

**“GRACE AND A
COSTCO CHICKEN”**
Date: June 19, 2022
Speaker: Kip Gallienne



This weekend we're celebrating and recognizing Fathers, and like Mothers on Mothers Day, there are those of you sitting quietly... and hurting:

- Men who desperately wanted to be dads, but are still waiting.
- Fathers who have lost their children, to broken relationships, or to their passing.
- Men whose fathers had abandoned the privilege of being a loving parent
- Single moms who are doing their best to be both mom and dad... And more, I'm sure...
- I don't know your story, or how it will continue, but I have experienced God's faithfulness, and that healing of whatever your heart needs to happen will come, if you allow God the space to do so.

In this series of "The Blacksmith's Dog" we've looked at the meaning of "apathy", and as it's used most often today it is exactly as Danny presented it in the first week of this series

- ...apathy being "a lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern." It's the great shoulder shrug of "Ehh"
- In its original Greek, though, it was a more powerful and descriptive word. Centuries ago, apathy literally meant to be "without suffering." That progressed into the idea of "experiencing a lack of emotional connection and to be without feeling."

a = without **pathos** = suffering

The absence or suppression of emotion or passion

A lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern

- So there can also be a deliberateness to apathy... an intentionality... a purposeful choosing not to feel.

At 17 my life changed forever.

- My high school girlfriend had a sincere, heartfelt relationship with Jesus Christ, and she lovingly and patiently modeled Christ to me. Her family wasn't perfect, but it was loving and playful, and their home was peaceful and welcoming... effortlessly so. I would look at the family dynamic that they had, which seemed to just "happen" without a person like me "making" it happen. If this is what Jesus is about, if this is His kind of love, then Jesus be my Savior...PLEASE!
- You would think that this life-change encounter with Christ would have obliterated the Perfectionism I had adopted, but I wasn't ready to let Jesus take it, nor was He going to force it from me.
- I was constantly stressed out, worrying that I had left something either poorly done, or undone altogether, for which I would be criticized.

- By the time I was 20 I had married a beautiful Christian woman whom I adored, and whose family were all believers and seemed to be pretty happy and pretty normal. I was so happy to begin a new life with her, but my controlling ways, which I re-defined as being a "solid, Christian husband and Spiritual Leader of my marriage" remained...and grew even more dysfunctional.
- I was my harshest critic of my performance, and continually set incredibly unrealistic expectations for myself, and others. I was deathly afraid of failure, so much so that if there was any possibility of not meeting my personal goals or my employer's expectations, I would find an excuse to abandon a project, or make someone else responsible when it went south.
- As I look back I can definitely see times in which the Holy Spirit was calling to my heart to confront my Perfectionism, but I just couldn't let it go. It was a reliable and trustworthy friend, always there for me in the midst of the emotional unrest, and always capable of providing me with either a solution to excel or a door to run through and escape.

"The sorrow of God lies in our fear of Him, our fear of life, and our fear of ourselves. He anguishes over our self-absorption and self-sufficiency... God's sorrow lies in our refusal to approach Him when we have sinned and failed." - Brennan Manning

- I hear about people whose spiritual awakenings have come from a powerful sermon, or a song they hear that tells them their story and God's ability to heal, or the amazing testimony of a friend, or a miraculous intervention of physical healing from God.

The Holy Spirit's revelation, His process of transforming my heart, began through a much more unusual source... a Costco rotisserie chicken.

- That night was the beginning of God peeling off the layers of apathy and self-protection, and revealing His grace to me.
- This was the beginning of the emotional dominoes falling, and the more I talked in each succeeding therapy session the faster they fell.

"The deeper into weakness and suffering and testing we go, the deeper Christ's solidarity with us. As we go into pain and anguish, we are descending even deeper into Christ's very heart, not away from it." - Dane Ortlund

The deeper I went into confronting what had happened, the more I felt the strength of Jesus' arms around me. My entering into the abundant life Jesus has promised, has nothing to do with my own ability. My resource to deal with all of it comes from the One who truly loves me, and Who gladly and willingly supersedes my own weaknesses in His perfect strength... it's the reason Paul declares...

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

- *Psalm 3:3 is one of my favorite verses, because for me it speaks to the intimate Presence of My Heavenly Father:*

"But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head." Psalm 3:3 ESV

- David wrote this psalm when he was on the run from an enemy, and it speaks to his trust in God as both his Protector and the One who lifts him up out of his despair.
- And while this verse has spoken to me in the same way at times, it also gives me a picture of my Heavenly Father cupping my face in His hands, lifting up my head so that my eyes can meet the kindness in His, and all the distractions of the world go away. I hear Him say, "Keep your eyes on me! I want you to see the love in them that I have for you! I want you to see the confidence that I have in you as you trust in Me to deal with everything! I want you to see your reflection in my eyes of you... my beloved child!"
- I have discovered that my Lord Jesus, as I live in His Presence, as I respond to His invitation in the 15th chapter of John to abide in Him, wants to be the Redeemer of **ALL** of my life, and show me His strength in **ALL** things... He wants to be the Redeemer of all my **"every"**... every hurtful word that was said to me, every painful slap, every time I tried to say "No" but it happened anyway, every bit of shame and guilt, every thought that I am less than, every time I ran instead of trusting Him... redeemed in His strength and to His glory!
- And as I go through each day with Jesus, I'm finding that my numbed-down emotions and deliberate apathy has given way to a growing curiosity and amazement as to what He's up to, what's next for me in His plans and purposes, that not only has He NOT given up on me, but is presenting me with opportunities I never dreamed of! I am "In Process", which Kawika so beautifully and powerfully described two weeks ago. Is it all football games and See's Candy?? I know the expression is "Rainbows and Unicorns" but I needed to make it my story... No. I still struggle with old thoughts and old habits. But the Holy Spirit is incredibly faithful in His loving correction as He guides me out of them.
- In The Message Bible, Eugene Peterson interprets Matthew 11:28-30 like this: *"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me. Get away with Me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me-watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."*
- I've come to believe that being the Dad my Heavenly Father wants me to be, that shows my kids and grandkids the amazing love He has for them **through** me, has more to do with admitting my short-comings than ever talking about my successes, of taking EVERYTHING to Him for direction and for healing, realizing that He really wants me to be the Dad I want to be, and to trust His ways of getting me there.

MESSAGE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

PONDER

1. What about the message did I feel...
 - Inspired about?
 - Convicted by?
 - Sadness, grief, or loss about?
 - Curious about?
 - Hopeful for?

EXPERIENCE

2. Did anyone have a "Wow!" moment during the message that resonated in you? If so, what was it? (Could be a new scripture/Bible story you've never heard, a profound concept, etc.)

LEARN

3. What new/fresh thing did I learn about God? What new/fresh thing did I learn about myself?

APPLY

4. How can I challenge myself this week with what I've learned? What might responding well look like?