
What The World Needed Then, And Now

An Incredible Story We Can't Ignore:

Acts 8:1-24, Micah 6:8, John 3:16-17, 8:44, 10:10, Romans 5:8, 1 Peter 5:8, Ephesians 6:12

The main characters:

God = **LOVE & JUSTICE**

Satan = **STEAL, KILL, DESTROY** and the great **DECEIVER**

People are never the **ENEMY**, but we can all be **INFLUENCED** by him.

If we fail to recognize and define the **ENEMY**, we will lose the **BATTLE** every time.

How the Church Became the Church:

Persecution made them **GO** where they otherwise **NEVER** would have gone.

Their actions and attitudes were the **BRIDGE** that **TRUTH** traveled over.

The **GOSPEL** was **SHARED** wherever Christians went.

Food for Thought

For the week of June 14, 2020

(Questions and Scriptures for further study & discussion)

Discussion Questions Added - *Food for Thought* is normally written as an aid for personal study during the periods when our Life Groups are not meeting. However, given the unique situation we currently find ourselves in with COVID-19, many Life Groups are continuing to meet in order to provide opportunities for connection. In light of that, we have adjusted the *Food for Thought* format so the questions can be used for group discussion as well as personal study and reflection.

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT?

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

We saw how God used persecution to make the early church go places they never would have gone. The legendary country singer, Garth Brooks, has a song called "Unanswered Prayers." Here is the chorus:

*Sometimes I thank God
For unanswered prayers
Remember when you're talkin'
To the man upstairs
That just because He doesn't answer doesn't mean He don't care
'Cause some of God's greatest gifts
Are unanswered prayers*

The early church never would have asked for persecution to break out against them, but God was able to use it to create a movement of the early church. Can you think of a time where God did not answer a prayer, but looking back you can see how He wanted you to move or act in a way that was contrary to your original prayer?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend we were cautioned, "if we fail to recognize and define the enemy, we will lose the battle every time." In order to teach us, Jesus used the analogy of a sheep, a shepherd and a thief. Read John 10:1-18 through the lens of a sheep. How might a sheep identify its enemy and its protector?

John 10:1-18 *New International Version (NIV)*

10 "Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. ¹⁰They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹¹The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹²"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹³The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹⁴The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁵"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁶just as the Father knows me and I know the Father— and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁷I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁸The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life— only to take it up again. ¹⁹No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Is there something from the passage above that might help you define the enemy in a situation?

Based on the interactions between the sheep and the shepherd, is there something that might help you to better identify the voice of God in your own life? (Read Psalm 23 for another example.)

2. Chris taught that one way the church became the church was through “their actions and attitudes being the bridge truth traveled over.” In one of Jesus’ most well-known and beloved parables, He told a story of a son who wandered out on his own. Read Luke 15:11-32 and describe how the actions of the father created a bridge to allow truth to be traveled over.

Luke 15:11-32 New International Version

¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

²⁸ “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

³¹ “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

Take a look at the actions of the older son and compare/contrast his actions to those of his father’s.

Which person’s actions better built a bridge that truth could travel over?

Can you think of a time where your actions and attitudes helped to build a bridge for truth to travel over?

If so, what actions or attitudes, would you like to replicate?



NORTH COAST SUMMER SERIES & CLASSES

Check out our website for updates as more details will be added in the weeks to come. northcoastchurch.com/classes

Summer Study Series

We have three incredible virtual events lined up this summer by each of our teaching pastors! You will be able to watch these free classes as they stream at the times listed below on our Facebook page and YouTube Channel. They will also be available on our website on the dates listed below so you can view them when convenient. No registration required.

- **An Open Conversation About RACE. Part 1** with Pastor Chris Brown, Friday, June 19 at 7pm
- **The Only Legacy That Really Matters: *Parenting for The Long-Haul*** with Dr. Larry Osborne, Friday, July 17 at 7pm
- **Is God Evil?** with Pastor Christopher Hilken, Friday, August 14 at 7pm

Summer Classes – Register for these classes online at northcoastchurch.com/classes

We are putting together a great collection of virtual classes and webinars on a variety of topics that will be offered throughout the summer. Here are some of the classes we have planned:

- **Preparing for Marriage:** Mondays, June 29 – August 3
- **United in Marriage:** Sundays, June 28 - August 16 (1st Class Monday, June 22) OR Mondays, June 22 – August 16
- **Financial Peace University:** Mondays, June 22 – August 17
- **Never Read a Bible Verse:** Wednesday, June 24
- **S.H.A.P.E – Helping You Discover God’s Purpose in Life:** Wednesday, July 8
- **Parents of Young Kids Parenting through Pandemic:** Wednesday, July 22
- **Parents of Teens Parenting through Pandemic:** Thursday, July 23
- **Self-Leadership:** Thursday, August 6

Check our website for many more classes to be scheduled soon.

Summer Connection Intro Life Groups

New to North Coast or never been in a Life Group? Curious what being part of a Life Group is all about? Summer Connection Intro Life Groups will start **Thursday, July 9** and meet for three weeks. They are a great opportunity to find out what Life Groups are like with minimum commitment. Registration coming soon