

November 29, 1998 PM

ARE YOU AVAILABLE?

(Luke 14:25-33)

Introduction

A. In our day of advanced technology, many of us have voice-mail greetings. Most of them sound something like this, “hello, this is the home of John Doe, I am sorry we are not available to answer your call at this time, after the beep, please leave your name and phone number, we will answer your call as soon a possible.” The words, “not available” bring us to our subject for tonight.

B. The writer Frederick Buechner, tells a story about his wife’s great-grandfather, a man named George Shinn. Mr. Shinn was a preacher back in 1880. He was summoned one night to the bedside of an old woman who lived alone. She had little money and a few friends. She was very sick and dying. She told the preacher she wanted another woman to come and stay with her during the few hours she had left to live. So the preacher and the doctor started looking for a woman to spend the last hours with the old lady. It was now late at night. The preacher and the doctor went from door to door knocking and throwing rocks to second floor level houses, asking if a woman could spend some time with an old sick lady. One woman say she could not come because she had children. Another said she simply would not know what to do, or what to be, in a crises like that. Another was suspicious of two men prowling around at that hour of the night and would not talk to them. But finally, as the preacher and doctor went to another door, they knocked at the door and a little woman put her head out of the widow. She asked, “who is there?, and what could you want this time of the night?” The preacher made his plea, the woman had several children, but was touched by the need. She said “I will come, and I will do my best.” The woman did her best, because she was available. The words, I am available are warm and sweet words. They mean I am here for you, I am willing, I am ready to do what I can.

C. Great crowds followed Jesus, but not many was available. Jesus is asking, can I count on you? Will you do your part? Many of them was just curious, some are genuinely interested, but only a few would make themselves available for the Master. Can he count on you tonight, and the rest of your life?

I. Are You Available To Walk In The Steps of The Master?

1. This is the first question we must ask ourselves (Matt.6:33)
2. Christ does not ask us to do anything that we cannot do
3. Are you ready to walk where he walked?
4. Jesus says you must love Him more than your family members, and your own life
5. Jesus' family came to speak to him , but he refused (Matt.12:46-50)
6. He could have at any time, gone back home to Nazareth, but his mission was more important to him.

II. Are You Available To Suffer The Possible Consequences of Discipleship?

1. "And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).
2. We are not a people who love to make sacrifices, however there are some exceptions
3. But most are in love with comfort; cars, trucks, houses, jobs, church buildings.
4. One of the reasons I decided to go to Africa, was because I considered myself to be blessed, and I simply wanted to share with others who had much less

III. Are You Available To Tell The Story of Salvation?

1. Our mission is clear (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16)
 - A) "Go teach all nations and every creature"
 - B) Baptize those that believe
 - C) Teach them to observe all things Jesus commands
2. Why is it that we as Christians, find it so hard to tell others about our savior? Are we afraid to let our light shine? Are we too sophisticated to go and make disciples as we have been commanded? Or is it that we really do not believe that the gospel of Christ can change people? Whatever, the reason, only a few Christians are willing to make themselves available to share the good news of the cross.
3. It is said that a missionary was on a flight from Atlanta to Dallas. Sitting next to him was a young girl with Down's Syndrome. She turned to the missionary, and in all her innocence, asked, "Mister, did you brush your teeth this morning." With hesitation the missionary answered, well, yes, I brushed my teeth this morning. Good, the girl replied, "cause that is what you supposed to do." Her next question was, "Mister, do you smoke? This one was a little easier for the missionary to answer. He said "no." The little girl

answered with approval, "Good, 'cause smoking will make you die." The third question was even easier to answer. The young girl asked, "Mister, do you love Jesus?" The missionary answered with much confidence, "Well, yes, I love Jesus." The little girl said, "Good, 'cause we all supposed to love Jesus.' Just then, another man settled into the seat beside the missionary. He was very busy reading his magazine. The little girl with Down's Syndrome asked the missionary to ask the stranger next to him the same three questions: Did you brush your teeth this morning? Do you smoke? and do you love Jesus? When the missionary uncomfortably asked the last question. The stranger's face showed much sadness. He was at a point in his life when he was searching for the Lord. The missionary was then able to share the word with the stranger sitting next to him.

It is amazing what the Lord can do with anyone who obeys Him, and makes himself available to Him. Are you available tonight?