

Christmas Series Part 2

The Power of Love

Dave Spooner – Mosaic Rockford – Dec. 6th, 2015

Intro:

- Last week we talked about the power of hope in our lives – how it anchors us, renews our strength, provides joy and peace, inspires endurance and limits our grieving
- Hope inspired by the fulfilled promises of God and those we are yet waiting to receive
- This morning we are looking to experience God great love for us and express this great love to others through the lens of an interaction between Jesus and another with a very familiar story from most of us and a powerful challenge to all of us.

Luke 10:25-28 NIV

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

The Great Question

- This man was asking a very important and crucial theological question . . . “what must I do to inherit eternal life”
 - In order to ask this question, this man believed a number of things:
 - There is a God
 - There is eternal life
 - Not everyone will have it
 - What we do makes a difference
 - This man already had a belief system . . . and I really love Jesus approach – He answered His question with another question . . . drawing from the man’s own belief system.
- This man gave the right answer – to love God with *all* our heart and *all* our soul and with *all* our strength and with *all* our mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves”
- Jesus answered with – “you got it! Great answer – now go and do this and you will live.”
- And it is true, you can earn your salvation by being perfect. The problem is, no one is perfect – all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God . . . except one.
- God gave us His laws to show us what perfection does and so that we would know that we all for short of the mark.
- The Law points out our sinfulness. That is all it can do. It cannot produce righteousness only love can do this.
- We do not have the capacity to earn eternal life, eternal life can only be inherited. Eternal life is not obtained but received. Jesus died and we receive the inheritance of eternal life –if we believe in him and walk in his will

The Great Answer

- Being a good Lawyer he wanted to make sure that he clearly understood what Jesus meant by the term “neighbor” because he wanted to be declared “innocent” or “Just”.

Luke 10:29 NIV

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

- Most of us people who believe think this love should only extend to those people who are like us or who we like, or who we understand, or who are close to us.
- Jesus gave him the “great answer” by telling a story that best illustrated what he wanted this person and every person to do.

Luke 10:30-37 NIV

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him. Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

- Jesus started the story with the man’s understanding that if you were “holy” you would stay away from things and people that were “unclean”.
 - The priest crossed over to the other side of the road
 - The temple assistant walked over and looked, but then passed by on the other side
 - If you were holy –that meant you separated yourself from sinners . . . by telling this story Jesus said that the holy don’t run away from sinners – but run toward them. Not to join in with them but to heal and help their woundedness
 - This thinking is why the religious people got on Jesus all the time for going to the “sinners” -
 - Jesus said

Luke 5:31-32

"Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. 32 I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."

The Great Surprise

- The last person in the story was the last person on the list of “holy people” a “despised Samaritan” a trader, a half breed, and “enemy”, a blasphemer, an “infidel”
- And it is this man who ends up being the “holy one” or the one “right with God” the being “possessing eternal life” by being the true neighbor.
- **This “despised” man possessed eternal life because he expressed eternal life in loving God by loving people.**
- You are “holy” because of whose you are, and you will do “holy” things out of that source.
- From this story we can see that:
 - **Love feels something . . .**
 - **Love does something . . .**
 - **Love costs something . . .**
- This half dead man was truly surprised by love and so was the religious man asking the questions

The Great Challenge

- *Remember – you can only give what you have received . . .*
- *Remember - each one of us before we met Christ were the naked, beat up, half dead person lying by the side of the road. Remembering this fact should give us compassion for others*
- *Remember - You may be the only person coming down the road*
- *Remember – love is a powerful force to be reckoned with – love changes lives*
- *Remember – to surprise people with love*
 - Find someone you think least deserves it and love them and do it this week. (feel, do, cost)

Conclusion

- Prayer People
- Pray