

Garvin Adams

Church Name

SERIES: You Do You?

MESSAGE 1: "Almighty Me"

LINK TO MY SERMON: <https://vimeo.com/757739169>

Bottom Line: The most authentic thing you can do is give Jesus authority over you.

Object Lesson:

Key Idea: The common mantra of our culture is "be true to you". You do you. What seems like the most authentic thing to do comes with a steep cost. In a story told by Luke, Jesus confronts a close friend, and he didn't suggest she listen to her heart.

NOTE: All my commentary and suggestions are included in this document in BLUE. Also, this is NOT a manuscript. I prefer to outline most of the message while manuscripting the opening line, closing line, and transitions.

CONNECTION – We are living in a time where self-discovery is our highest priority.

NOTE: CONNECTION: The story of Mary and Martha is interesting and can be used as the connection if we bring people into the story. Connection is about connect the crowd to you and to the content.

A. **INTRODUCTION:** Every moment with Jesus is intriguing. There is an interesting moment in the life of Jesus that we often pass by without too much consideration. In a way, it's probably more of an interesting moment in the life of two women: Mary and her sister Martha. When we read it, we always take a lesson away from it, but perhaps not all the lessons we should take away.

This moment happened 2,000 years ago, but as the saying goes, "the more things change..." I want us to look at this story together, because in this world we find ourselves living in, there's something quite significant in this story that we might should consider ourselves.

B. **CONTEXT:** The story is about two sisters: Mary and Martha. They have a brother who's going to become quite famous: Lazarus. When Jesus brings you back from the dead, word spreads. But that hasn't happened yet. Jesus is close friends with this entire family. He and his disciples are traveling and they came to the village where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live.

I'll let Luke tell it from there...

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Luke 10:38-40a (NIV)

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet **listening** to what he said.

⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the **preparations** that had to be made.

- **Scene is set:** Jesus is in the lazyboy and Mary is sitting on the ground beside Jesus listening. Conspicuously absent is Martha. Martha, isn't sitting and listening to Jesus. Because somebody has to make dinner. We can't all be lazy. We can't all attend storytime.
- **Martha has a guest in her house.** Not just any guest, but Jesus! She knows he is from God. She probably suspects even more of Jesus. She knows he can heal and perform miracles.
- Hospitality: It's easy to be hard on Martha. When Jesus is in your house, spend time with him. They'll be plenty of time for cooking later.

We've all had people over and had to prepare. You may have even had someone important over. But we really don't have a culture of hospitality like that which existed in first-century Israel. Martha was doing what was expected. She was doing what, according to custom, should be done. She was doing what she thought was best. And this led to some frustration.

She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has **left me** to do the work by **myself**? Tell her to help me!"

- Dad, Mary isn't helping!

NOTE: This is a perfect place to change the Scripture to call attention and set up the message. And it's comical.

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you do **you**, boo, and let's allow Mary to **follow her heart**, too."

- Martha, you do you! Leave Mary alone. She's doing her.
- Ha, Ha. Okay. That's not what Jesus said. Before we read what Jesus actually said, let's just acknowledge that this is what gets said over and over and over in our western world today.
- In our western world (I say western because much of the world does *not* think this way), we're constantly encouraged to focus on being our full, authentic self.

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Being our full, authentic self...

"You do you."

"You be you."

"Be true to yourself."

"Follow your heart."

"Find yourself."

"You be happy."

- We are living in a time where finding happiness through self-discovery is the highest priority.
- Not just the world. Christians are equally pursuing happiness as a primary goal in life, too. Research from Barna that shows the large percentage of churchgoing Christians (66 percent) who say "enjoying yourself is the highest goal of life."

TRANSITION: If you aren't a follower of Jesus, I'm so grateful you're joining us and being curious. I love curiosity. I hope what you hear today is helpful and maybe even gives you a life alternative to consider. If you are a Jesus follower like me, this story Mary and Martha story has something deeply important to say to us that we have all lost in some way, shape, or form.

NOTE: As you see above, whenever we can address the entire room, we have a better chance of engaging the entire room. Since I began this message with a Bible story, I wanted to ensure the non-believer remained engaged.

TENSION – "Expressive Individualism" leads us down a predictable path.

- A. **EXPRESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM:** Before we get back to Jesus, Mary, and Martha, we need to think more about this "you do you" world we're living within.

No doubt, the western world is all about you being your full, authentic self. The official term for this is Expressive Individualism.

Expressive Individualism

Expressive individualism is the be true to yourself mindset that finds self-fulfillment and expression as the highest goal of life.

We see this life concept on full display nearly everywhere in life. Self-help books, television and movies, blogs, and more.

It seems the current buzz word of our western world: "Authentic."

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We tend to wrap “authenticity” into this pursuit.

We are told that “being you” is the most authentic think you can do.

There are lots of good things about authenticity, and we’re going to come back to this word in a bit, but here are elements of the pursuit that are deeply problematic.

- a. There’s a guy named Robert Bellah who wrote a book called *Habits of the Heart*. He talked about this idea, saying:

“As a people, we believe in the dignity, indeed the sacredness, of the individual. Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decisions, live our lives as we see fit, is not only morally wrong, it is sacrilegious. Our highest and noblest aspirations, not only for ourselves, but for those we care about, for our society and for the world, are closely linked to our individualism.”

- Robert Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*

Just for a second, look at Robert’s statement. It’s incredible, because it’s so true. When I first came across this, my immediate reaction was, “Wait a minute, I believe in dignity. I want to think for myself. Judge for myself. Make my own decisions.” Do you know why I tend to think that? Because, like you, I’m living in a time where that quest is the favorable pursuit.

- B. **RELIGIOUS FLARE:** It can even have a religious flare to it. Allowing for internal authority means that we can sin, but *sin* is what we do to ourselves when we choose to not follow ourselves and fulfill ourselves.

If the first and greatest commandment of individualism is to “be yourself,” then the unforgivable sin is to be dishonest of self by giving into any external pressure or authority.

Sin is the failure to be true to yourself. Thus, the solution is not repentance, but reassertion.

- C. **WHERE THIS LEADS:** The push for authentic, expressive individualism leads us to a pretty predictable place. As I show you this path, I’d love for you to consider where you might be seeing some of these things around us today. Maybe even *in* you today. Crisis is both an accelerator and a revealer. This past year has revealed much of our own heart. And the hearts of those around us.

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LIST INDIVIDUALLY...

1. The **highest good** is individual freedom, happiness, self-definition, and self-expression.
2. Traditions, religions, received wisdom, regulations, and social ties that **restrict** individual freedom, happiness, self-definition, and self-expression must be **reshaped, deconstructed, or destroyed**.
3. The world will inevitably **improve** as the scope of **individual freedom** grows.
4. The primary social ethic is **tolerance** of everyone's self-defined quest for individual freedom and self-expression.
5. Humans are inherently **good**.
6. Large-scale structures and institutions are **suspicious** at best and **evil** at worst.
7. Forms of **external authority** are rejected and **personal authenticity** is lauded.

- D. **SOUND FAMILIAR?** **Sound like anything you've seen of late? Sound like anything you've pursued or questioned of late?**

None of us are above this thinking. It's so pervasive in our western culture. Again, if you're not a church or Jesus following person, you might be looking at this list and wondering "what's the problem?" I get that. I completely get that.

As Jesus followers, this path leads us to places that are problematic. At least they are problematic if we want to follow Jesus.

- E. **TODAY...:** That last step on the path is a problematic destination:

Forms of **external authority** are rejected and **personal authenticity** is lauded.

- a. Let's be honest – we don't like authority. We don't particularly like being told what to do.
 - b. As an individual, we're fine with "internal" authority. We don't mind challenging ourselves and holding ourselves to a version of accountability, mostly because challenging ourselves leads to us discovering more personal authenticity and fulfillment.
- F. **WE'RE ALL GUILTY:** It's almost human nature, isn't it? Think about it: **The very first act of external authority rebellion was a choice by man to reject the authority of God in the Garden of Eden.** The Garden of Eden rebellion was resistance against any external authority – God.

TRANSITION: *To say this has been an ongoing issue in every single facet of our life is an understatement! Now Mary and Martha are facing it in a kitchen and living room with Jesus.*

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FOUNDATION – Liking Jesus makes him our life coach. Following Jesus makes him our Lord.

- A. **BACK TO MARY AND MARTHA’S HOME:** We didn’t finish it earlier, so let’s go back for a minute.

As a reminder, Martha is upset that Mary isn’t helping. She’s just sitting with Jesus. Martha asks Jesus to intervene, and here’s how Jesus responded:

Luke 10:40b-42 (NIV)

She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

- The primary point of this story is probably to not allow the things of the world to distract us from the person of Jesus. That’s an important point. But I think there is a secondary point we shouldn’t miss in our world today.
- This is so easily missed yet so important for us as followers of Jesus. According to Jesus, not every choice we make is “best.” It seems, at least according to Jesus, that 4K: “You doing you” isn’t what we should do.

You doing you isn’t always what we should do.

- **Buckle Up:** That’s a interesting story, but there is meaning for us. I’m going to ask you to put on your individualism seatbelt for a minute, because I want us to really press down on the actual issue at hand.
There is an important question that we must answer. A question worth wrestling to the ground. Jesus says “Mary chose best.” It’s worth considering: Who is Jesus to decide what is “best”? Shouldn’t Mary and Martha each in their own identity decide what’s “best” for them.

Who made Jesus the boss of Mary and Martha?

- Who put him in charge of others? He can do whatever he wants, but should he be telling *other* people what they can and can’t do? Should he be telling others what choices are good, better, and best?

- B. **LORD OR LIFE COACH:** Maybe we should rephrase the question in the language Mary and Martha used:

Who made Jesus the Lord of Mary and Martha?

If we look back at this story being told by Luke, that word “Lord” is used to describe Jesus.

Luke 10:40b (NIV)

She came to him and asked, “Lord...

When we read about Jesus, we see him with authority, but the real question is do we see him as *our* authority?

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That's what the word "Lord" means. A Lord is someone with power, authority, and influence over another.

Martha called Jesus Lord. Lots of people who experienced Jesus recognized him as Lord. And you should know that we, as followers of Jesus, are called to follow suit.

Liking Jesus makes him our life coach, but following Jesus makes him our Lord.

We don't want a "Lord." We want just enough of Jesus to get us through, get us by, and give us what we need. When life is tough, we want all Jesus has to offer. When we're on that business trip or vacation, not so much Jesus, please.

But Jesus will not serve as your helper or therapist. He's not an example to follow. He's the authority.

TRANSITION: We've been led to believe that following to Jesus means surrendering your true self. The opposite is actually true.

APPLICATION – How do you want to follow Jesus?

A. **WHY WE RESIST JESUS' AUTHORITY:** But we need to think about it this way:

We resist authority because we believe autonomy is the path to authenticity.

But autonomy is not the path to authenticity, because as a follower of Jesus, autonomy is at odds with authority of God.

Think of it this way:

Who knows you better than the one who made you, knows you, unconditionally loves you, saved you, and now dwells inside?

- This is why we use the phrase, "asking Jesus into our heart." It's our way of saying, "Jesus is now indwelling our life, giving us his Spirit, and guiding us to the fullness of life."

When Jesus is our Lord, knowing you begins by following Jesus.

- You are "in Christ." Your life is hidden with him.
- And it's being under the authority of Jesus that paves the way to true authenticity.

The most authentic thing you can do is give Jesus authority over you.

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Maximum freedom is found under authority.
Authenticity is about being our true self.

TRANSITION: This is actually the Good News. This is the Gospel. But let's not forget: The Good News has a hard truth.

INSPIRATION – The world says to look inward, but the Gospel says we should look upward.

A. THE HARD TRUTH OF THE GOOD NEWS:

- a. The Good News of from God is simply this: You are a sinner in need of a savior.
- b. You've sinned against God, not yourself or your personal journey to self-discovery.
- c. But God loves you so much he was NOT willing to leave for your sin to keep you separated from him.
- d. In your place, God offered his Son, Jesus, as a sacrificial Savior.
- e. The Good News is that salvation is free gift. The Hard News is that you can't save yourself.

Expressive individualism would have us look deep into our hearts to discover our inner essence and express that to the world.

The world says we should look inward,
but the Gospel says to look upward.

By looking upward, we don't lose ourselves, but rather find ourselves. Our true selves. The selves we were meant to be from the beginning.

PRAYER

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Church Name

SERIES: You Do You?

MESSAGE 2: "Why Do You Think You Are?"

Bottom Line: You're a unique person created for God's common purpose.

Object Lesson: None

Key Idea: Self-discovery is a worthwhile pursuit. After all, we are made unique. Discovering the depths of our uniqueness is a good thing, but if self-discovery leads to self-focus, our self-fulfillment greatly suffers. It's a good thing the Apostle Paul gives us an alternative.

CONNECTION – We are all unique.

A. **PERSONALITY PROFILE:** I recently overheard someone say:

"Well, I'm just a Red, 8, ENTJ, Director profile, with strategy and creativity strengths, but with a wing 7, so I like to have some fun, too."

And I knew *exactly* what they were talking about! Because that's me!

- The fact that this sentence makes some sense might indicate we have a problem! Or maybe it's not a problem on the surface as much as instinct. The sheer volume of personality profiling systems and self-discovery frameworks must mean something, right?

B. **WE WANT TO KNOW THYSELF:** All of these "know more about yourself" personality assessments and profiling frameworks exist for a reason:

We know we're **unique**,
and we **intrinsically** desire to
discover our **uniqueness**.

- Assessments and profiles help us do that. That's why there's such a huge assessment market.
- **From childhood to adulthood:** We get a sense that we are unique and that we should discover our uniqueness from childhood:

"Today you are You, that is truer than true.
There is no one alive who is Youer than You."

— Dr. Seuss, *Happy Birthday to You!*

"I yam what I yam and dat's all what I yam."

—Popeye

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- Then we grow up and hear more of the same. From Dr. Seuss to Dr. Phil. From Popeye to Lady Gaga.

C. **SOCRATES:** Our desire to understand ourselves isn't modern at all. This is the modern-day version of Socrates famous quote from around 450 BC, "To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom."

"To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom."

– Socrates

- I'm guessing Socrates wasn't the first to consider this, either. It doesn't take long for us to realize we are all unique. We sort of intrinsically know that being oneself is an important pursuit.

NOTE: I always try to make the connection personal where possible.

D. **WHY I'M A PASTOR TODAY:** Self-discovery is important for sure. Self-discovery is why I'm a pastor today. I can say without question that the more I've learned about myself and how I became myself, the better I've been as a father, husband, employee, leader, teammate, etc.

- This pursuit of "know thyself" is why I'm in ministry today. Came across this quote 15 years ago:

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

– Howard Thurman.

This quote is why I'm in ministry. I learned more and more about myself, and that discovery led me out of the marketplace and into ministry.

E. **SOMEWHAT INNOCENT DESIRE:** We have an intrinsic desire to "know thyself." And the world around us shares that desire. Dr. Seuss gives way to Dr. Phil. And it makes sense.

We want to know ourselves so
we can be ourselves.

We want to be "us." To include a buzz word, we want to be authentic. And we want to be happy. It seems, and we are constantly reminded, that being you is the path to happiness. "You do you." "Be true to yourself." Follow your heart." The more I "know thyself" the more I can be myself. Why do you want to know more about you?

TRANSITION: So what's the problem? Nothing so far...but this "know thyself" culture can be a gateway that doesn't always provide what we really want.

TENSION – Our happiness question for fulfillment.

A. **GOAL = HAPPINESS:** On the surface, it makes sense. The more we know about ourselves, the more we'll be able to direct our efforts toward what we want most. What do you want most? I know you're in church and you're tempted to say "Jesus" or "Prayer" or something

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like that. What do you really want? To know yourself? No. That's an action that you hope leads to an outcome. What's the outcome you want?

If you are like virtually everyone around you, the real answer is happiness.

HAPPINESS

- **Me too! That quote to inspired me to be a pastor...** It sounds all spiritual when I say, "I came across a quote about 'coming alive' and it caused me to follow God's calling to pastor this church." Do you know why that quote jumped off the page for me? Because I was UNHAPPY! I didn't feel "alive," so a quote about finding what makes me feel alive spoke to me. I wanted to be... any guesses? HAPPY. I was on a happiness quest.
- We never say it this way, but we are all on different versions of a happiness quest. And as is obvious, the better we know ourselves, the better we'll be able to pursue what makes us happy.

We want to **know** ourselves so
we can **be** ourselves so
we can find **happiness** for ourselves.

- a. **Happiness is what we chase**, and we are at the center of the pursuit and the result. The purpose. Our purpose.
- B. **THE GATEWAY:** **Naturally, we think self-discovery is the path.** Chasing happiness often leaves us unhappy AND unfulfilled. You've probably heard people talk about how marijuana is a gateway drug to harder substances. Same thing here. The innocent desire to "know thyself" for the purpose of self-fulfillment is a gateway to something completely unfulfilling.

When **self-discovery** becomes a
means to **self-fulfillment**,
we become hyper **self-focused**.

As the path continues...

Self-focus is a gateway to
seeking fulfillment **for** ourselves,
in ourselves, and **from** ourselves.

- a. **We become our own means to our own end.** Self-discovery is the means to the happiness end.

TRANSITION: I want to suggest an alternative - not to self-discovery, but self-fulfillment. Actually, Paul wants to suggest an alternative.

Fulfillment is what you want,
but **happiness** is what you chase.

Happiness solves a temporary problem,
while **fulfillment** provides a lasting purpose.

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The great news is that "knowing thyself" is directly connected to lasting purpose.

FOUNDATION – What the Bible teaches on the topic with summary.

A. **CONTEXT:** With all this self-discovery leading to self-focus, I want us to look at an alternative. Paul is dealing with a lot of issues in the churches he helped launch. In Corinth...

1 Corinthians 10:23-33 (NIV)

²³ "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive.

- Exactly, Paul. This is massively important for us as follower of Jesus. You are free to do anything now. You are not under the law. You are forgiven, it's a gift that you didn't earn, but you accepted freely. And freely accepting forgiveness gives you a lot of freedom. Apparently, the people were really pushing the limited of this option.
- Bringing this to our culture today. *You do you, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else*, it's fine. *Don't let anyone tell you what you can do*, when you can do it, and who you can do it with. We are all unique, so make your own path.
- Paul sees it a different way. And he should know. Paul knew himself, and with this knowledge, he decided to live for something other than himself. This very church existed because Paul used who God made him to be for something other than himself. That's where he's going with this section of the letter.

²⁴ No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

- That's a directive not a suggestion.
- Paul believes unequivocally that the best thing you can do with yourself is to not live for yourself. Living for your own good isn't for your own good.
- Then he gives them a real contextual example:

²⁵ Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, ²⁶ for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

²⁷ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. ²⁹ I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? ³⁰ If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

- SIDE NOTE: You and God are in right standing. You and God are good! You can eat whatever you want. BUT...
- Culturally, eating laws and restrictions were a big deal to the Israelites.

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- This is no longer about you and God. It's about you and others. It's like a progression: You began with you and you, then you moved to you and God, and now you're ready to move again to you and others.

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

- Whatever you do, do it illuminate the love of God for others.
- Everything you do, do it in a way that forces people to notice God. To look to God.
- See your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven.

³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— ³³ even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many...

- What's the purpose? So God will like me more? If I focus on others God will appreciate my efforts?

³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— ³³ even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many so that they may be saved.

- As a follower of Jesus, this is our purpose. If you've ever wondered, "why am I here?" This is why. This is why you are here. This is your purpose. The world has a problem, and we have been given stewardship of the solution. You are here to help others meet and follow Jesus.

B. **GOD MADE YOU UNIQUE FOR A PURPOSE:** Because you are created unique, you have a unique part to play in God's purpose. We see this repeated over and over in Scripture.

a. Examples from Scripture...

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV); Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIV); Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

- b. Put this all together. You are so unique. You have unique passions, personality, strengths, spiritual gifts, and more. The uniqueness in you is meant for the people around you.

You're a unique person created for God's common purpose.

TRANSITION: Your unique person plus God's common purpose is where we find lasting fulfillment.

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APPLICATION – Discover yourself to better understand your purpose.

- B. **SELF-DISCOVERY FOR GOD'S PURPOSE:** All this self-discovery in our world today is an expression of our God-given desire to know our part is His greater purpose.

That desire was placed in us by the one who created us. We know we are unique. And we know that we want purpose. It's unfortunate that our world encourages self-focus over self-fulfillment.

You don't need to discover yourself to discover your purpose.
You need to discover yourself to understand your part in God's purpose.

When you begin to understand your part in His purpose, you experience true fulfillment.

If we allow self-discovery to lead to self-focus, we begin a happiness chase that can never be won.

If we allow self-discovery to lead us to our part in God's common purpose, we find fulfillment. And joy.

- C. **DISCOVER YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY:**

SELF-DISCOVERY FOR GOD'S PURPOSE

1. Discover how God made you.
2. Explore where God could use you.

- a. Discover how God made you:

- Take personality profiles, but take a spiritual gifts inventory, too.

NOTE: I offered a spiritual gifts inventory assessment for people on our website:

HOW DID GOD MAKE YOU?

woodstockcity.org/gifts

- b. Explore how God can use you:

- Allow your SHAPE to point the way.

WHERE CAN GOD USE YOU?

Allow your S.H.A.P.E. to point the way.

Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences.

– From Rick Warren's *A Purpose Driven Life*

- SHAPE: Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences.
- God uses ordinary people to accomplish his extraordinary purpose.
- God uses people for his purpose in every place. If there are people there, there is a purpose for you there.

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- There is no limit. **God can use you for his purpose wherever you are.** If you are in the marketplace, be used for God's common purpose. If you coach little league... If you work from home...

TRANSITION: Socrates wasn't wrong. We just forget the second half of his statement.

INSPIRATION – Knowing ourselves helps us be used best.

A. **BACK TO SOCRATES:** Maybe Socrates had it right.

"To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom."

– Socrates

- He didn't say "know thyself." He said knowing thyself "is the beginning of wisdom."
- **Knowing yourself is not the end, but the means to God's end.**

PRAYER

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Church Name

SERIES: You Do You?

MESSAGE 3: "To Whom Will You Go?"

Bottom Line: Salvation is free; it costs you nothing. Following Jesus will cost you something. Refusing to follow Jesus will cost you...

Object Lesson: None

Key Idea: It's so easy to like Jesus. After all, he has a lot to give us. But if liking Jesus keeps us from following Jesus, we miss out on the real purpose of his presence. Salvation is free; it costs you nothing. Following Jesus will cost you something. Refusing to follow Jesus will cost you...

CONNECTION – Remember, liking Jesus makes him our life coach.

A. **LIKING JESUS IS EASY:** You've probably heard me say this before: "It's easy to like Jesus."

It's easy to like and love Jesus.

He's might just be the Mr. Congeniality of religion. Put your feelings around Christianity, church, and his followers aside, and it's hard to *not* like Jesus. Heck, even non-Christians like Jesus *way* more than they like us and his church. Other faiths and religions even like Jesus... 2,000 years ago, the only people who didn't like Jesus were the Jewish religious elite. They held the purse strings (literally) for everything religious in Israel. Jesus was *not* what they wanted in a Savior (destroy Rome, etc.). In many ways, he was the opposite of what they wanted. Worse, following him would take away their power.

But outside of this small, yet powerful group, Jesus was well liked. Why? Jesus is the guy constantly loving, forgiving, extending grace upon grace.

Because he's so likable, it's easy to like having him around.

Can you imagine being Jesus after performing a miracle or two?

"Hey, you're the water into wine guy! I have a party next weekend, are you available?"

"I've heard that you can heal people who don't deserve it..."

B. **LIKING JESUS:** For a guy who is so likable, it's amazing that Jesus *never* asked us to like him.

For a guy who is so likable,
it's amazing that Jesus *never*
asked us to like him.

That wasn't his goal at all! He could care less about a popularity contest. He wasn't aiming for the "most likable" superlative at Nazareth High School.

Jesus probably doesn't mind being liked, but that wasn't what he asked. It's certainly not why he came to earth.

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But it's our initial approach to Jesus. We like liking him. We like what we can potentially get from him.

Liking Jesus makes him our life coach.

Be honest: That's what we really want. We want the right amount of Jesus depending on where we are, what we are doing, or who we are doing it with.

Examples:

- When things are rough, we want a lot of Jesus. Tragedy. Diagnosis. Job loss. Relational trouble. Rebellious kid.
- When things are good, we want a little bit of Jesus. Good job. Steady income. Healthy relationships.
- When we vacation in Vegas... Or go on Spring Break... Jesus, you stay here, and I'll come back...

- C. **JESUS KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN:** Jesus knew people would like him for their personal benefit. I think Jesus realized that people would be tempted to use and abuse him for their personal benefit.

TRANSITION: No doubt, Jesus came to earth to give us something. But his gift wasn't what everyone was chasing.

TENSION – What did people really want from Jesus?

- A. **JESUS WAS A "MUST EXPERIENCE":** There is a 24-hour microcosm of this on full display. To say that Jesus was must-see-tv is an understatement. There are so many moments that are just spectacular. There was one day, though, that stands out.

- a. Feeding of the 5,000...
- b. Walking on water...

Arrive at the other side of the lake and people are already gathering. Now, why do you think all those people are standing on the banks ready and waiting for Jesus? Why do you think people are waiting for Jesus to disembark? Any guesses?

"I found this bread crumb; can you make me a turkey sandwich with spicy mustard?"

- B. **JESUS KNEW HE HAD TO ADDRESS IT:** You don't have to be omniscient to see why. It was clear to Jesus, so he thought, "This is the perfect time for a sermon."

John 6:25-26 (NIV)

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."

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- Jesus not holding any punches! You are glad to see me because I fed you. But do you really want me? Do you want *all* of me? You were looking for me, but you know what you might find in me? Kind of like the dog chasing the car. Whatcha gonna do when you catch it?

TRANSITION: *Knowing that all these people were following him around to get something, Jesus decided it was a great time to teach something.*

FOUNDATION – Do you want Jesus for what you can get or for what he can give?

- A. **CONTEXT:** I want to read the relatively short sermon Jesus gave. It is worth hearing it all. Quick side note: We are going to see the phrase “very truly I tell you a lot.” That’s important. Jesus is using this as a reminder that what he is saying carries significance.

John 6:27-42, 47-66 (NIV)

²⁷ Do not work for food that **spoils**, but for food that **endures** to **eternal life**, which the Son of Man will **give** you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

- Jesus is using what they came back for (food) to make a bigger point. Earthly food is temporary, but what I offer is eternal.

²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we **do** to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to **believe** in the one he has sent.”

- They’re Jewish. They are used to earning God’s acceptance.

³⁰ So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the **manna** in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

- History Lesson...

³² Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my **Father** who gives you the **true bread** from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

- Basically, please give us what we need the most. Not food, but life. Life to the full.

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the **bread of life**. Whoever **comes** to me will never go hungry, and whoever **believes** in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will **never** drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do **my will** but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s

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will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

- Beautiful moment of teaching. Jesus is saying that he is the one who offer life through faith.
- This is the gospel. This is the good news. If you’ve ever wondered how to reach God.
- That one group that didn’t like Jesus at all started didn’t like this sermon one iota.

⁴¹At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴²They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’”

- Of course they are skeptical. They were awaiting the Messiah, who would come from heaven to defeat Rome!

⁴⁷Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. ⁵⁰But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die.

- At this point the metaphor might be going a bit too far.
- Now, I mentioned earlier how likable Jesus was. He knows it, and now he is ready to push on them a little bit.
- Here’s the set up: Jesus isn’t willing to settle for being liked. He’s about to sacrifice his life for all of humanity. He desires followers, not just friends. He is about to challenge this crowd who are all here for the handouts. Are you in it for all of me, or just part of me?

Liking Jesus makes
him our life coach,
but following Jesus
makes him our Lord.

- That word “Lord” is important. It comes with authority. Power. Making someone our Lord gives them authority over *all* of our life.

A life coach makes suggestions,
but a Lord gives directions.

- Lordship is our struggle with Jesus. We like him, but we don’t want too much of him. Too much Jesus cramps our style. I can’t be the boss if I make Jesus my Lord.
- How can I be “true to myself” if I’m not in charge of myself? How can I “follow my heart” if I’m not calling the shots?
- Jesus knew the crowd (and us) were there to have a temporary need met, but he wanted to meet their greatest need.
- With great intention, Jesus takes the metaphor too far.

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⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

- Uhhhhh...

⁵² Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

- Good question.

⁵³ Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹ He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

- Whaaaaaat???? Can you imagine being in this crowd?!

⁶⁰ On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

- I bet they did.

⁶⁶ From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

- Why did many turn away? They were there for the free food, not to find a Lord. They were there for what they wanted in the moment, but not realizing what they needed eternally was the greater desire.

B. **POINT OF THE SERMON:** Do you want Jesus for what you can get, or do you want Jesus for what he can give?

BREAD OF LIFE SERMON

Do you want Jesus for what you can get,
or do you want Jesus for what he will give?

Those are different. “Getting” from Jesus places you at the center. Jesus “giving” places him at the center. One makes him your life coach, the other places him as your Lord. One meets a temporary want, the other solves an eternal need.

TRANSITION: This is why the “you do you” mindset predominant in our culture today always leaves us empty.

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APPLICATION – There's a cost to following Jesus.

- A. **ANTI INDIVIDUALISM:** “You do you” drives self-discovery as a means to self-fulfillment, but often only produces self-focus. We aren't capable of filling ourselves. **No matter how much we “follow our heart” or “live our truth,” we'll always feel partially empty.**

That's what Jesus referenced with the manna portion of his sermon.

ISRAEL: While Israel wandered through the wilderness, God provided bread for their temporary hunger, but they all got hungry again, and they still died in the end.

CROWD AT THE RIVER: That's what the crowds on the banks of the lake were experiencing. “We want more free food” is code for “we are focused on what we can get from Jesus.”

US TODAY: And we continue to do the same.

We seek temporary solutions
for our eternal problem.

Or to use some of Jesus' sermon:

Don't settle for manna when
you can have the Bread of Life.

And the world is FULL of manna! Our temptation for self-focus leads us to all sorts of counterfeit, temporary solutions for our eternal problem. We begin to feel empty in life. There's something missing. Our solution: we try to fill our life by turning inward. The world says we should look inward, but the gospel says to look upward.

Filling our stomach doesn't fill our life. Chasing happiness doesn't provide us joy. Liking Jesus doesn't give us peace.

- B. **THERE WILL BE A COST:** And let's not kid ourselves. There's a cost.

Salvation is free; it costs you nothing.
Following Jesus will cost you something.

- C. **APPLICATION:**

- Christian: This is a daily thing.** But the return of following Jesus is worth the cost! Daily choose to lose. Give God authority over your life. Be true to your calling, not your heart. **Find self-fulfillment in self-denial, not self-focus**
- Not a Christian: Starting point.** Not sure. Curious. Not working for you now: Starting Point...

TRANSITION: When Jesus finished his “Bread of Life” sermon, many people began to turn and leave. His Disciples were all there, too.

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INSPIRATION – What will refusing to follow Jesus cost you?

B. **BACK TO THE SERMON:** Jesus sees people leaving and he turns to his guys:

John 6:67-70 (NIV)

⁶⁷ “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.

- “Uh... Yes?”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go?”

- We’ve tried it other ways. We’ve at the manna of the world and still felt hungry.

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

- Have you come to believe that?

Salvation is free; it costs you nothing.

Following Jesus will cost you something.

Refusing to follow Jesus will cost you...

PRAYER