

J.J.

BUCKET LIST FOR CHRISTIANS

John 17:15-24

John 17: 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

INTRODUCTION

SLIDE : 5 Bucket List for Christians

That was the topic that was assigned for me to preach in your Christian Lifestyle Series.

When I was coordinating with Joi, I wrote to her, I don't have a bucket list but more of a "Lord, bakeet?" list (Bakit is why in Filipino).

SLIDE : (Show photo) As most of us know, the term "bucket list" became popular because of this movie with Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman in 2007.

In that movie, both Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman were roommates in a hospital and found out they have only a few months to live and Morgan Freeman made a list that Jack Nicholson saw and asked him what it was.

SLIDE: "Bucket List. We were supposed to make a list of what we want to do in our lives before we "kick the bucket." - Morgan Freeman to Jack Nicholson

"To kick the bucket" is an idiomatic expression which means, "to die". I won't go anymore on where that term "kick the bucket" came from but you already know what I mean.

From then on, after this movie, a lot of people started making their own bucket list. Some of the bucket lists go from "Climb Mt. Everest to writing a book to traveling to an exotic country or eating balut".

SLIDE: (Show photo) For me, I want only 10 things in my bucket – and it's all dark meat at KFC.

The question is, should Christians have a bucket list? There's no problem about that. But let us remember that it shouldn't be the end-all and be-all of our existence.

SLIDE : As Proverbs stated :

Proverbs 16:9 We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps. (NLT)

By God's grace, as you well know, I don't usually teach "topical", meaning from a topic because I don't trust myself. I am not disciplined enough.

My danger of preaching "topical" is I might just get Bible passages to support the topic. The big theological word for that is "eisegesis".

SLIDE: "Eisegesis" - interpretation of Scripture that expresses the interpreter's own ideas, bias, or the like, rather than the meaning of the text.

My son has a term for this when preachers uses Scriptures this way, it becomes a spiritual "Ted Talk". To those who don't know what a "Ted Talk" is, it's a popular youtube video series where speakers are invited so that they can give a 15-20 minute lecture on a topic they are an expert on – e.g. **how to read body language and etc. BY GOD'S GRACE, THIS IS NOT A TED TALK, THIS IS GOD TALK.**

So in preparation for this, I was praying to the Lord, "Lord, what should be the bucket list for Christians."

The answer is, "What is a Christian?" Simply put, a Christian is a follower of Christ. What does it mean to be a Christian? The Word of God says it this way as written by Paul.

SLIDE:

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

This means the Christian's bucket list should be what our Lord Jesus Christ wants for us.

LISTEN CAREFULLY : Once we know our Lord's bucket list for us, we will be able to know what should be our bucket list as Christians.

What does our Lord Jesus Christ want for us CHRISTians? THE ANSWER IS FOUND IN WHAT WE READ EARLIER IN JOHN 17:15-24

Background of John 17

- Theologians call this the Holy of Holies in the New Testament
- It's the longest recorded prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- It showed his relationship with God the Father... his intimacy
- This was prayed **before He suffered and died on the cross... BEFORE HE KICKED THE BUCKET.**

This means this is a very important prayer. In this prayer, He prayed for Himself and for His disciples and for us.

SLIDE :

John 17: 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

In short, this is the Lord's bucket list for us! AGAIN, AS WE STUDY OUR LORD'S BUCKET LIST. WE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE WHAT SHOULD BE IN OUR OWN BUCKET LIST AS A CHRISTIAN.

SLIDE: CHRIST'S BUCKET LIST FOR CHRISTIANS: SAFETY, SANCTITY AND UNITY

I don't have 5 but only 3 according to God's Word but in the end I will show you our Lord's ultimate bucket list for us which should dictate OUR ULTIMATE BUCKET LIST TOO.

I. SAFETY

SLIDE:

15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

I always pray for my family AND my no.1 prayer is that they will be protected.

STORY: I remember this story of a husband who was going away for a convention and said to his wife while he kissed her and their children goodbye, "I prayed that God will keep you safe while I'm away." His wife replied, "Who do you think keeps us safe even when you are here?"

One of the things we pray for those close to us is that they will be safe. It's the same with our Lord, one of the things that He prayed for us is that we will be protected from the evil one.

Illustration : I've heard my father-in-law preach that the devil is not in the night clubs or in the beer house. The devil is lurking around in churches. **We have to remember that the church is by God's plan is the one that He uses to preach the good news of Christ.**

SLIDE: That's why in Romans 10, it says :

Romans 10: 13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

SLIDE: This is the reason why our Lord prayed,

not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one

It's because we have to remember those who are not yet saved, belong to the devil and since God loves them, **He sent His one and only Son in order to redeem us from the enemy.**

SLIDE: Do you think Satan will take that lightly? Of course not! That's why the Bible says :

1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

How can we be kept safe from the enemy?

ILLUSTRATION: I was telling this illustration in DCF a few weeks ago that I was walking very early in the park with a mini-forest. And I saw this hawk and he was looking at this squirrel that was on the ground. I knew that hawk wanted that squirrel. So I stopped and waited on what will happen. True enough, the hawk, swooped down with his claws open to get the squirrel. But the squirrel climbed immediately at the side of the tree. The hawk was unsuccessful and the squirrel went down to the ground again to find food and again the hawk swooped down again to get the squirrel and the squirrel went back to the tree again beside him. This happened several times until the hawk gave up.

It's the same with us Christians, we will only be protected from the evil one, if we walk closely with our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's because our Lord knows that as Christians, we will face tremendous pressure from the world. Yes, the Lord prayed *not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one*

SLIDE: Since, they need to be used by God tell the world about Jesus Christ. But the Lord also knows that while in this world,

John 17: 14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

Remember this, the safety that our Lord Jesus is asking from God is not a life free from suffering. Sometimes, suffering even makes us even closer to God. There will always be trouble in this world. He said that in John 16:33

The thing that our Lord is asking the Father is that we will not STOP walking with our Lord Jesus Christ because the devil has tempted us or discouraged us.

SLIDE: Remember this is what happened to one of the companions of Paul :
2 Timothy 4:10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me

SLIDE: CHRISTIAN BUCKET LIST 1: INTIMACY That's why one of the bucket lists of Christians is that they will always be walking intimately with our Lord Jesus Christ!

How can we be intimate with the Lord?

- By not neglecting our personal prayer time with Him.
- By reading God's Word personally.
- By prioritizing attending Bible Study or hearing God's Word preached every Sunday.

Why do we need to prioritize God's Word?

SLIDE: SHOW PHOTO : One of the reasons I became a Christian is because my first boss in advertising was a Christian. She planted the Word of God in my heart. She gave me a Bible on August 14, 1991 and in the dedication, she wrote : *"Dear Jerry, A verse a day keeps the devil away. Keep this verse close to your heart all the days of your life."* I still have this Bible with me up to now.

SLIDE: Biblical Illustration : Remember when our Lord was tempted by the devil in Matthew 4? What did He use? SCRIPTURE!

He always answered the devil *"It is written"*

Now, in our Lord's next bucket list, we will see why the WORD OF GOD is important.

II. SANCTITY

SLIDE:

17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Etymology : sanctify “hagiazō”; another word for holy. To be separated for a high purpose.

If you were here when I preached about the meaning of “holiness” last February, then you will understand what “sanctify” or “sanctity” means.

Holy in Hebrew is kadosh and in Greek is hagios where we get hagiazō.

Again both means something or someone to be set apart. Theologians call it “apartness” or “otherness” or “distinctiveness”. I called it “separated up.”

It means to be SEPARATED FOR A PURPOSE. Our Lord wants us to be sanctified! TO BE SEPARATED FOR A PURPOSE

SLIDE: For what purpose, you might ask?

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth

And that is to be able to know the Word of God so that we can share the Word of God.

Simple logic : How can we be used by God to share His Word if we are not familiar with His Word?

SLIDE: We know that being sanctified means being used by God since Jesus mentioned it.

18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify (separated myself for God’s purpose) *myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.* (separated for God’s purpose)

That’s why

So as a Christian, our second bucket list is to be USED BY GOD!

SLIDE: BUT HOW CAN WE USED BY GOD?

BUCKET LIST 2 : AVAILABILITY

SLIDE: As the quote says : God isn’t interested in your ability but your availability.

SLIDE: Remember again what we read earlier in Romans 10

Romans 10: 13 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Story : I was sharing this story in our Bible study last Friday night. Lee Strobel was a former atheist who became a Christian. He told this story when he became a Christian that one time he was driving home and felt the conviction from the Holy Spirit to go back to his workplace and share the good news of Jesus Christ to an atheist colleague of his. So he went back and told his atheist colleague why he was there and he shared Jesus Christ to him. But the atheist professor, just laughed at him and never became a Christian so he asked God why. So one time, he was preaching at this church after many years of being a Christian, after the preaching and the man was thanking him. He said that several years ago, he gave himself to Christ because of Lee Strobel. Strobel did not know the man. So he asked him, how did it happen. It was that night when Strobel was sharing the good news to the atheist professor. No one knew that the man was there but while Strobel was sharing the good news, the man was also hearing it. That night he gave himself to Christ and then shared to his family and started going to church to find out more about our Lord Jesus Christ.

SLIDE: This is the reason one of the things we should say to the Lord like what Isaiah said when he saw the Holy, Holy, Holy God and God asked,

Isaiah 6: 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

That's why part of our bucket list is to say to the Lord, "Lord, USE ME."

Illustration: I remember when I was a young Christian, in one of the worship services, I prayed to the Lord, "Use me." Ever since then, I had the most adventurous and fulfilling ride of my life.

Just say that to the Lord, "Lord, one of my bucket lists is to be used mightily by you." Don't worry on the how, let Him dictate how and when. A servant cannot dictate to his Master.

III. UNITY

SLIDE: 20 *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

We need to remember that Unity is connected with Safety and Sanctity.

SLIDE: By God's grace, we just finished last month preaching at DCF on Ephesians 4 verse 2 to 6. It's a three part series. The key verse is this :

Ephesians 4: 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

One of the tools of the enemy is divide and conquer. It's because the devil knows when the church is not as effective when it is not united.

SLIDE: You will see the beginning of this in the beginning prayer of our Lord for us.

John 17: 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

SLIDE: Remember again on the devil's tactics?

1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

How does a lion hunt?

You will see this in National Geographic.

Side Note: The lion or the group of lion – by the way, a group of lions is called a pride. For example, you call a group of sheep, a flock or a group of fish is called a school. So a group of lions is called a pride – very apropos if using it as an amorphism for the devil. It's because the cause of division is because of pride and ego. AND TO KEEP THE UNITY, THE CHURCH NEEDS HUMILITY.

Anyways, let's get back. How does a pride of lion hunt? They will do a fake attack on let's say "a confusion of wildebeest". The reason they do that is because they will see who has the tendency to separate from the confusion. And once they see, that wildebeest who separates, they have their eye on that wildebeest and their next attack is to after that wildebeest.

Remember this, Listen carefully. If you are causing division in the church, you are not being used by God but being used by the devil.

SLIDE: And why is unity important in our sanctification or being used by God?

21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Our Unity is important in our witness to a fallen world!!!

SLIDE: Quote : "Our conduct is an advertisement for or against Jesus Christ. That's why unity in the body of Christ is so important." - Elizabeth George

SLIDE: So how do we keep the unity?

*John 13: 34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 **By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**"*

SLIDE: This brings us to bucket list 3

CHARITY –

In order to keep the unity of the Spirit, we need to show charity or love to one another.

Part of our bucket list, is "Lord, how can I ALWAYS show love today to my brother and sister in church?"

I have more to say about unity but if you want me to preach or share this with you in your Bible study, I can share the notes or the preaching with you.

SLIDE: Now, earlier, I mentioned THE ULTIMATE BUCKET LIST OF THE LORD AND OUR ULTIMATE BUCKET LIST TOO.

A lot of people have a penultimate bucket list. That's the last thing they want to do before they kick the bucket – some is to climb Mt. Everest, others to dive in the Tubbataha Reef, or see the Great Pyramids and etc. **This is the ultimate bucket list for Christians BUT THIS IS AFTER KICKING THE BUCKET NOT BEFORE!!!**

SLIDE: Here it is :

24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

THE ULTIMATE BUCKET LIST : THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Illustration: I think I shared this illustration already with you before. Some of you part of your bucket list that you fulfilled is to go to Banff already and see Lake Louise. Lake Louise is GLORIOUS!!! To see it is majestic and glorious! **Imagine you're there. It's great but it will be more complete if your loved ones are there specially if they haven't seen it yet.** One of the things, you will say to them is this, "I wish you were here to see this with me."

The ultimate bucket list of our Lord for us is to see His glory on His throne one of these days!
This is the reason why we were saved. So that we will be able to spend ETERNITY with Him.

SLIDE: If WE understand and really know who Jesus Christ is HOW BEAUTIFUL AND GLORIOUS AND MAJESTIC HE IS., our ultimate bucket list is to SPEND ETERNITY WITH HIM!!!

SLIDE: That's why Paul said:

Philippians 1:23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Remember this brothers and sisters : Bucket lists are good here on earth but let us not forget that THERE IS SOMETHING AND SOMEONE MORE BEAUTIFUL, GRANDIOSE, GLORIOUS AND MAJESTIC than all the bucket list on earth and THAT IS TO SPEND ETERNITY WITH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The problem with some Christians is their bucket list is based only on the pleasures here on earth. As

SLIDE: C.S. Lewis wrote :

"...infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

In short, ang babaw ng kaligayahan natin.... That's not a virtue! Sometimes, we even take pride in that..."mababaw lang ang kaligayahan ko." That's not a virtue... **GOD WANTS THE BEST FOR US AND WHAT IS THE BEST FOR US... TO SPEND ETERNITY WITH HIM!**

Illustration: When I was a young boy, I was already happy with Lido Beach in Paranaque. I thought that was the best thing ever. I did not want to leave when we're about to go home. Until I grew up and went to Boracay for our honeymoon in 1993 when Boracay was still pristine. If I were to choose between Lido beach and Boracay...I would choose Boracay.

And that's the problem with man, **they think this world is already the best place ever...this is only Lido Beach, compared to what is waiting for us.**

Again, don't get me wrong. There's nothing wrong with making bucket lists here but as I read this quote one time,

SLIDE: Quote: Do not let your happiness depend on something you may lose.

Our happiness should depend in knowing that WE have Jesus and one of these days, we will spend eternity with Him and see His glory forever and ever!

SLIDE: God says in His Word.

Colossians 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

And that my friend is the difference between a Ted Talk and God Talks by God's grace.

S.G.D.