

## Sent Week 3: A way to measure the Gospel's effect in your heart.

### Mike's Minutes:

Celebrate the Unity Service. (Show pictures)

### Review:

As we talked about last week...

Everyone wants a revival, they just want *their* version of a revival.

For most people, God moving in their lives means God helping them win their way over someone else's.

How many people pray for revival and mean, "I am in sin. My people are in sin. Forgive me, oh God!"

### Illustration:

A number of years ago I was watching the news and God allowed me to see my bias. There were two stories back-to-back about crimes and the arrested suspects that did them. One was a country looking boy and the other a minority. As I listened to the news stories, in my mind I quickly painted a picture of the country boy accidentally getting into a bad situation or being misunderstood. Without thinking about it I gave him the benefit of the doubt and believed the news reporter probably had a vendetta against him. She probably didn't respect those "fly over state" people. With the minority person I didn't create a back story. I just moved on.

Wait... what? Why did my mind so quickly work to create a back story for the white guy that made him innocent or at most unlucky?

We defend people we have befriended. We offer charity to those we already cherish. We rescue the ones we relate to.

I want to make a really bold statement. Please give me the rest of the morning to defend it.

Show me your friends and I will show the actual effect of the gospel in your heart.

### Luke 5:1-11

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. <sup>2</sup> He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

<sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

<sup>5</sup> Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

<sup>6</sup> When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

<sup>7</sup> So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

<sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." <sup>11</sup> So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.<sup>1</sup>

- When people have a true encounter with God there is a mix of two feelings. People seem to be overwhelmed with love and acceptance, but they *also* are overwhelmed with the reality that they are flawed and being called into a better identity.

- If you only see your flaws you haven't seen the real God. There is grace.

- If you only feel acceptance and no conviction you haven't seen the real God. There is truth.

Maybe I should say it like this.

- If the Gospel has only made you proud, you have weaponized against others the truth scalpel God intended for your own heart.

- If the Gospel has only given you shame, you are rejecting a perfect father's love that is offered to you independent of whether you deserve it.

- The good news of Jesus is for the poor or *Ani* in Hebrew (Luke 4:18; referencing Isaiah 61:1-2). The poor refers to so much more than those who don't have money. It refers to people of low social status, social outsiders, and those who have made poor decisions.<sup>2</sup> When you think of the poor think of those with little money, but also think of Levi the tax collector, the sick, the prostitutes, and ultimately even the Gentiles (non-Jews).

- God is here to create an upside-down view of love and mercy. Instead of only offering grace and favor to those that are "in" socially, God wants us to offer mercy, grace, and help to those that are social outsiders to us. Charity, mercy, and friendship isn't only for those that are like you – it is for everyone.

- We defend people we have befriended. We offer charity to those we already cherish. We rescue the ones we relate to.

- Show me your friends and I will show the actual effect of the gospel in your heart.

- The disciples are about to "fish" for all people, even the ones they don't like. God even placed enemies in his discipleship community. Matthew the tax collector will minister alongside Simon the anti-Roman zealot. They will even get a Pharisee named Paul that

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<sup>1</sup> [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Lk 5:1–11.

<sup>2</sup> "Watch: Luke Acts Book Collection Video Series | Bibleproject™". 2021. *Bibleproject*. <https://bibleproject.com/explore/category/luke-acts-series/>.

will join the crew! Then come all the misfits, outsiders, and foreigners. Jesus' last words to His disciples are to "disciple" them. Literally, go do life with them.

What does this mean for me?

Illustration:

There I was thinking about the news and my natural response to the suspects in the story. It hit me that I am a bit of a country boy at heart. There is part of me that fits with those people. I have so many wonderful memories of fishing in cow ponds, hunting, and riding dirt bikes. A few good friends and open land are heaven on earth to me. When I drive back to Indiana from Oklahoma, I see the rolling hills and miles of property where the only manmade thing is a fence and random oil rig. Honestly, I have cried driving from the country back to the city. When I hear Big News put down country people and create "straw man" arguments against them, I can't help but want to defend "my people."

Don't hear me wrong. I have lived and worked in a city for nearly 20 years now. I feel called and love people in the city too. Yet, in the beginning of my ministry I had to purposefully work to understand, offer the "the benefit of the doubt," and even befriend city people.

The mercy, compassion, and even friendship I offer isn't only for people I prefer. It's for all people.

Remember:

We defend people we have befriended. We offer charity to those we already cherish. We rescue the ones we relate to.

The measure of the Gospel's work in your heart isn't in how well you treat the people you prefer, it's in how you treat the people you don't prefer or even naturally like. Gospel and grace to the world.

Next Steps:

Who are the people I prefer?

Who are the people I need to make space for?