

03/11/12

You Can't Do That

- one of the invitations we're given in Scripture is to...
 - **Psalm 37:4 - Delight yourself in the LORD...**
 - fundamentally our faith is not about religion, or ritual, or duty, or principles...though some of that has its place...
 - but fundamentally it is about delighting ourselves in the Person of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...
- John explained that like this at the beginning of His gospel...**John 1:14-16 - And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' " For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.**
- see, a Savior like that is someone in whom we can find great delight...
 - that then becomes the foundation of our growth and the direction of our service...not raw duty but joyful delight
- that's why we want to know the Lord more – like Paul said -- **Philippians 3:7-10 - But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.**
- see, it's our delight in someone that would motivate us to want to know and love Him more...
- that then leads to a desire to be more like Him...if you find someone attractive, you want to be like that yourself...
 - **Luke 6:40 - A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.**
 - do you see the progression – the more we delight in the Person and work of Christ, the more we want to know Him, and the more we want to be like Him...
 - there's a corresponding delight in seeing growing Christ-likeness in the person you see in the mirror in the morning...becoming less like your old self and more like your Savior you love is a delightful thing...
- when's that's in place – His Word goes from being restrictive law to becoming liberating principles...you delight in that as well because it takes you where deep down in your heart you really want to go...(the direction of becoming more like your Savior whom you love...)
 - you find yourself saying with the Psalmist things like:
 - **Psalm 40:8 - I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart.**
 - **Psalm 119:16 - I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word.**
 - **Psalm 119:47 - I shall delight in Your commandments, Which I love.**
- that's what we're trying to accomplish this year with our emphasis on **Building Core Strength**
- as we study more about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, finding more and more reasons to delight ourselves in Him...

- here's what we hope will happen this am...in the verses we're going to study, Luke tells about several occasions where Jesus is being faced with people who are essentially saying...you can't do that...it's amazing how frequently that theme emerges...
 - and what we find is a Savior who refuses to be intimidated by such pressure, or sidetracked from accomplishing the mission God has given...
 - and the net effect is – we find additional reasons to delight ourselves in our Savior...
 - and in this particular case especially, it is a very short walk to what it means to live the Christian life today – because we have all sorts of people in all sorts of ways for all sorts of reasons telling us – you can't do that...
 - this passage will help us know exactly how to respond...
- with that in mind, please open your Bible this am to Luke chapter 5....page 48 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you...
- last week we reminded ourselves that if we are interested in understanding this story chronologically, we need to insert the information from the gospel of John chapters 1-4 between Luke 4:13 and Luke 4:14...
 - none of the gospel writers intended to provide a comprehensive treatment of the life of Christ...they wrote to specific audiences for specific reasons...and they were really quite selective...
 - sometimes folks fuss about how big the Bible is – truthfully the opposite is the case...it's amazing how selective the Bible writers were...
- so by time we get to the verses we're going to study today...
 - Luke has given all the information about the birth of Christ and the amazing way so many Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled...
 - then we had the ministry of John the Baptist...and the temptation of Christ...
 - then you insert the information about Jesus' first year of public ministry where He emphasized the importance of being born again in his meeting with Nicodemus and how the gospel is for everyone through his meeting with the immoral Samaritan woman at the well...
 - that takes us to last week's verses about how Jesus came back home to Nazareth and read from Isaiah 61 where His ministry was to preach the gospel to the poor, and to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and set free those who are oppressed...
 - and that included not just one particular ethnic group...but every person who was willing to come to Him in repentance and faith...
 - then He went on to demonstrate His power over disease and the demonic host...
 - and even called a group of people to join in His mission of being fishers of men...
- that brings us to a series of interchanges that Luke describes, all of which have a fascinating theme...people essentially saying to Jesus...**You Can't Do That...**
- let's see if that notion deters Him in any way...
- **read Luke 5:12-6:11...**
- we're talking this morning about people who looked at Jesus, or who might look at us, and say – you can't do that...
- and with the time we have remaining – let's think about **3 steps to confidently serving God even when others think you shouldn't.**

I. Understand the Things People Said Jesus Couldn't Do.

- the emphasis in this first section is...

A. You can't touch a person who is unclean.

- it's probably hard for us to picture the significance of what Jesus did with this man who came to Him for help...

- the word leprosy can describe many different skin conditions...but this man obviously had a very extreme form...some believe it was what we would call Hansen's disease today...John MacArthur described it like this...

- **Leprosy attacks the skin, peripheral nerves (especially near the wrists, elbows, and knees), and mucus membrane. It forms lesions on the skin, and can disfigure the face by collapsing the nose and causing folding of the skin (leading some to call it "lion's disease" due to the resulting lionlike appearance of the face). Contrary to popular belief, leprosy does not eat away the flesh. Due to the loss of feeling (especially in the hands and feet), people with the disease wear away their extremities and faces unknowingly. The horrible disfigurement caused by leprosy made it greatly feared, and caused lepers to be outcasts, cut off from all healthy society, for protection (John MacArthur, Luke 1-5, p. 313).**

- people in that day would have considered his disease to be very contagious [that may or may not have been true but that is the way it was viewed in that day]

- more importantly he was considered unclean by the religious leaders and was not to have any contact with anyone to prevent spread of the disease...

- there was also the issue of instances in the Bible where people were cursed with leprosy because of their sin...so that would provide a backdrop for the suffering as well...

- When you put all of that together you see that what this man did was an act of incredible desperation...he fell down and implored Jesus---

- **Luke 5:12 - Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.**

- that is about as humble a statement of belief a person could possibly make...

- and the next words...remember, recorded by a physician... **Luke 5:13 - And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him.**

- you can't do that – you can't touch a person who's an outcast, who may be contagious, who may be that way because of his own sin (many would have thought)...

- Jesus thought differently – that's one of the reasons we delight ourselves in Him...

- then He told him to go immediately to the priests and follow the procedures prescribed in the OT...something it appears the man was too excited to do...

- but Luke made a clear emphasis about how Jesus' ministry was directed by what the Father said He should do...not what others said He shouldn't...

- was event does Luke explain next?...

- and did you notice – he just says in **verse 17 – "one day"**...there's no way to know whether this came before or after what just happened with the leprous man...or how much time may have elapsed...

- Luke is trying to illustrate important principles about Jesus' ministry to his friend Theophilus...

- which in this next case was...

B. You can't say that a person's sins are forgiven.

- the text says that... **Luke 5:17 - One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting *there*, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and *from* Jerusalem...**
- so they've been hearing reports of Jesus ministry and instead of rejoicing at the blessing the Lord is to so many people – they're there to judge and undermine...
- the crowd is so large that there's no way to get inside the house...
- and you can just picture this story...only 5 guys would have come up with this solution...anyone have a skill saw?...
- and they cut a hole in the roof and lower their friend down...can you imagine if you were in that house and hearing those noises and seeing that sight?...
- and I wonder if Jesus laughed...you know it honored and pleased them...
- because the text says...**Luke 5:20 - Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."**
 - those are the kind of guys you want to hang around with...
 - Jesus went right to the core issue – not his physical disease, but his spiritual condition...and of course...
 - **Luke 5:21 - The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this *man* who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"**
 - and Jesus went on to challenge them about which was harder – to say his sins were forgiven or to get up and walk...and in some ways – forgiving someone's sins...but the one that was more provable in the moment was the latter...which is exactly what Jesus did...this is exactly the kind of man that Isaiah had in mind in the passage we studied last week...
 - so it didn't matter if people were saying – you can't do that...
 - Jesus said - I can, and I must, and I will...
 - **Luke 5:24-26 - "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home." Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. They were all struck with astonishment and *began* glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."**
- then Luke moves to the call of Levi the tax collector...same issue...
 - C. You can't eat and drink with sinners.**
 - here's a man who was undeniably despicable in many ways...
 - but Jesus drew him to Himself (follow me) and then went to a party to celebrate his conversion...and who do you think would be there?...a bunch of other despicable people...
 - you can't do that...yes I can, and yes I must, and yes I will...
 - **Luke 5:31-32 - And Jesus answered and said to them, "*It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."***
 - are you delighting in Jesus this morning as you watch Him fulfill the ministry God has given regardless of what others might say?....
 - then what?...more innocent enjoyment...but some religious people can't stand that...their definition of godliness is the fear that somebody, somewhere might be having a good time...
 - so they play the "John's disciples don't do that" card...as if that's the test...
 - D. You can't enjoy the pleasures of life.**
 - and Jesus says – no, the opposite is true...

- **Luke 5:34 - And Jesus said to them, “You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?”**

- see, Jesus has set free those who were oppressed...his disciples were and are no longer bound by all this legalism and extra biblical expectations...and that drives some people crazy because they have no place for a God of joy and freedom...

- then the same thing again when his disciples were gleaning from a field on the Sabbath...

E. You can't challenge our religious traditions.

- the OT allowed for gleaning a field just like the disciples were doing in places like Deut 23:25.

- but the religious leaders had added all sorts of other rules regarding keeping the Sabbath and apparently the disciples had just broken several of them...

- and Jesus isn't going to be intimidated by that...and he explains biblical why they're wrong with the illustration of David and the showbread...and then he says...

- and then He makes the astounding claim...

- **Luke 6:5 - And He was saying to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”**

- I can do that...I must do that...I will do that...

- lastly the story of the man with the withered hand...again one that probably would have especially interested Luke the physician...

- and verse 7 says....Luke 6:7 - The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely *to see* if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find *reason* to accuse Him.

- isn't that pitiful?...not to see whether this dear man who would not be able to work effectively because of the condition of his right hand might be healed...but to see if they could catch Jesus violating their man made rules of the Sabbath...their position was...

F. You can't show unrestrained compassion.

- and it's interesting when you compare this to the parallel passage in Mark, you read...

- **Mark 3:5 - After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.**

- is the theme coming through loud and clear?...we saw last week that Jesus was quite comfortable in the mission God had given to Him outlined in Isaiah 61...

- and He even called a group of people to join Him in that pursuit – to be fishers of men...

- and there will always be detractors...people who say that you can't do that...

- and don't you find yourself growing in deeper love with our delightful Savior as you find Him in essence saying over and over – yes, I can, yes I must, and yes I will...

- now, before we turn it around to where we're living today...let's take a quick stab at this issue...

II. Understand Reasons People Say You Can't Do That.

- the people we're reading about were quite sincere and passionate in their opposition....where'd that come from?...

A. Your compassion on those in need might convict others of their indifference.

- some people will tell you that you can't do that because they're convicted about the fact that they don't do that...

- **Matthew 5:16 - Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**

- one of the first issues you learn in counseling is – there's the presenting issue, and then there's the heart issue...there's the smoke, and there's the fire...

- so when someone says you can't---you need to ask, what is going on in their heart that is making them so passionate in their belief about this...
- B. Your focus on Scripture alone may undermine their legalistic additions.**
 - some people love to add to the Bible and when you don't get in step with that it can infuriate them.
 - **Galatians 5:1 - It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.**
 - that's exactly what was happening in these verses...
- C. Your focus on the importance of forgiveness might convict them of their same need.**
 - when Jesus began talking about the centrality of forgiveness, as even being a more fundamental need than physical healing...that brought some of these people out of their cage...
- D. Your innovation might challenge their religious traditions and preferences.**
 - that's not the way we've always done...
 - we don't touch lepers, we don't associate with tax collectors, we don't enjoy the simple pleasures of life, we don't do anything on the Sabbath day....blah, blah, blah...don't upset the apple cart of our long standing traditions...
 - see—you can't do that...what did Jesus say...
 - I can, I must, I will...
 - Delighting in a Savior like this can give us great strength at the very core...
- now, let's swing this around to people like you and me...
- here's the question – is there anything that God is calling you to do, that you've chosen not to yet because you don't want to deal with the pressure of people in your life telling you that you can't do that...there's a lot of potential examples...

III. Understand the Things People Say We Can't Do.

- and before I tick down through a list...students of culture understand that this very issue presents a real challenge for people in our country...
 - because on the one hand we are fierce promoters of freedom...and tolerance...
 - but there's an equal distaste on the part of many in our culture for anything that's even remotely religious...
 - so many people even in our own community don't really know what to do with us...
- A. You can't educate your child in a faith-based fashion.**
 - 1) for example, home schooling – we have several families in our church family who have selected that method for their children – and they may have extended family members who look down on that...
 - or neighbors or friends who say in one way or another...you can't do that, or you shouldn't do that...
 - and these dear folks just smile and say – yes I can—this is what I believe God has called us to, and I will...
 - 2) or sending your child to a Christian school...or wanting to attend one as a student yourself...you may get some pressure on that one...
 - we certainly did when we were starting Faith Christian 15 years ago from all sorts of angles, inside and outside the church...
 - well, here we are...yes we can...
 - 3) or, living for Christ in a public school...
 - it's amazing how much freedom you can have...

- and we're not trying to be ornery about that...but you can have a powerful testimony and witness in whatever educational environment God calls you to...
- don't cave to the pressure of you can't educate your child in a faith based way...

B. You can't counsel people with difficult challenges from the Bible.

- we've faced that here for over 30 years...
 - and interestingly enough, a fair amount of that has come from inside the church as well...
 - and we've tried not to be nasty about that, or argumentative...
 - we've tried to follow the principle outlined in this passage:
 - **2 Timothy 2:24 - The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,**
 - that's why we're working with a larger group of men and women through the Biblical Counseling Coalition...the Lord is raising up many people, interestingly enough—in some of the larger, more influential churches in the US who are trying to work together to produce cutting edge resources based on Scripture...
 - and the Lord is choosing to bless that like never before...
 - I'm glad for people like Doc Smith, Pastor Goode – the early members of this church who said – we respectfully disagree...our calling is an Isaiah 61 kind of calling
- one of the reasons I'm glad we're seeing this emphasis is because Faith West is about to be cast into the public light...we go before the Area Plan Commission on 3/21 and then the West Lafayette City Council on 4/2...
 - and there will be some dear folks who will look at the kinds of things we do as a church and say...you can't do that...let me try to prepare us for that...

C. You can't have a facility like Faith West as a church.

- we've actually had dear people say to us – a church is something that has a steeple on the top and meets on Sunday mornings for worship...
 - but all that other stuff is not a church...
 - and we would respectfully disagree...
- why?...
 - because the early church in the book of Acts met on a daily basis in many cases...
 - they fellowshiped together...
 - they ate and prayed and studied together...
 - in some cases they lived together
 - they served together in all sorts of ways...
 - and that was a daily thing in many instances...
 - so our model of ministry of finding community needs and seeking to meet them seven days a week is very much consistent with the pattern of the early church...
 - what is it that everybody criticizes churches for – I won't go to church because it's full of...hypocrites...
 - and what is a hypocrite?...a person who doesn't live out his/her faith 7 days a week...
- well, you shouldn't indoctrinate college students with your religious ideas...
 - we respectfully disagree...we think biblical Christianity is a far more compelling and rewarding world and life view than secular humanism...

- and we're glad that one of the major entrances to Purdue's campus is going to be a facility that is all about the promotion of a lifestyle based on the inerrant, sufficient Word of God...the home of Purdue Bible Fellowship
- well—a non-profit organization shouldn't have a fitness center because it competes with for-profit businesses...
 - well, who was the first entity in this town to offer those kinds of services to our community...
 - as far as I know, it was the YMCA which started here in 1889...
 - and we're pro business – but businesses shouldn't come along later and scoop off one aspect of a non-profits' activities in order to make money and then fuss about the fact that non-profits continue to do what they had already been faithfully doing...
 - if that's a way our neighbors tell us we can show love for them and we have the ability to provide those kind of resources – of course we can do that...
- well, you shouldn't have a restaurant...we're Baptists for crying out loud –
 - and we do assume that the assessor and the Property tax assessment board of appeals will ask us to pay property taxes on that portion of the facility and we're fine with that...
 - but many of our ministries require food support and our neighbors requested that amenity in our many input meetings...
- well, you shouldn't have all these small group Bible studies and biblical counseling sessions and mentoring groups...people will be coming and going all the time...
 - well, we'll provide adequate landscaping and teach our young people to respect our neighbors by being as unobtrusive as possible in their comings and goings...but if want young people to avoid making bad choices, we need to provide resources to help them make good ones...
- well, you shouldn't have pre-school – those moms ought to stay home with their children...in a perfect world, that may be true – but many of the women we serve are single moms trying to get back on their feet and we want to love and support them all we can...
- well, you shouldn't have ministry housing?...
 - seriously...the church has been providing ministry housing for nearly 2000 years...
 - there's even a book of the Bible written about that very topic...3 John...
 - we provide all sorts of ministry housing here in the form of VOH, seminary interns, missionaries, VOH interns...
 - we're not doing anything over at Faith West that we aren't currently doing here on our main campus
 - we're not going into the student housing business to charge market rates to make money...
 - we want to provide a faith based ministry environment 24/7 for young people who want to grow in their faith and we are using housing as a component of that...
 - just like dozens of others non-profit organizations are doing around campus...
 - if the Evans house can be a tax exempt charitable organization providing student housing organized around their love for golf, surely we can be a tax exempt charitable organization providing student housing organized around our love for God...
- well, do you really need to have another church service over there...

- until every person in our town has clearly heard a biblical presentation of the gospel, we intend to do everything we can to make God's Word available to as many of our friends and neighbors as possible...