

## THE BIG IDEA: God's answer is greater than our agenda.

### The Take-Off

If you've been a part of The Gathering for any of our longer book studies, then you've already experienced the way it seems like the portion of the book we're studying seems to match what's happening around us, and today is no different.

When we started True Story almost a year ago, we never would have known that we'd be in **Luke 11:14-28** on the Sunday after potentially the most divisive election in our nation's history - or, at least, recent history.

For me, the way God seems to orchestrate these moments are even more proof that the Bible is living truth and something that can be trusted to guide us.

I don't think I need to go into a lot of stats to tell you what you already know: our country was pretty evenly divided in this election, and in the days since then, it isn't getting any better.

But this isn't a political message; I'm not as concerned with a divided country as much as I am with a divided church. That can't happen, because a divided church will be a defeated church.

In **Luke 11**, Jesus speaks about unity and division, and this morning I simply want to highlight 2 passages and then give you some observations that will hopefully help us move forward in unity.

First passage is in **11:17** / "a house divided against itself will fall"

- disagreement is nothing new or surprising in the church, and unity isn't the absence of it
- in reality, almost every letter written in the NT was written in direct response to disagreement
- it's not surprising that people who can't agree on whether Burger King or McDonald's has the best fries might struggle to agree on weightier spiritual issues, too
- don't let disagreement shake you - it's normal
- there will always be some who like it one way and others who like it the opposite way

But Jesus addresses that in **11:23** / "he who does not gather with me, scatters"

- in other words, people will always have different agendas, but God has an answer that is greater than our agendas: JESUS
- that's the Big Idea: **God's answer is greater than our agendas**
- God's answer for the world and its sin is the cross - the reconciliation of man back to God and each other

I just want to share 5 statements that will always be true when we allow the cross to be greater than our preferences.

## 1. Being righteous is more important than being right

- Proverbs 14:12**
- Sometimes our need to be right can lead us in the wrong way
- So often in our youth, we just want to be right, don't we?
- But Paul told young Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:22** to flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness
- Romans 5:1** / being righteous in Christ leads to peace; needing to be right leads to fights

## 2. Being one is more important than winning

- Unity is so much more important than doing what I want to do
- It's hard to sum the gospel up with INDIVIDUAL wins, because so much of the gospel is about US, not about ME
- It's lived in COMMUNITY, and my individual "wins" aren't as important as the unity of the team
- Paul faced this issue with the church in Rome - people eating and drinking whatever they wanted without thought of how that might effect others
- Individuals were winning, but the church was losing unity, so Paul wrote in **Romans 14:17-18** that God's kingdom is about righteousness and peace and we should seek MUTUAL EDIFICATION
- Being one is more important than winning

## 3. The difference grace makes in us is more important than the differences issues can cause between us

- In **Philippians 3**, Paul talks about what a great Pharisee he was
- In essence, he highlights the differences between who he was and who his readers are

- c. But then he says that none of those differences matter as much as pursuing Jesus - the Jesus who had made such a radical difference in Paul
- d. And then Paul calls the Philippians to the same pursuit, but acknowledges potential disagreement in **3:15** / all who are mature should take such a view, but if we see differently, God will make that clear
- e. Paul is making a much bigger deal about the difference grace makes IN us as opposed to the differences that issues can cause BETWEEN us
- f. It still holds true today.
- g. The greater the differences, the greater the need to hear stories of how God's grace has changed us

#### 4. A family committed to unity is more important than an enemy committed to division

- a. Something powerful happens when a family gets committed to one another
- b. That family gets stronger
- c. We know from **John 10:10** that Satan wants to kill and destroy us
- d. So how do we respond? By loving each other!
- e. **Colossians 3:14** is Paul's conclusion to a whole chapter of one another and relationship insight
- f. He says to put on love, because love binds everything together in unity
- g. Love is the superglue that solidifies the ranks and is stronger than a divisive enemy!

#### 5. The cross is more important than the crossfire

- a. We live in a "shots fired!" generation, don't we?
- b. People love the fight, and our opinions and our sides have basically become an idol
- c. But I need to allow the CROSS to be more important than the CROSSFIRE
- d. I love what Paul writes in **Galatians 2:20** / in essence, the life I live now is hidden in and motivated by the cross
- e. Only a life that sees the cross more than the crossfire will fulfill **Romans 12:10** / Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

#### The Landing

What I'm hoping to make clear is that we can't honor one another if we're driven by our agendas

There's nothing wrong with agendas, but they must be submitted to God's answer at the cross, because **God's answer is better than our agenda.**

Let's pray.