

# Jeff Cavins: “Walking toward Eternity: Making Choices for Today.”

By Deborah Montez | November 4th, 2015

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On Friday, October 2nd and Saturday, October 3rd, Jeff Cavins was here at St. John Vianney—live and in-person! I say that with such enthusiasm as so many of us as students of the Bible Timeline have watched countless recorded presentations from Jeff Cavins in our classrooms here at St. John Vianney. That’s certainly no complaint because his recorded presentations are always engaging and compelling. However, it was a special treat to get to see and hear him in person after so many hours watching him on TV in our classroom. He certainly did not disappoint! What a blessing for St. John Vianney parishioners to have the opportunity to experience Jeff Cavins’ wit and wisdom up close and personal.

On Friday evening, Jeff Cavins presented “Living the Life that You Don’t Have Time For.” He began the presentation with a reference to Ecclesiastes 3:11 that set the tone for the weekend series—“God created us with eternity in our hearts.” We were created by God, for God. However, our world today is filled with so many distractions that keep us from our desire for God. Jeff Cavins further explained that as human beings, following in the same path as Adam and Eve, we are always searching and grasping for happiness. We seek instant gratification in the myriad pleasures of this world such as status, wealth, the latest technology and gadgets, and other “toys” and “shiny” things when the only thing that can satisfy the longing in our hearts is union with God. Those “shiny” things that catch our attention only serve to distract us from God and leave us feeling empty. He warns against settling for the creation rather than the Creator as Eve did. When we pursue the things of this world rather than God, our life becomes infinitely more complex. Jeff Cavins paraphrased from St. Paul, “The enemy has deceived us and has created complexity.” On the other hand, if we are able to live more simply, following Christ devotedly on a daily basis, everything falls into place and we will find true peace and happiness. Jesus is the answer to the complexity of our modern lives.

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Furthermore, Jeff Cavins asked, “Are you truly a follower of Jesus or are you just a fan?” Is our faith just a hobby to us or do we truly have the passion to follow Jesus and become His disciples? Our faith is not about our consumption, but rather our passion, our commitment, and our willingness to sacrifice and take the yoke of Christ upon us. He pointedly asked us, “Who is your Rabbi or your teacher?” Is it Oprah, Dr. Phil, Rush Limbaugh or some other celebrity, pundit, or self-help guru of today or is it Jesus? If it is Jesus, He asks us to take His worldview, not the view of

the world. As we know all too well, though, it is so much easier to follow the popular personalities of the world today rather than Jesus. Jesus’ worldview flies in the face of almost everything that the world teaches us today. It takes courage to be a disciple of Jesus in our world.

Finally, at the end of the evening, Jeff Cavins asked us to reflect upon how much time we spend with God and His word. Would we know if God were calling us? How can we know how to follow Him unless we hear His voice? Yet, how can we recognize and truly know the voice of God unless we spend a lot of time with Him?

These questions led into his next presentation on Saturday morning, “Walking toward Eternity: Making Choices for Today.” In this presentation, Jeff Cavins called us first to appreciate and praise the glory of God—His eternity, His power, His love, His creations, and His call to us. God has written the desire for Him in our very souls. Nothing else will satisfy. We are called to walk with Him. We are on a journey, walking in faith and trust with God just as our ancestors did. Jeff Cavins illustrated this point by drawing our attention to how Hebrew students referred to “walking in the dust of their Rabbi.” When we walk with Jesus as our Rabbi or teacher, we should be following our Rabbi, so closely that at the end of each day, we should be covered in His dust. How beautiful and glorious would that be?

Although the journey and our way home to God can be difficult, Jeff Cavins explained how God makes it easier on us by coming to meet us in His Word (Sacred Scripture), His son, Jesus Christ, and His Church. Jeff reviewed the four pillars of the Church as follows:

1. The Creed—what we believe or according to Jeff, “the story of the Bible in miniature.”
2. Liturgy and Sacraments which empower us, allow us to experience grace, and allow us to encounter Christ.
3. Life in Christ or Christian Morality—this is our script which tells us how we’re supposed to live.
4. Christian Prayer—a personal relationship with God which brings everything together.

In the afternoon, Jeff Cavins focused on a discussion of how we respond to God’s call. Jeff explained, “God has initiated the conversation and waits patiently for our response.” He introduced us all to the ancient practice of Lectio divina or divine reading. “Lectio divina involves a seeing, hearing, and responding with our ‘soul senses’ to the deep invitation to intimacy at the heart of the Word.” In the practice of Lectio divina, God speaks to us in the quiet of our hearts. Lectio divina involves:

1. Reading a short passage or section of scripture.
2. Reflecting or meditating on that scripture passage—filling your mind with God’s Word and savoring what you have read.
3. Prayer and discussion with the Lord—trusting in God, talking with Him, and letting him lead you.
4. Rest—allowing ourselves to relax in the arms of God.
5. Concrete actions or plans to address what you have learned from God in this experience.

Finally, Jeff Cavins urged us all to continue our walk with God through faithfulness and personal

examination. God reveals Himself to us and our response should be faithfulness in word and deed. We are called to be faithful as God is faithful. Our goal is to be faithful sons and daughters in Christ. He emphasized that we are called to be faithful 100% of the time. Furthermore, we are called to be faithful in every area of our lives in both the “big things” and the “small things” of life. To aid us along our journey, Jeff Cavins shared the Ignatian tradition of the Examen Prayer with us. It is a prayer that can be used as dialogue and part of our journey with God. St. Ignatius said that the Examen Prayer was the one prayer that he could not live without, and it is a prayer that is important to Pope Francis today. The Examen prayer should be done at the end of the day and takes approximately 10 minutes. It consists of five steps:

1. Thanksgiving—reviewing God’s blessings and faithfulness with a thankful heart.
2. Simple petition where we ask for help in reviewing and seeing our day.
3. Reviewing the past which can include tasks, events, conversations, thoughts, victories, and failures of the day.
4. Repenting in the present where we ask forgiveness and turn from what has hurt us.
5. Renewal where we look toward the future and make concrete intentions and plans as to how we’ll do better tomorrow.

In his presentation, Jeff Cavins addressed the critical choices that we as Christians face today. As he said, “Life has many choices, eternity has two.” So, who is your Rabbi? Who is walking beside you? Our lives are extremely complicated and fraught with difficulty. We must make time for God in our lives. We need Him—His wisdom, His power, and His companionship—to help us make good choices. Ultimately, only our connection with Him can deliver the longed-for peace and happiness for which our souls hunger.

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eternity has two.”**

**~ Jeff Cavins**