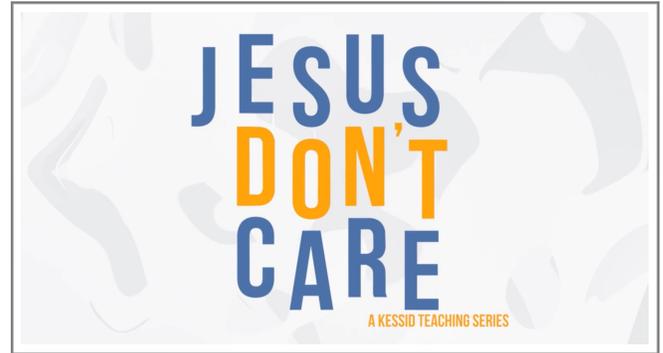


"JESUS DON'T CARE THAT IT MAY COST YOU"

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Today we're going to look at what happens when we as a community line up all that we don't care about with what Christ doesn't care about...

- Now, "Community" can look like many things... For instance, within this particular story, there are 4 primary players doing the Communal Aligning...

I want you to imagine this story like a great stage drama!

At Center Stage: "The Christ: Is what all else aligns around in order to experience healing and wholeness."

- As we know, Jesus was born in Bethlehem... When He was very young, His parents moved to Nazareth, in the area of Galilee. And when Jesus grew up, He moved to Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee.
- From here Jesus traveled all over Galilee teaching His truth and healing the sick

(Vs) Matthew 4:23 ESV – "And He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people."

Despite all this travel... It appears Jesus spent quite a bit of time in and around Capernaum.

- ... Meaning He probably made it sort of a ministry base because Mark even refers to it as "home." And it's within this setting our story begins...

(Vs) Mark 2:1a-2 – "... when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that He had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and He preached the word to them."

- Because of His reputation as one who could heal the sick and cast out demons... naturally as news spread that Jesus was back in town, a huge crowd gathered... Until people packed the house where He was staying.

The idea that people knew exactly where Jesus was, and which house He was at, speaks to the reality that He probably had a host home and host family...

Enter Stage Right: "The Hosts: Are the people who have resources to spare, which they're willing to risk for the cause of Christ."

- FYI: We are all called to be Hosts at some level...
- One other quick note about this gathering: So much of Jesus' Ministry happens because of how He finds His way toward people. (Vs) Luke 15:3-7 – "So He told them this parable..."

Simply put, we preach... "Jesus is great at finding the lost."

- But... this doesn't mean you just get to drive your life into a ditch and then start bleating out into the darkness for "Super Jesus" to swoop in and save you...
- For instance, everything that happens from here on out within this story is the result of people finding their way to Jesus...

This is because... "Jesus is also great at sitting still long enough for the lost to discover He's always been just around the corner."

- **Question:** Which are you today? – Lost/Seeking – Found or Finding?

Now somewhere across town, there's been a meeting happening...

- There's at least five people at this meeting, but I'm guessing more.
- These people are passionately discussing what it is they are about to do... Statements like, "We couldn't get to him last time," and, "We still have to try!" were being tossed back and forth.
- Someone looks at a quiet figure off in the corner and says, "He's worth whatever we can do!"
- Off in that corner lay someone deeply loved... He's an unnamed paralyzed man who probably doesn't even know how rich in relationship he is – But he's about to find out!
- What he does know is that his closest friends have gathered around to discuss how it is they are going to love him today...

They are the figures sitting Stage Left. "The Friends: Are the people who allow love to lead them into action."

- Eventually, they explain their plan, wide-eyed, he must decide... Does he give them his blessing and participate, or does he stay as he is?
- There's a great deal of risk here... In this culture, to be sick, is to be sinful. We do a bit of this still today...
 - ➡ Sick? = Sin!
 - ➡ Scared? = Sin!
 - ➡ Trouble? = Sin! Etc... That's all-garbage theology! Throw it away!

"What is true is that our culture, just like theirs, enjoys judging those with trouble different than our own." Addicts, Divorced, Etc...

- This Paralyzed Man would know this, and that this plan will probably cause a lot of exposure, embarrassment, and so, insecurity for him, but he also knows he just doesn't want to stay how he is anymore... So, he's authentic... and with shaky confidence decides to bless what it is that's about to happen. – "Tears all around at this point for sure"

This man's the figure at Front of Stage. "The Human Condition: Can only be faced when we are first both honest and then humbled about the place we currently are."

This is because..."It's only when I realize my great need for Christ that the greatness of Christ can be received."

And so finally, with all these players revealed... Let's watch what happens next...

(Vs) Mark 2:3 – "Some men came, bringing to Him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them."

STAGE LEFT: The Friends could not get him to Jesus... They clearly saw the Obstacles!

- But, through Love and Leadership, decided they would find a way...

(Vs) Mark 2:4 – "Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on."

STAGE RIGHT: The Hosts could do nothing to manage the coming miracle...

- They had put themselves in a position to help... So, today their willingness to Risk and sacrifice Resources was about to be tested.

STAGE FRONT: We see the Human Condition, with all its frailty, being lowered into the room.

- This would have been an incredibly emotional thing to watch or be part of... Really think about it... Being lowered by your expectant friends?
- His eyes and the eyes of his friends looking upon each other...

The Story Continues...

(Vs) Mark 2:5-7 – When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Quick Note: "Don't sweat the spectators."

- The world will never understand... "So, stop performing for them..."

Back to CENTER STAGE: With Christ

(VS) Mark 2:5:8-12 – ⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in His spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and He said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So, He said to the man, ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

And... "Scene!" – Curtain Closes! Standing Ovation! "Awe and Wonder for all!"

This is what can happen when we as a community line up all that we don't care about with what Christ doesn't care about...

- People watching will say... "We have never seen anything like this!"

Question: So, why doesn't it happen all the time?

- Easy Answer... Because of the Costs.
- It cost a lot to put on this kind of life-changing drama!

Really consider it...

It Cost those called to be... "Hosts – Resources and Risk"

- Few people can handle not being able to manage the miracles. Especially as their roofs are getting ripped off in the name of the Lord!

It Cost those called to be... "Friends – Love and Leadership"

- Few people are willing to encourage, let alone plan for, the friends they know that needs to get into the room with Jesus!
- Then, of course, it Costs each of us, personally every time we face down our Own... "Human Condition – Honest and Humble"
- Self-Awareness like this is unheard of!

"Stories of people aligning with God around the things He doesn't care about are exceedingly rare because the cost to experience them is so high that hardly anyone wants to pay it."

And yet, always, there in the center of the room is The Christ ...

- Watching, Willing... But very clearly reminding...

(Vs) Matt. 16:24a-26 – "... If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

"Jesus doesn't care that it may cost you."

- And so, He invites you to align your sacrifice and so life with His... For herein lies true Healing and Wholeness... the very essence of Hope!