A NON-RELIGIOUS AFFIRMATION OF JESUS' POWER & GLORY. WE WOULD EXPECT TRUE BELIEVERS TO ACCLAIM JESUS - HERE WE FIND A MORE SECULAR & WORLDLY AFFIRMATION OF WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE TRUE - JESUS IS GOD'S SON!! JESUS REALLY DID PERFORM THOSE POWERFUL MIRACLES!!! OTHERWISE THERE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SUCH A GROUND SWELL OF JESUS FREAKS TO MAKE HIM A WORLDLY KING!!!

THEY WERE JESUS FREAKS BASED ON WHAT THEY COULD

GET OUT OF JESUS. THEY WERE EAGER TO RALLY AROUND JESUS WHEN HE GAVE THEM WHAT THEY WANTED. TO THEIR WAY OF THINKING, JESUS HAD **BOUGHT** THEIR LOYALTY - A LOYALTY THAT DEPENDED ON FAVORS & SELFISH SATISFACTION. WE MUST SEARCH OUR OWN HEARTS - ARE WE SO DIFFERENT? WHEN WE WANT COMFORT IN SORROW, STRENGTH IN DIFFICULTY, PEACE IN TURMOIL, HELP WHEN LIFE HAS GOTTEN US DOWN, THERE IS NO ONE SO WONDERFUL AS JESUS. IT MAY BE THAT WE TOO LOVE JESUS FOR **WHAT WE CAN GET OUT HIM.** WHEN HE COMES TO US WITH GREAT CHALLENGES & DEMANDS WE TOO MIGHT FAINT WITH LUKEWARM ALLEGIANCE. MIGHT BE INCLINED TO GET RESENTFUL & HOSTILE TO THIS DISTURBING, DEMANDING JESUS OR THE CHURCH/PASTOR WHO REPRESENTS HIM.

ST. JOHN WROTE, "***JESUS WITHDREW AGAIN TO THE HILLS BY HIMSELF.***" JESUS COULD NOT TRUST HIMSELF WITH THE MADNESS & FRENZY STIRRED BY THE MISGUIDED MOB. THEY HAD ALL THE RIGHT JESUS-FREAK FEELINGS OF ENTHUSIASM & EXUBERANCE FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS. JESUS "**WITHDREW - BY HIMSELF.**" WE ARE TO BE CAREFUL & INTENTIONAL TO NOT GET SO OUT FRONT & AHEAD OF JESUS FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS & INTENTIONS SO THAT JESUS WITHDRAWS FROM US. WE CANNOT, MUST NOT MANIPULATE JESUS FOR OUR OWN HUMAN PRIDE & VAIN GLORY. IN THE MIDST OF THE FRAY & FRENZY WE CAN BE SO SELF-BLINDED SO AS TO NOT KNOW THE DIFFERENCE. WE ARE SUCH A RATIONALIZING CREATURE IT IS SCARY & TROUBLING TO ME.

WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH WAS OUTSIDE PICKETING OUR CHURCH LAST SUNDAY WITH THE MOST HATEFUL, JUDGMENTAL, VIOLENT SIGNS IMAGINABLE - I CANNOT EVEN MENTION THE SLOGANS ON THEIR PICKET SIGNS - THEY WERE SO REPULSIVE & DISGUSTING. JESUS FREAKS? PROBABLY BRANDED SO - BUT **NOT.** THERE IS ***NO JESUS, NO JESUS, NO JESUS*** IN WHAT THEY ARE DOING - JESUS HAS SURELY WITHDRAWN FROM THEM. YET THEY HAVE SO RATIONALIZED THEIR POLITICAL HATRED & AGENDA IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY WOULD MOST LIKELY DIE FOR THEIR GODLESS CAUSES.

WE DO SIMILAR POSTURING WHEN WE TAKE OUR GODLESS, JESUS-LESS POSITIONS & RATIONALIZE & CLOAK THEM IN OUR OWN PRIDE, SELFISHNESS & AMBITION. WE CAN BECOME BLINDED TO

OUR OWN SIN & IT WILL KILL US - THERE IS NO LIFE IN US WHEN JESUS WITHDRAWS FROM US.

WHEN OUR DAYS ON THIS PLANET ARE DONE FOR WHAT WILL WE BE REMEMBERED? THAT WE HAD A NICE CAR, TRUCK, MOTOR-CYCLE OR HOME? THAT WE MADE LOTS OF MONEY OR BECAME FAMOUS? SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO STRUGGLE TO KEEP OUR EYES SET ON THE THINGS OF GOD RATHER THAN THE THINGS OF MAN - I KNOW THIS IS A CHALLENGE FOR ME. IT IS GOD'S LOVE, MERCY & GRACE THAT GIVES ME THE STRENGTH, US THE STRENGTH, TO STAND UP FOR JESUS. REAL FAITH IN JESUS SEEMS TO MAKE PEOPLE UNCOMFORTABLE. THAT IS WHAT THE WORLD CALLS A "**FREAK**" - SOMEONE WHO COMMITS TO SOMETHING WHOLEHEART-EDLY WITHOUT APOLOGY OR COMPROMISE. IT IS MY HOPE THAT WE WILL LIVE OUR JOURNEYS OF FAITH, EVEN IN FREAKISH WAYS SO THAT JESUS WILL NOT HAVE CAUSE TO WITHDRAW FROM US - NO, JESUS WILL BE OUR ALL IN ALL.