

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **John 18:33-37**.
- B. Jesus lived on a high plane or level of life. He wants His followers to do the same.
- C. This morning 4 levels that some people live on, and how we can rise above them all.
- D. Jesus lived on a level above all four. Let look into the gospel accounts and see how.

I. LIVING ABOVE THE “DOG-E-DOG” LEVEL.

- A. The “**dog-e-dog**” level--always fighting and using others in “the war of life” (Lk. 22:24; Mk. 10:35-45).
(Lk. 22:24) And there arose also a dispute among them *as to* which one of them was regarded to be greatest.
(Mk 10:42-45) And calling them to Himself, Jesus said[^] to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. **43** “But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; **44** and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. **45** “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
- B. Before there was a church, a building; before a single worship service or preacher hired, the “church” knew how to fight!
- C. Jesus taught us that life is more than position and power it is sacrifice and service.
- D. **There is a level above this!**

II. LIVING ABOVE THE “ALL BUSINESS” LEVEL.

- A. The “**all business**” level--people who follow rules and regulations only (see Jn. 8:1-11).
- B. Those about this woman knew the Law and were “all business” about what needed to be done. They had become prosecuting attorney, judge and jury.
- C. To these people there was no room for forgiveness. To them it was all “cut and dried.”
- D. But Jesus lived above that plane (level). He said something that caused those around this woman to rethink their current condition (Jn. 8:7).
But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him *be the* first to throw a stone at her.”
- F. **There is a level above this!**

III. LIVING ABOVE THE “NO BUSINESS” LEVEL.

- A. The “**no business**” level--individuals who are “happy-go-lucky” never planning or caring about the future (Jn. 6:51-56, 66-68).
(Jn 6:51-56) “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.” **52** The Jews therefore *began* to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?” **53** Jesus therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. **54** “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. **55** “For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. **56** “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.”
(Jn 6:66-68) As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. **67** Jesus said therefore to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” **68** Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.”
- B. As long as the people were **being fed** by Jesus physical food **and entertained** by His miracles they were happy. But when Jesus tried to teach the many of them left.
- C. Some are just not interested in the important matters. Apathy towards the things of God is very dangerous in light of eternity.
- D. **There is a level above this!**

IV. LIVING ABOVE THE “GOOD OR BENEVOLENT” LEVEL.

- A. The “good” level--showing mortality, goodness and benevolence to others (Lk. 10:38-42).
Now as they were traveling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. **39** And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet. **40** But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.” **41** But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; **42** but *only* a few things are necessary, really *only* one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”
- B. Martha was doing a good work in making preparations for the physical needs of Jesus. Doing benevolent good is fine and proper but Jesus lived above this level.
- C. Jesus stated that Mary had chosen the good part. She was more concerned about what Jesus was teaching and who He was than making other arrangements.
- D. Many times we practice a social gospel rather than a soul saving gospel.
- E. **There is a level above this!**

V. LIVING ABOVE THE WORLD.

- A. The four levels that don't work well are:
1. The “dog-e-dog” level--always fighting and using others in “the war of life.”
 2. The “all business” level--people who follow rules and regulations only.
 3. The “no business” level--“happy go lucky” individuals not planning or caring about the future.
 4. The “good” level--showing mortality, goodness and benevolence to others.
- B. Living spiritually means:
1. Making Jesus the Lord of your life (Ac. 15:11; 1Cor. 6:11; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:17; Jude 4).
(Ac 15:11) “But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”
(1Cor 6:11) And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.
(Gal. 2:20) “I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.”
(Col 3:17) And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
(Jude 4) For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.
 2. Learning to forgive and go the second mile (Mt. 5:39-45).
“But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. **40** “And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. **41** “And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. **42** “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. **43** “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, and hate your enemy.’ **44** “But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you **45** in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.”
 3. Do not judge or put a stumbling block in someone's way (Mt. 7:1-5; Lk. 17:1-2).
(Mt. 7:1-5) “Do not judge lest you be judged. **2** “For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. **3** “And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? **4** “Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? **5** “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”
(Lk. 17:1-2) And He said to His disciples, “It is inevitable that stumbling blocks should come, but woe to him through whom they come! **2** “It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.”

4. Being a holy and living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2; Mt. 5:16).
(Rom 12:1-2) I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
(Mt 5:16) “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”
5. Walking in the light as Jesus is in the light (1Jn. 1:6-7).
 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
6. Walking humbly and patiently with God (Jas. 5:7a; Micah 6:8).
(Micah 6:8) He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?
(Jas. 5:7a) Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Jesus lived on a higher plane than “dog-e-dog” or “all business” or “no business” or “good.”
 He lived on a level than spoke of godliness by His spirituality.
- B. Jesus told us to excel in our righteousness (Mt. 5:20).
 “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”
- C. May we resolve this day to live with Jesus on His level (Gal. 2:20).
 “I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.”
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, for erring Xians.