

**THE BIG IDEA:** When the connection glitches, check the switches.

### The Take-Off

Last week, we all agreed that family can be awesome and awkward all at the same time.

Remember this picture?

[AFP - Mom and daughter dressed alike]

For all of it's awkwardness, it also says, "you're in."

We realized that even though God made family easy, our sin made family hard, and the cross was God's answer to that.

It's also our standard for who gets into the family.

Where we exclude, God includes, and our Big Idea was simply that we can't say no to anyone when the cross said yes to everyone!

Family means we're accepted, but that's just the beginning! It also means we're connected.

Being ACCEPTED provides a place, but being CONNECTED provides the power.

### **1. We're connected to power achieving great things in us**

- a. Something happened for the church at Pentecost - the Holy Spirit went from external to internal, and the Bible described Him with a different word that had never been used before in that way - "dunamis"
- b. The Greek word is all through the Gospels, and when you read them and see words like power and mighty works, it's that word. So when Jesus promised His disciples (Acts 1:8) that they would receive power - they knew from following Jesus what a life connected to that kind of power should look like
- c. Acts 1:8 - "dunamis" power - it's the same root for our word "dynamite" - and this power living on the inside of us changes everything:
  - Acts 1:8 - now there's power to witness without fear
  - Romans 1:16 - now there's power to preach without shame
  - 2 Corinthians 4:7 - now there's power to truly change (we couldn't, b/c we're jars of clay)
  - 2 Timothy 1:7 - now there's power to live courageously
- d. The Holy Spirit isn't some lawnmower battery that can barely get a golf cart up a steep hill
- e. The Holy Spirit is like grabbing a 220-volt cable!!!
- f. There will be a change!
- g. If you're following Jesus, you've got that kind of power surging through you
- h. Ephesians 3:20 promises us that this dynamite power is achieving great things in us...
  - Romans 15:13 - filling us with hope
  - 1 Corinthians 2:5 - strengthening our faith
  - 2 Timothy 1:8 - enabling us to withstand persecution

### **2. We're connected to people believing great things with us**

- a. We could stop right now, couldn't we?
- b. At the risk of sounding like a bad infomercial, "But wait! There's more!!"
- c. Not only does God desire to connect us to power achieving great things in us, He also wants to connect us with people believing great things with us
- d. Look at what can happen when we connect with the people of God around us:
  - John 17:23 - our witness about Jesus to the world is validated
  - Ecclesiastes 4:12 - we're made stronger
  - Matthew 18:19 - increased confidence in prayer
- e. Let's put it like this: being connected to the power of God gives us energy, and being connected to the people of God (who are also connected to the power of God) gives us synergy
- f. That's just a fancy word for 1 + 1 equals a lot more than 2"
- g. We can see this in Leviticus 26:8 (maybe this is where the cliché Together Everyone Achieves More came from!)

### **3. Troubleshooting a bad connection**

- a. It's a no brainer that we want that kind of power in our lives, right, and so the obvious question is what do we do if we aren't experiencing it?

- b. Some of us simply aren't plugged in. You've never trusted in the work of Jesus on the cross for our salvation, and so all the promises we just read about the power of God and the people of God don't apply to you.
- c. But they can! Simply choosing to begin a life of following Jesus and trusting what He did gets you plugged in and connected to the power of God.
- d. But some of us ARE plugged in. We work hard, we try to do the right things, and yet there seems to be no power.
- e. We're like Clark Griswald in Christmas Vacation. We've done a ton of work but it didn't seem to work.
- f. If that's you, today's Big Idea is for you: **when the connection glitches, check the switches.**
- g. Here are some switches that we often leave turned off:
  - The Bible
    - John 6:63 says His words are life; this isn't just any book, there is supernatural power in it
    - Joshua 1:8 - meditate on it (chew it and chew it and chew it)
  - Prayer
    - Luke 11:9-13
    - We're just kids talking to our dad, and He actually wants us to ask him for things and trust him
    - Ephesians 6:18 - pray at all kinds of time in all kinds of ways about all kinds of things
  - Worship
    - We're not going in depth on this one, but there are 7 ways that the Bible describes praise (we've only got the one word "praise")
    - 5 of the 7 describe acting clamorously foolish, with hands lifted, playing loud instruments, shouting, and singing passionately.
    - It's possible that football stadiums are closer to biblical worship than sanctuaries, and that's sad.
    - We need to give God the worship He enjoys the most, not the worship we enjoy the most.
  - Fellowship
    - There are 59 "one another" commands in the New Testament
    - Ecclesiastes 4:8 - being alone doesn't end well
    - Community is crucial!!! (Good thing we have Community Groups)

### The Landing

Now that's a lot to think about, but the really important thing to remember is that we don't want to end up like Clark Griswald, checking every one of 25,000 bulbs trying to find the problem when it was a switch being turned off the whole time.

We want to live lives turned on to the power and people of God, and when we sense the connection isn't what it used to be, instead of trying to work harder to be better Christians, it would be smarter to simply check the switch to make sure our lives are in an open, receiving position.

I want to close this morning reading from Galatians 3:1-6 from The Message. Let's meditate on this and then we'll respond.

1You crazy Galatians! Did someone put a hex on you? Have you taken leave of your senses? Something crazy has happened, for it's obvious that you no longer have the crucified Jesus in clear focus in your lives. His sacrifice on the cross was certainly set before you clearly enough.<sup>2-4</sup>Let me put this question to you: How did your new life begin? Was it by working your heads off to please God? Or was it by responding to God's Message to you? Are you going to continue this craziness? For only crazy people would think they could complete by their own efforts what was begun by God. If you weren't smart enough or strong enough to begin it, how do you suppose you could perfect it? Did you go through this whole painful learning process for nothing? It is not yet a total loss, but it certainly will be if you keep this up!<sup>5-6</sup>Answer this question: Does the God who lavishly provides you with his own presence, his Holy Spirit, working things in your lives you could never do for yourselves, does he do these things because of your strenuous moral striving *or* because you trust him to do them in you?

Let's pray.