



Pastor Hanke's Blog

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Whom Should I Follow?

I hated history in high school. All I remember was furiously taking notes so I could prepare for the test. Nothing was actually sinking in about the story of my country. Currently, I am watching a series on the “untold history of the United States,” and it is intriguing to hear the story unlike any way I have ever heard it before. Hearing history in the form of a story made the different personalities involved stand out and the lives lost in World War II more real. I still don’t know what is the actual truth; is it the one I was writing down in high school or the one presented in this series?

David Letterman recently put out a new series on Netflix where he is doing some high profile interviews, like former president Obama. Letterman & Obama spent a good chunk of time talking about racism, which was fitting since it aired on MLK day. They also spent a good chunk of time talking about truth, and the confusion we have searching for it. During the interview they mentioned the sacrifice of Martin Luther King Jr., and how when we compare our challenges to the ones King faced, we don’t have it tough at all. Letterman and Obama came to one conclusion; the issue of racism has a lot to do with individuals wanting to have power and control over other individuals.

Even though I hated history and struggled with reading, I would work hard to read Martin Luther King Jr.’s books. I was intrigued by his loving leadership, and of course, his love for the Lord. He inspired me to want to help people and change our world, not just in any way, but by following Jesus. The other day my kids asked how we were going to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday. I asked them what they thought we should do, and they quickly responded that we should bake a cake. Then they continued to shout out facts about how King changed our world. Their words brought me back to the simplicity of history. His story, and our story, has one common bond—the fallibility of people—of all people. This is what makes it so hard to answer the question, “Who should we follow?”

This reality—all people are fallible—is what makes Mark’s version of Jesus’ story so powerful. Last week we left off with Jesus being the *one* person who God could be “well pleased with.” That makes Him, and only Him, the perfect candidate to follow. So what does Jesus do first after His baptism? He is led into the wilderness to unselfishly face temptations—just like we face temptations. After Jesus’ time in the desert, He enters one of the most politically charged places in Galilee, full of leaders trying to convince the people to follow them, and He speaks, “Repent and believe in the Gospel.” Leaving that environment and heading to the most unexpected of places, Jesus finds His first followers, a couple of fisherman, men who would eventually lead the church into the future. There is true simplicity in Jesus’ words: repent, believe the Gospel, and follow Me. We take time to continue with the beginning of Jesus’ story according to Mark, and ask the question, “Whom should I follow?”

God's Peace,

Pastor Will