

Get In The Game – The Big Dance

HOCL

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Review – We’ve been in a sermon series over the last few times I’ve spoken and the main idea with this series is to for each of us to move from being a spectator to fully participating with what God is doing! Stuart Briscoe, who ministers in Wisconsin, makes a great analogy between serving and sitting in a stadium watching football: During a football game there are twenty-two people on the field in desperate need of rest, and sixty thousand people in the stands in desperate need of exercise! And one of our goals here in the life of this church is to get everyone in the game. We want to move people from being spectators to become sold-out participants who are exercising what God has already enabled each of us to do. Our mission is be Christ’s witnesses in the world around us and the only way we are going to accomplish that mission that Christ has set before us is by participating and getting in the game.

As we continue in our series, I want to talk to you tonight about the “big dance mindset”. If we were talking in football terms and referenced “The big dance”, we would be talking about the game of all games, the ultimate sporting event known as the Superbowl!!!! And for our purposes today as we reference this idea of the “Big Dance”, I want to speak to you about the big dance that Jesus calls each of us to. And that is a life of evangelism. “Well Rob, I don’t have the gift of evangelism, I did that spiritual gifts test once and I don’t have it!” Here’s the thing.....As Christ Followers, we have an obligation to share our faith and to talk about our relationship with Christ with those who have not yet stepped across the line of faith! Jesus instructs us to “go and make disciples!!!! (matthew 28:19)” And he informs us that we “will be His witnesses... (Acts 1:8). There’s no middle ground for us. We are to share our faith!! Last week we wrapped up the message by talking about the reality that if we are to experience victory in our lives, one of those areas will be in the responsibility that we have with sharing Christ with others.

And that’s what I want to talk to you about tonight.

Prayer

III. I heard about a little six-year old boy who restlessly struggled to listen to a rather lengthy sermon. After the service, the little boy asked the question that sooner or later most "church kids" ask. "Dad" he said, "what does the preacher do the rest of the week?" The dad replied, "Son, he’s a very busy man. He takes care of church business, visits the sick, studies the Bible. . . and he has to take time to rest up. You see, preaching in public is not an easy job." The little boy thought about that and said, "Well, listening ain’t so easy either!"

Friends, I’m not really sure how easy this message might be for us to listen to today? And the reason it might not be easy for us is because we’ve allowed our culture to shape our thoughts and curb our actions when it comes to this responsibility as Christ followers to share our faith. Sharing our faith has become this politically incorrect and offensive thing.....even during this presidential campaign, one of the vice presidential nominees said that faith was very important in their life, but they wouldn’t try to convert anyone! I understand the balance that we have to have in work and life but we’ve grown accustomed to not sharing our faith at all because we’ve allowed the society we live in determine what we can and cannot do!!!! That is not at all consistent with what Jesus wants from us!

Big Idea: **We have to live with a Big Dance mindset!**

Turn to Luke 5:1-11 –As you are turning there, I want us to keep in mind that Jesus himself was focused not on what the culture dictated for him to do but he was focused on the Big Dance as he instructed his disciples about their new responsibility to share the good news!!!

Read Luke 5:1-11

As we look into this passage today, can you just *imagine* how pumped up Peter, James, and John were because of this incredible catch of fish? This was the mother load! They'd never *seen* a catch like this!

- Their nets were *bursting* ...
- their boat was *sinking*
- They had to call in *reinforcements!!*
- *It was supernatural event!!*

One of the things I find interesting is that when we look at all the amazing strategies that Christ had at his disposal, why did he choose to supernaturally fill some fishing nets in order to recruit a few disciples?

I'm not sure how many of us, in that same situation would have chosen to do it the same way?

But here's what I think is even *more* interesting about this passage.

- I believe this "odd miracle" sets up one of the most critical aspects of Jesus' teaching: **the idea of *small fish* versus *big fish*.**
- Think about this with me. From the moment he arrived on the scene ... all the way up until today, Jesus has been asking *all sorts* of people ...
not only career fishermen ...

but businessmen and women
and stay-at-home moms or dads
and bus drivers
and presidents
and actors/ singers/writers/
hairstylists
and pro sports players
and professional chefs
and retail managers
and retirees
and grandpa and grandmas
and pilots
and lawyers
and teachers
and preachers
... and all the rest of us—this one question:

Are you going to throw your one and only life into pursuing small fish, or will you risk tossing your nets out there in anticipation of catching the human-sized ones?

We have to have a big dance mindset – focusing on reaching people who are lost and who are one step away from spending eternity in hell!!!!

Christ is calling each of us to be fishers of men.

Let me share with you 3 observations from this passage

Observation 1: The Priority Is People

- Jesus desperately wanted three career fishermen ... as well as people like you and I ... to understand that this life is all about *people*.
- When you and I live with a Big Dance mindset, the priority is *always* people. He wanted them—and us—to prioritize *people* above everything else that wants our attention.
- Our Vision statement for our church is to Love God and Love Others!!!! This means that we are to care more

about other people than about ourselves.

- It means that we will have a “radical inclusiveness” for people, even if they look different, talk different, act different, vote different, and so on and so forth!!
- And so Jesus asks all of us who are here today,
 - Do You want to just catch some fish ... or do you want to become fishers of *men and women*.
 - You can be super successful in business ... or get all over the business of redeeming *lives*.
 - You can be the top student ... or focus your attention on studying *people*.
 - You can shine as a superstar salesman ... or care more about letting your *light* shine in the lives of people all around you!

Jesus in Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light shine before others in such a way that they may see your good works and then glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Let your light shine in such a way ...

“In such a way” means that there must be more than one way, right?

- I think what Jesus is saying is that we get to choose whether or not our “light” is going to impact people!
- Our light will either shine on people and point them toward the Father,
- Or we’ll keep our light to ourselves, and in essence *deny* the people we supposedly care about, a relationship with God.
- “Make sure your light shines in such a way,”
- I think Jesus is saying, “that people can come to know my Father because of how we treat them. Because of how we respond to them. Because of how we embrace them. Because of how we prioritize them!”
- I can almost hear God telling each one of us in this room ...
- “You can catch fish ... spend all your time netting some scaly, underwater creatures and taking them to market for a few dollars. It’s a perfectly acceptable occupation. Or, you can become fishers of men and women ... concerning yourself not with dollars but with destinies!”

Can I ask a question today? Why is Jesus so convinced that living with a big dance mindset *really* is the better option? Let me give you a couple of reasons why...

1. Because this is the way his kingdom gets built.

- Jesus was saying to all of his followers—both then and now, “Please understand how important your priorities are.
- The stakes are *way* too high for you to put anything but *people* in your top spot.
- The way you treat people will serve either as a magnet that draws them to God ... or it will repel them away.
- And whose light was Jesus talking about in the Matthew passage we looked at?
- **“Let YOUR light shine** before others....
- Not “your pastor’s” light.
- Not “your Sunday School Teacher’s light.
- Not “all your Christian friends” lights.
- No, he says, *your* light. IT simply means that each one of us has a role to play as participants, not just spectators!

The second reason why Jesus is so convinced is because

2. This is the way our souls get satisfied. Remember last week when we talked about how sharing our faith with others would help us experience victory? Jesus knew that!

- When you and I start living with a big dance mindset, we will *never* want to go back to simply doing life as normal.
- We won’t get as excited about netting a few small fish like we once did.
- We won’t throw all of our energy toward earning a few more dollars.
- Why? Because these things will no longer scratch the soul-level itch that we feel.

Jesus knew that if you and I would build a *lifestyle* around accepting people, getting to know people, caring for people, serving people, listening to people, embracing people, befriending people, exposing people to spiritual things ... *prioritizing* people, we would never crave our old ways again. Simple as that.

Observation 2: The Focus Is on Potential

It didn't seem to matter to Jesus that his soon-to-be disciples were teenaged boys whose first response to his commands was a little south of obedient. Remember when Jesus asked them to put the nets over the boat to catch some fish?

- "But we've been fishing *all* night! And we've caught ... nothing!"
- I think their insinuation was, "Hey, we've been doing this for a long time, who do you think you are?"
- *We're* the experts here!
- *We* were the ones slugging it out all night at sea, working for all we are worth to net a few fish.
- *We* were the ones slaving away while you were sleeping ...
- And now you want *us* to listen to *you* about catching fish?!"
- By anyone's standards, these guys weren't contending for any Disciple of the Year awards just yet.
- They weren't the most obvious choices for primo-followers of the one and only Messiah.
- **But Jesus saw what these guys could be like** once they chose to live with a big dance mindset!

For us, we have

- To look past the self-centeredness ... and see the potential for servanthood
- To look past the rebelliousness ... and see the potential for righteousness
- To look past the quick temper ... and see the potential for kingdom-building

When we boil it right down, guess what? Aren't you glad Christ looked past some of those bad areas in our lives?

Luke 5:27 says that Jesus went out one day, saw a tax collector sitting at his tax booth—someone obviously outside the family of faith—and told the guy, "Follow me." Matthew's friends and co-laborers probably thought he'd lost his mind.

Why on earth would a successful businessman ditch his career and follow a homeless rabbi?

"Follow me!" he said that afternoon. And in that moment, Matthew, the tax collector left everything—including his money - to pursue Christ.

Q: What did following Jesus mean to Matthew?

- For starters, He was walking away from his business, his identity, his comfortable routine ... not to mention his financial security.
- It meant that Matthew would be prizing—and prioritizing—the people he once swindled.
- He'd be looking for the potential *good* in them, rather than the potential vulnerability that he could exploit.
- Tax-collectors weren't the kindest, most respected group of people in those days.
- There was an incredible amount of change in Matthew's life now that Christ was in his life ... much more than even he could ever imagine!
- Matthew probably wasn't completely sure of what he'd gotten himself into.
- But I believe that Matthew knew he was *definitely going to live with a big dance mindset!*

Observation #3 - Start Small ... but Start!

- "Rob, how can I do this? How can I start living with a big dance mindset?" How can I really be a fisher of men and women?

- “I’m on board with the “people-priority” and “potential” pieces ...
- “I’m just kind of wondering, “well, what should I do next?” What’s supposed to happen in my life—today ... right here and right now—as a result of living with a big game mindset?
- If Matthew were standing here instead of me, I think he’d say, “Yeah! I *totally* understand where you’re coming from! I felt exactly like you feel.”
- Here was Matthew, a newly converted disciple of Jesus’ who had a deep, deep desire to expose his friends and family members to the acceptance and love, the purpose and hope, that he’d found in the person of Jesus Christ.
- He didn’t have time to go through the disciples’ official Evangelism 101 course. He was too new to have memorized the 4 spiritual laws, and the other little formulas.
- But all of his old buddies were standing there in their tax-booths—the same spot where he used to work
- Their lives would be so blessed by knowing Christ, but he had no idea how to get that introduction made. There he stood and something tugged at his heart
- Just then, (5:29) he decided to throw a party!!

Friends, when we look at this idea of starting small – it really doesn’t matter what you do. Throw a party if that’s your deal. Throw a BBQ, have some unsaved friends and family members over to your house.....go over to theirs! Do something to step out of your comfort zone. ***Living with a Big Dance mindset is all about people and connecting them to Christ.***

As we talk about getting in the game, this idea today is critical for each of us to understand and work on as we participate with what God is doing and what he still wants to do. Prioritize people. Focus on their potential. And Start small.

Pray