

This morning we looked at the need to look to self, to ask the question: "Is it me?" Even when others are at fault. Even when we are doing good. The answer is within us to find our area to improve. I have power to influence others but only to control one person: myself.

We begin that journey each week with the Lord's Supper. The text teaches us to examine ourselves.

■ **Remember His Majesty – v23-26**

- This act alone, when done purely can destroy pride and self-exaltation.
- "Is it me?" Yes. I am the reason He had to die. And He died for me. "I'm The One"
- He is perfection and glory and pure love. He's never the problem: always the answer.

■ **Examine Oneself Honestly – v27-30**

- "Is it me?" Yes. Some of my choices and approaches are hurting our relationship.
- My fellowship with Him, humbly at His service, hasn't been living into the week.
- – Notice – some just hadn't even thought of this and were weak, sick, or asleep.

■ **Accept God's Discipline – v31-32**

- "Is it me?" Yes. I am the one who needs to make real changes. I need to be shaped.
- What others do with this event is up to them, but I accept God's hand to change me.
- I will not lose favor from God because I refuse to acknowledge my need to change.

This is all in an effort to Avoid Self-Deception. Self-deception is when I convince myself that I am right. I defend and justify myself, assuming always that change is needed in others. It is dangerous. And once the self-justification machine is in overdrive, seeing you have a problem can be the toughest part.

In total, there are a solid 5 New Testament Passages which point out what self-deception is:

1. I Corinthians 3:18 – Over-Evaluating my own Wisdom

- a. My experience, my ideas, my study... these become law. So much so, that even simple instruction of Scripture can't get through to us.
- b. **2:14** – We convince ourselves we are spiritual, but we are natural and spiritual things don't get correct consideration: Study on Marriage Not Applied!

2. Galatians 6:1-5 – Claiming Strength without Showing Strength

- a. It seems there were brethren who'd made mistakes and needed – training – teaching – attention – mercy. They needed spiritual people to go help them, to take an interest.
- b. "I don't do that. And I harbor some ill will toward them for what they did. But I'm the strong one and strong before God, even though I don't help the weak. Since I didn't do the things they did that displeased God."

3. James 1:22-25 – Equating Knowledge with Action

- a. Maybe I'm not doing all the right things, or making very good progress, but I'm better off than most because "I Know" the truth. I've read it. I go to church and hear it. I look in the mirror and identify the need for a haircut. So I'm okay.
- b. It is self-delusion (deception) to somehow think that knowledge is power without action.

4. James 1:25-26 – Valuing my Thoughts over my Speech

- a. I know I am religious. I know I am righteous. So my speech could be better and gets away from me, but it is not as if that affects my relationship with God.
- b. This person may use their speech or silence to keep other relationships from healing or growing, but that doesn't mean their relationship with God suffers the same damage.

5. I John 1:5-10 – Denying that Sin is my Problem

- a. Well this is the ultimate bell ringer isn't it!? The ultimate "it is not me" – not accepting that sin might be my problem and therefore rarely consider my own contamination.
- b. The history here relates to "gnostics" who believed that knowledge of God was separate from the usage of the body. So fleshly actions weren't sin, since knowledge was supreme. Hmm.. I wonder if people still deceive themselves with that one anymore...?

Is it me? Am I someone who, at times, falls into these traps, and then --- gets my brain to kick in overdrive to justify my position and cast blame and fault on others? Uh. Yes.

But listen, this doesn't mean we are terrible people. It just means we are not mature people. Or at least, you and I have not matured to a level of **self-awareness** that is possible for us and needed.

Do you remember that time a really good guy deceived himself mightily and put himself in a world of pain and disappointment. He was not a heathen. But he was a man who nearly lost it all because of his lack of self-awareness and inability to consider his own mistakes and shortcomings.

Example: Peter during Jesus Betrayal

- **Matthew 26:31-35** – "It is not me!" He assumed his strength and inability to be wrong.
 - o Overestimation of his own Wisdom – "I know!"
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- **Matthew 26:36-44** – The urgency, humility, self-preparation wasn't there.
 - o Hearer only in this case – was told to watch and pray but they slept.
- **Matthew 26:47-52** – (**John 18:11**) – Yep that was Peter. Thinking he knew what to do.
 - o He didn't. John reveals who it was and Jesus questioning/correcting him.
- **Matthew 26:69-74** – Now it is all coming apart. But notice he didn't see or acknowledge his sin the first two times, or even at the moment of the third sin.
 - o And yes, while he'd consider himself a disciple, the tongue has come unbridled!

Luke 22:61-62 – "The Lord turned and looked at Peter." And it hit him, maybe for the first time – "IT IS ME" – Do you think he was thinking "that Judas is a betrayer." Oh no. In that moment Peter is thinking: **"It is me. I am the betrayer of my Lord."** He was. But only because of how he had repeatedly deceived himself.

Well, it is me. I've travelled Peter's road and in many ways still do. But he changed. He grew. He matured. He addressed his weaknesses, he increased his faith, he became much more humble in his older years. He learned to avoid the pitfalls of self-deception – the very thing we must do.

How? I'm just so glad you asked. I'll let him tell you:

II Peter 1:1-11

- He gave himself completely over as a bondservant of the Risen King.
- He became diligent to improve, to increase, to grow.
- He equating a lack of growing and changing with... blindness and self-deception.
- And he lived with confidence that if he could be humble and diligent, he would be saved!

This is the message of the cross. This is the true message of our journey. This is true for us all.