

THE BIG IDEA: We're made right so we can do right.

The Take-Off

If you weren't here last week, then this morning's message could be like eating only one part of a meal: it'll be good, but it's better on a plate full of a complete meal.

Let me explain.

Last week, we saw Jesus send 72 disciples out to preach and heal, and they came back really pumped about what THEY had done. Jesus reminded them that nothing THEY DID FOR HIM was ever going to be more important than what HE HAD DONE FOR THEM.

Next week, Phil's going to be teaching about a time when Jesus corrected Martha about DOING A LOT FOR HIM at the expense of SPENDING TIME WITH HIM.

And **today**, sandwiched in between both of those, is a familiar story to many called The Good Samaritan about some men who didn't do what they should have and another who did what no one thought he ever would have.

Why, then, is this context so important? Because if there's one thing that we mess up, it's the whole idea of work.

We can so quickly become a flurry of activity but for all the wrong reasons!

We become human doings and forget that we're human beings.

We forget that our IDENTITY is more important than our ACTIVITY.

We forget that WHO WE ARE is more important than WHAT WE DO, but just as easily forget that WHAT WE DO is still important.

And so we can find ourselves listening to a story about a man doing a lot of stuff and begin to think that if we just do the right things, then we'll be saved.

But that's not Christianity, and I think that Luke did a really good job of placing these 3 pictures next to each other so that we'd be reminded over and over that everything we do is the direct result of what Jesus did.

My goal - and I think, Luke's goal - is to help you see that in the story about a Samaritan, it all points back to Jesus.

Here are 2 ways this story shows us how.

1. Jesus is the better answer

- a. We've all heard the expression "be careful what you wish for" but this expert in the law learned to be careful what you ASK for!
- b. Don't ask questions if you don't really want the answer
 - "Does my breath stink?"
 - "Does this make my butt look big?"
- c. This man asked Jesus 2 questions, and it appears that he may not have wanted the answers that he got
- d. What we see is that he asked good questions, but he got an answer that he wasn't expecting
- e. His first question was about eternal life, and while it's a good question, it revealed his wrong belief
- f. "What must I DO to inherit eternal life?"
- g. This man is an expert in the Law, and so he most likely has an answer in mind, so Jesus asks him to answer
- h. Love God and love my neighbor
- i. Jesus told him that if he did that, he'd have life
- j. But Jesus knew that the man couldn't do that, not perfectly the way the Law required, and the man's second question reveals the true motive behind the conversation: he wanted to justify himself!
- k. There are many answers to the question about how to be saved:
 - Hinduism - rid yourself of bad karma through your actions
 - Buddhism - follow the Eightfold Path by acting, speaking and living in the right manner w/ the right intentions
 - Islam - salvation comes to those who obey Allah sufficiently that good deeds outweigh the bad
- l. All of those - and every other world religion - assume the same thing that this man did: that there is something that WE can do to be saved.
- m. But **Jesus is the better answer** to the question, and we can only be justified - made right - by what HE DID
- n. Just a few verses that show us that: Romans 2:13; 3:24, 26; 4:2; 5:1, 9
- o. **We're MADE RIGHT so we can DO RIGHT.**
- p. When we get those reversed, we buy the lie this man did: that we can somehow do right in order to be made right.

- q. That's man's answer to man's question.
- r. **Jesus is the better answer.**

2. Jesus is the better neighbor

- a. I love how Jesus answered the man's second question with a story that showed how things change when we allow Jesus to be the answer to the 2 questions
- b. I hope you'll see the genius of Jesus, as the man who tried to test Jesus actually ended up getting tested
- c. He thinks he can love God and love his neighbor, until Jesus changes the definition of "neighbor"
- d. To the Jews, neighbor meant any member of the Hebrew nation (def. not a Samaritan)
- e. To Jesus, neighbor meant anyone no matter what nation or religion with whom we live or meet
- f. The Good Samaritan story that so many have heard in Sunday School was a picture that
- g. The lawyer wanted love people like him, but Jesus shows us that He is the better neighbor
- h. He found us naked, left for dead by sin, and picked us up, anoints us, heals us.
- i. He paid the price for our sins, and all while we were His enemy (Romans 5:8)
- j. **Jesus is the better neighbor.**

The Landing

And all of that brings us to question, "So what?"

What are we supposed to do as a result of Jesus being the better answer and the better neighbor?

The answer is in verse 37 - "GO and DO likewise."

Not in order to be made right, but because Jesus made us right.

Religion says DO RIGHT and you'll eventually BE RIGHT, but Christianity says what our Big Idea says: **we're MADE RIGHT so we can DO RIGHT.**

That makes all the difference, and today, if you're feeling beaten up and left on the side of the road for dead, there's a better answer than trying to work your way to salvation and there's a better neighbor than cold religion that doesn't really help.

His name is Jesus, and when He loves you, heals you and cares for you, you'll find His love compelling you to GO and DO likewise!

Because of the cross, **we're MADE RIGHT so we can DO RIGHT.**

Let's pray.