

Nothing John 15:1-5

I. Introduction: I

- I. **2** Ever heard a sermon about “*nothing*”? Well, tonight I’m going to preach about “*nothing*”!
 - A. Be careful when you go home and someone asks you “What was the sermon about?”
 - B. You may be tempted to say “*nothing*,” but the idea of the word “*nothing*” actually makes for “something”: a valuable Bible study.
 - C. In fact, the word “*nothing*” is used 286 times in the NKJV.
2. So tonight I want to talk to us about the word “*nothing*” and the important role it plays in Scripture as it relates to us some very important spiritual truths.

II. Discussion:

I. 3 Nothing Without Christ:

- A. I doubt if there has ever been anyone who lived that did not want to come to the end of their lives and derive a measure of satisfaction that their life had some kind of “meaning.”
- B. We pursue many things as we strive to give meaning to our lives: educational achievements, business success, riches, wine/women/song, etc.
 - (1) The book of Ecclesiastes was written by a man who was searching diligently for things that would give his life “meaning.”
 - (2) He sought meaning from:
 - ☛ The pursuit of pleasure (**Eccl. 2:1-3**),
 - ☛ In building great works (**Eccl. 2:4-6**),
 - ☛ In the acquisition of great wealth (**Eccl. 2:7-11**).
 - ☛ In the acquisition of worldly wisdom (**Eccl. 2:12-17**)
 - (3) After all this searching his conclusion concerning worldly pursuits was: **Eccl. 12:8**: “Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher, ‘All is vanity.’” But he did discover the true purpose of life: **Eccl. 12:13-14**: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”
- C. Man always thinks he is smart enough to make it through life successfully on the basis of his own “intelligence,” but that is just not the case: **Jer. 10:23**: “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”; **Prov. 14:12**: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
 - (1) For example, the article about the Catholic Church and the family in *American Spectator* (i.e., Pope Francis concerning same-sex marriage, “Who am I to judge?”).
 - (2) God’s laws are immutable! Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6; **Eccl. 3:14**: “I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him.”
- D. Without Christ as the center of our life, our life is empty, useless and pointless:
 - **Jn. 15:5**: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”
 - **Acts 17:28**: “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’”

4Acts 4:12: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

****Jn. 6:67-68:** “Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”

2. **5** Nothing Without Love:

A. Unfortunately our society has a completely false view of love: sex is love?!

- (1) Pervasiveness of pornography: “Pornography found online is single-handedly the most dangerous enemy to healthy and vibrant relationships that I have run in to through my 15 years of helping couples.” According to some experts pornography is more addictive than “crack” cocaine (once heard of a preacher who ran up \$85,000 in credit card debt due to his pornography habit!).
- (2) Tragedy of divorce: Over the past ten years the divorce rate has gone down 17% (8.2 to 6.8 per 1,000 population). Not for the reason you might think (i.e., simply through a reduction in divorces.) A recent study says, “By the time they’re 20, 1 in 4 women ages 15 to 44 in the U.S. have lived with a man, and by the time they’re 30, that ratio climbs to 3 in 4, the new study shows. ‘The question becomes not who cohabits, but who doesn’t?’ Smock says.”
- (3) Perversion of homosexuality: According to a recent Gallup poll U.S. adults, on average, estimate that 25% of their fellow Americans are gay or lesbians. In actuality less than 2% are homosexuals. One certainly understands this misconception given the fact that so many in our society are determined that homosexuality will not be just “acceptable,” but will be celebrated by our society. Add to this the same-sex marriage issue and it’s easy to see our society really doesn’t have the first clue of what true love is.

B. ****** The highest form of love actually has nothing to do with sex (**1 Cor. 13:4-7**); **6** if I do not possess that kind of love in my life “*I am nothing*” (**1 Cor. 13:1-3**).

3. **7** Nothing Without Fruit: **Matt. 21:18-19:** “Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. 18 And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, ‘Let no fruit grow on you ever again.’ Immediately the fig tree withered away.”

A. What did the Lord see on the fig tree? He saw nothing but leaves, no fruit. What was His reaction? Disappointment followed by condemnation.

- (1) What does the Lord see when He looks at my life?
- (2) Does He see only leaves or does he see a fruit-bearing Christian?

B. **8** Christians are worthless in the sight of the Lord if we are not bearing fruit (**Matt. 7:19:** “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”; **Rom. 7:4:** “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”).

C. **9** What? How?

- (1) What: **Gal 5:22-25:** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”
- (2) How: **Gal. 2:20:** “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

D. If you were the fig tree and the Lord came by looking for some fruit, what would He find?

4. **10** Man is Nothing:

- A. One of man's most common problems is having an over inflated view of ourselves.
- B. That's why Paul said, *"For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself."* (Gal. 6:3)
- C. **11** Paul recognized that he was nothing without the grace of God (**1 Cor. 15:10-11**: *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. I I Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed."*).
- D. The fact that everything good thing we are, every good thing we have comes from God, therefore, **Rom. 12:3**: *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."*
 - (1) If it weren't for God's grace where would Paul have been?
 - (2) If not for God's grace, where would I be?
 - (3) **12** If not for God's grace, where will you be? **Titus 2:11-14**: *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, I 2 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, I 3 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, I 4 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."*

5. **13** I Know Nothing of Myself:

- A. Most people think that all truth is what they think is truth (me before conversion!); Paul once wrote: **1 Cor. 4:4**: *"For I know nothing by myself..."*
- B. Would to God that every gospel preacher had that disposition! I know nothing of myself! I would that every person on earth had that disposition!
 - (1) Man is incapable of directing his own steps (**Jer. 10:23**: *"O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps."*; **Prov. 14:12**: *"There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death."*).
 - (2) **14, 15, 16, 17** Nature of revelation: **1 Cor. 2:1-11**
- C. Today there's a great demand for gospel preachers to develop this kind of attitude in their preaching (Alan got fired because he "used too many Scriptures")(*"...I know nothing of myself..."*); every time I prepare a lesson I keep that thought in my mind; that keeps me from preaching my own ideas.
- D. **18** All of us need to develop this attitude whether we preach or not; it is an absolute prerequisite needed in order for us to receive God's word and for it to be effective in our life:
NKJ: **Jas. 1:21**: *"...receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."*
NAS: **Jas. 1:21**: *"...in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."*
- E. There is no doubt in my mind that this is the greatest impediment to:
 - (1) The lost accepting the gospel; most people I've tried to teach the truth resist it because they think they know God's will despite the fact they don't possess much, if any, Bible knowledge.
 - (2) Christian growth; Christians who are not growing as they should have many poor attitudes, not the least of which is the opposite attitude expressed in Jas. 1:21.

- F. Let us develop and cultivate the right attitude toward God's word (**Lk. 8:15**: "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."; **Acts 10:33**: "So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.").

6. **19 Possession Are Nothing:**

- A. In 1 Timothy 6:7-8 Paul is teaching a lesson that many more of us than we might think need to learn ("For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.").
- (1) Did you get that?! He said "we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (v. 7).
- (2) There was a time when they buried someone they would bury some items with him (Pharaohs, first emperor of China); I've heard of this practice even in this day and age (man buried on his motorcycle).
- B. To do this is vain! **Job 1:21**: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there."; **Psa. 49:16-17**: "Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; I 7 For when he dies he shall carry nothing away; His glory shall not descend after him.").
- (1) **20** We will be "naked" on judgment day (**Heb. 4:13**: "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.").
- (2) Of course, this isn't talking about be "naked" as in having no clothing; but refers to our spiritual condition:
- Eccl. 12:13-14**: "Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. I 4 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."
- Rom. 2:16**: "in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."
- (3) Can you imagine all of your "secrets" being revealed in the sight of God and every human being that ever lived?!
- (4) Can you imagine how precious your earthly possessions will be to you on judgment day?!

7. **21 Be Anxious For Nothing:**

- A. Have you been doing some worrying lately? The majority of the things we worry about never come to pass! **Phil. 4:6-7**: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
- B. I read one time that someone did a study and found that 90% of the things we worry about never come to pass and there is little if anything we can do about the other 10%.
- C. **22, 23, 24** God makes us many wonderful promises, one of the greatest is found in **Matt. 6:25-34**.
- D. Eliminating worry from our life is difficult; we can only do so by constantly growing in our faith through study, prayer and application.
- (1) What did Paul say was required in order to be "anxious for nothing"? "but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"
- (2) What does this attitude and prayer lead to? "and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
- E. Do I have that peace of mind? I can **IF** I'm willing to put in actions in my life what God says I need to do. Doing that just once or twice won't do! It needs to be our habit!

III. Conclusion: 25

- I. There it is...a sermon about nothing!
 - A. We've looked at "*nothing*" seven times, recall "*nothing*" appears 286 times in the NKJV, so there are 279 more "*nothings*" to examine.
 - B. I hope we can see there is value in "*nothing*."
2. When the Lord looks at you and me does he see more than "leaves"? Does He see "fruit"? One who:
 - ☛ Recognizes he is *nothing* without Christ?
 - ☛ Recognizes he is *nothing* without love?
 - ☛ Recognizes he is *nothing* without bearing fruit?
 - ☛ Recognizes that man is *nothing*?
 - ☛ Recognizes that he knows *nothing* by himself?
 - ☛ Recognizes possessions are *nothing*?
 - ☛ Is anxious for *nothing*, but fully trusts in God's promise to provide all his needs?
3. ** Now, are you going to do *something* or *nothing*?

Adapted from a sermon ("A Sermon About Nothing") by Ryan Thomas.