

Loyalty To God / Church

Text : **II Samuel 15: 13-21 , John 10: 11-18**

- S#1.**
- A. The news is filled with stories of 21 Egyptian Christians who were beheaded. **S#2****
1. Coptic Christians date back to the time of the Apostles.
 - a. They were thought to have originated from the preaching of the author of Mark.
 - b. They were very influential in early years of Christianity ... competed w/ Rome.
 - c. First College to train preachers at Alexandria. (*Didymus, Origen, Jerome taught*)
 - d. The concept of Christian monasteries started there.
 2. The Egyptian Christians are very familiar with persecution :
 - a. First the Jews and then the Romans tried to extinguish them.
 - b. They've been persecuted by the Muslims since the conquest of Egypt in 641 B.C.
 - c. Atrocities have been routinely committed against them.
 3. The 21 who were recently beheaded died with the name of Jesus on their lips.
 - a. If they had simply recanted their faith their lives would have been spared.
 - b. They remained loyal even unto death. (*Church in Smyrna*) **S#3.**

Rev. 2: 10 – ‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (*They will kill many .. stay faithful.*)
- S#4.**
- B. The loyalty of the early Christians was sorely tested. **S#5.****
1. **Heb. 10: 34** – For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. **S#6.**
 2. Not everyone had enough faith to be loyal to Christ or to the Apostle. **S#7.**
II Tim. 4: 16 – At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.
 3. Even some who were close to the Apostle abandoned him. **S#8.**
II Tim. 4: 9-10 Make every effort to come to me soon; **10** for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.
 (*Demas was afraid to die.*)
- S#9.**
- C. Even without persecution, loyalty is a fading quality in American culture. **S#9.****
1. Bumper sticker of “Bikers’ Motto” says it all, “Sworn to Fun, Loyal to none.”
 2. Divorce rate only slowed its climb because people stopped getting married.
 3. Loyalty to store or butcher no longer exists.

I. What does it mean to be loyal ?**S#10.****A. Etymology of the word “Loyal”****S#11.**

1. from Latin *legalem*, from *lex* "law."
2. from Old French *loial*, *leal* "of good quality; faithful; honorable; law-abiding; legitimate, born in wedlock"

B. Loyal**S#12.**

1. having or showing complete and constant support for someone or something
2. Faithful to a person, ideal, custom, cause, or duty
3. characterized by or showing faithfulness to commitments, vows, allegiance, obligations, etc.:

C. Loyalty

1. a strong feeling of support or allegiance. (*notice it is a response from the heart*)
2. faithfulness to commitments or obligations.
3. a feeling of strong support for someone or something

II. O.T. examples of loyalty.**S#13.****A. Ittai the Gittite was loyal to King David****S#14.**

1. **II Sam. 15: 19-21** Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile; *return* to your own place. **20** "You came *only* yesterday, and shall I today make you wander with us, while **#15.** I go where I will? Return and take back your brothers; mercy and be with you." **21** But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be."
2. This is true loyalty because he had nothing to gain and put himself in great peril.

B. The classic example of loyalty was Ruth to her mother-in-law, Naomi.**S#16.**

1. **Ruth 1: 16-17** But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall* be my people, and your God, my **S#17.** God. **17** "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but death* parts you and me." (*Christian's attitude toward God*)
2. Committed to a strange land with no anticipation of a good future. (*better at home*)

C. Daniel was loyal to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.**S#18.**

1. **Daniel 1** ... Daniel would not eat forbidden things.
 - a. Risked his life to refuse the King's food.
 - b. His fellow captives backed him up ... Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.
2. When promoted, Daniel was loyal to those who had been loyal to him.

S#19.

Daniel 2: 48-49 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. **49** And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's court.

D. The three friends of Job were loyal to him even when he was down.**S#20.**

1. Not very good comforters, but they were there for him in his hour of need.
2. Sat with him for many days.

III. N.T. Examples of Loyalty**S#21.****A. The Apostles were loyal to Christ when faced with threats.****S#22.**

1. **Acts 4: 18-20** And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19** But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; **20** for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."
2. They were standing before the same people who brought about the death of Jesus.

B. Aquila and Prisca were loyal to Paul.**S#23.**

1. **Rom. 16: 3-5** Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, **4** who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; **5** also *greet* the church that is in their house
2. Risked their lives for a fellow worker in Christ.

C. Barnabas was loyal to John Mark**S#24.**

1. **Acts 15: 37-40** Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. **38** But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. **39** And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and

Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. ⁴⁰ But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. (*the church endorsed Paul*)

2. Barnabas was willing to be left out of an apostolic mission to be loyal to Mark.

D. Jesus is our ultimate example of loyalty.

S#25.

1. **John 10: 11-15** I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. ¹³ *He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. S#26.
2. We can trust God's promises to be loyal to us. S#27.
 - a. **Matt. 28: 20** – ... I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
 - b. **Heb. 13: 5-6** Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." ⁶ so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" S#28.
3. Jesus suffered and died for others to leave and example for us to follow. S#29.

I Pet. 2: 21 – For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

IV. Challenges to our loyalty today.

S#30.

A. Clearly we have seen that the scriptures set forth loyalty as a required virtue. #31

1. **Deut. 13** set forth God's view of loyalty.
 - a. If someone seduces you to worship other gods, kill him even if it is relative.
 - b. If a city goes off after other gods, utterly destroy it.
2. God condemns friendship with the world as spiritual adultery. S#32.
 - a. **James 4: 4** – You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
 - b. By nature we want to fit in, to be accepted and to be liked. (*Must make choice*)

B. Being isolated in the world makes loyalty difficult.

S#33.

1. It is not unusual for a Christian not to see another Christian all week.

2. While on earth Christians are required to maintain the status of a resident alien. **S#34.**

- a. **Phil 3: 20** – For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;
- b. **I Pet. 2: 11** – Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

3. God's people have always realized they are aliens on the earth. **S#35.**

- a. **Heb. 11: 13** – All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.
- b. Like them we live in anticipation of a promised land to which we are headed.

C. Being closely involved with people of the world is an obstacle to loyalty. **S#36.**

- 1. **II Cor. 6: 12** – You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.
 - a. The word must be accepted and implanted in our heart so it controls our values.
 - b. We must restrain ourselves from evil because we want to do so ... not by force.
- 2. **II Cor. 6: 13** – Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also.
 - a. Children are those who need guidance. (*Don't always want it.*)
 - b. He appeals to them to receive instruction.
- 3. **II Cor. 6: 14** – Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership **S#37.** have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? (*Can't avoid non-Christians .. not form relations*)
 - a. When bound together with unbelievers they have strong influence over one.
 - b. There are many ways to be bound : **Marriage, close friendship, business, etc**
- 4. **II Cor. 6: 15–16** Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer **#38** in common with an unbeliever? **16** Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.
 - a. The Christian is "transformed" and forbidden to conform to the world's values.
 - b. How can people who have opposing values be in a close relationship?
- 5. **II Cor. 6: 17** – Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the **S#39.** Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you.
 - a. Christians can only remain loyal to God if they identify with God's people.
 - b. This is a command ... not a suggestion. (*Amish understand community.*)
 - c. GOD DEMANDS AN EXCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIP.

D. Accepting the value system of the world is an obstacle to loyalty.**S#40.**

1. What is the most important thing in your life ?

S#41.

a. Spouse ? ... family ? ... your job ? ... health ?

b. *If it is anything or anyone on this earth, you have a spiritual problem.*

2. When we want the same things the world wants we have turned from God.

S#42.

I John 2: 15 – Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

3. Jesus requires that HE be the single most important thing in your life.

S#43.

a. **Luke 14: 26-27** If anyone comes to Me, and **does not hate his own** father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.
27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

b. The Christian's love for God and for His Christ must be so strong that by comparison it is as if he hates everyone else.

c. **Luke 9:23** ... If one does not commit to serve God on a **daily** basis, he cannot be ..**CONCLUSION :****A. We must be loyal to God above all ... above everyone, above everything.****S#44.**1. Satan floods our lives with distractions. (*So busy some don't even attend all*)a. People (*Choose to be with other people rather than God's family*)

b. Opportunities

c. Pleasures (*The Lord's day is MY day off*)2. Everyone around us centers their lives on things of this earth. *Hard to be spiritual*

3. Satan makes it very hard for us to stay focused on spiritual things.

a. On serving God's interests (*Attendance is basic but it's more than just attending*)

b. On the journey to our promised land

B. Loyalty is composed of decisions we make every day ... day in and day out.**S#45.**

1. We cannot be loyal to God without being loyal to His church.

2. We cannot be loyal to God without being loyal to His people.

C. God / Jesus was loyal to you though it caused Him to be crucified.**S#46.****INVITATION :**

Will you not devote your life to Him ... live your loyalty.

S#47.

Lesson Text :**II Samuel 15: 13-21**

13 Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." **14** David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee, for *otherwise* none of us will escape from Absalom. Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword." **15** Then the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants *are ready to do* whatever my lord the king chooses." **16** So the king went out and all his household with him. But the king left ten concubines to keep the house. **17** The king went out and all the people with him, and they stopped at the last house. **18** Now all his servants passed on beside him, all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had come with him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile; *return* to your own place. **20** "You came *only* yesterday, and shall I today make you wander with us, while I go where I will? Return and take back your brothers; mercy and truth be with you." **21** But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be." **22** Therefore David said to Ittai, "Go and pass over." So Ittai the Gittite passed over with all his men and all the little ones who were with him. **23** While all the country was weeping with a loud voice, all the people passed over. The king also passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over toward the way of the wilderness.

John 10: 11-18

11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. **12** He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. **13** *He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. **14** I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, **15** even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. **16** I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd. **17** For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. **18** No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."