



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

The Story of the Greatest Disciple!

Luke 22:24-38

Message #66 of 70 – S856

Sermon given on August 11, 2019



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Story of the Greatest Disciple!

Luke 22:24-38

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 22**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- One of the realities of maturity is being able to view the world with a larger perspective
- When we are young, it is harder to see the big picture
- It is like taking kids to the happiest place on earth and they are fighting over the toy they got in the fast food meal before they got there
- As a child, that toy is the most important thing in the world in that moment
- As an adult, we know that toy is practically worthless and will probably be broken or discarded very quickly
- Spiritual maturity is very much like that
- Spiritual maturity allows us to see the world more clearly and keep the main things the main things
- Spiritual immaturity results in us doing and saying things that must grieve the heart of God
- In today's text we have an incident that reeks of spiritual immaturity
- My hope is that we come away from this message with a greater conviction to become spiritually mature
- Let's pray and then get into our text
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Story of the Greatest Disciple!**
- The context of today's message is the Last Supper
- Jesus is with His disciples and they have just shared the Passover meal
- During that meal Jesus introduced the New Covenant that would come through His coming sacrifice on the cross

- Then Jesus dropped a bombshell on them and told them that one of them was going to betray Him
- All twelve of them start asking Jesus if they are the one
- At some point during this, Jesus tells Judas to go do what he is going to do
- Then the conversation changes
- **Luke 22:24**
- The disciples start off wondering who could possibly betray Jesus to arguing over who should have the greatest place in the kingdom of God
- “I couldn’t possibly betray Jesus because I am so great!”
- “Oh, you think you are great – I am much greater than you!”
- This is not a new conversation – already seen it a couple other times in Luke
- What is so tragic and sad is the context of the Last Supper – in just a few short hours Jesus will be betrayed and arrested
- Jesus takes this time to try to help them to be more mature
- **Luke 22:25-27**
- Spiritually immature people are concerned about how many people are serving them
- A spiritually mature person seeks to serve as many people as they can
- Jesus saying, that’s what I have been doing **Mark 10:44-45**
And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.
- True greatness is not in how many people are serving you but in how many people you are serving
- A sign of spiritual immaturity is asking the question, ‘What’s in it for me?’
- Spiritual maturity doesn’t concern itself with what we might get out of it – wants to glorify God, bless others, and grow faith
- Trusts God to do for me what is good for me **Psalm 37:4**
Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.
- God delights to give His people the desires of their heart
- Jesus then tells them ‘What’s in it for them?’
- **Luke 22:28-30**

- A careful study of the Bible teaches us that we will all experience heaven differently based on our relationship with God in this life
 - This life and world are a dim, sin-corrupted shadow of what heaven will be like
 - Just as there is diversity of life in this world, I am convinced that heaven is immensely more diverse **Psalm 19:1**
- The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.**
- The more we look into the heavens, the more we find and more diverse we find the universe is
 - It is inconceivable to me that heaven is less in any way compared to the created universe
 - The Bible gives us frustratingly little information about what it will be like to live in heaven – what it does tell us is exciting
 - So, Jesus is preparing to finish the work He came to do – to save sinners by dying on the cross making a way for anyone who believes to be forgiven of their sins
 - The disciples are arguing about who is the greatest disciple
 - It is not hard for us to imagine that Peter being the most boisterous of the disciples – after all, he was one of the three to witness the Transfiguration and he was the only one to walk on water
 - Jesus just promised them all a kingdom and places of authority there
 - But they are not living in that kingdom right now, and so, Jesus brings them back down to earth by telling Peter that life was going to get difficult after He leaves
 - A spiritually mature person hopes in the future but lives in the present
 - Heart I heaven – feet on the ground – eyes on path ahead - hands on the plow
 - **Luke 22:31**
 - One of the attributes of God is absolute sovereignty – He is in control over everything
 - Nothing happens in this universe that is outside of His control
 - That includes the works of Satan
 - Satan is a real being – He is evil always **John 10:10a**
- The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.**
- Satan hates God and because humans are made in the image of God – he hates all humans

- And if Satan had his way, he would destroy all humans
- But Satan is not free to do what he wants, but only what God allows
- Just as he did with Job Satan asked God for permission to test Peter
- ‘has asked for you’ – has the sense of asked and given permission
- Jesus is warning Peter that Satan has been given permission by God the Father to test Peter
- Peter was going to be tested – and I can imagine Peter puffing up his chest and saying – Go ahead Satan – bring it! Careful Peter!
- **Luke 22:32a**
- ‘I have prayed for you’ – God the Son prayed for Peter
- The word ‘prayed’ has the sense of to plead, beg, or implore
- Peter was one of Jesus closest companions – begging God to help Peter to spiritually stand under the attack
- **Luke 22:32b**
- ‘when you have returned’ tells us that Peter is going to depart from Jesus
- This doesn’t mean that Peter’s faith is going to fail
- It means that Satan’s attack is going to be successful
- Peter doesn’t believe it is possible
- **Luke 22:33-34**
- The attack is going to come in the form of a servant girl challenging Peter to admit that he knows Christ – it is Peter’s courage that fails, not his faith
- Peter trusted in his courage – it was his place of strength – Satan turned his greatest strength against him, and Peter crumbled
- We will look at that more closely in a future message
- Peter believes he is spiritually mature and strong
- Before the next sunrise he will discover that Jesus is right and that he is not as strong as he thought he was
- Jesus ends this section telling them that things are about to change
- **Luke 22:35-38**
- When Jesus sent them out previously, they were usually received gladly – people looked upon Jesus as good teacher, a healer, a prophet, and some even believed He was the Messiah
- He was about to be executed as a criminal

- From now on ministry was going to be harder, sometimes it would even be a battle
 - Turn to **Ephesians 4**
 - Ministry was easier for them while Jesus was with them
 - Life and ministry would be easier for us if Jesus was walking around with us
 - He went back to heaven and is at the right hand of the Father preparing a place for us and will someday come back for us
 - Until then, we need to grow in spiritual maturity
 - What is spiritual maturity?
 - **Ephesians 4:11-16**
 - There is a series of sermons in those 5 verses
 - Spiritual maturity – ‘the fulness of Christ’ – being like Christ
 - The question is how do we do that?
 - By doing the basics: prayer, Bible, serving, giving, and fellowship
 - Some who listen to this message might think, “I’m doing those things, at least three out of five.”
 - But are you doing them in a way that leads to spiritual maturity?
 - Why does it even matter? **1 Peter 5:8-9**
- Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.**
- Spiritually, the devil is looking for people he can devour spiritually – remember – he wants to steal, kill, and destroy the image bearers of God – you and me
 - Lions don’t hunt by going after the strongest in the herd – they look for the young and weak
 - Spiritual maturity doesn’t make you immune to Satan’s tactics, it just makes you less vulnerable
 - Not every difficult thing that comes is an attack by Satan
 - Sometimes bad things happen – like water leaks under your house
 - I don’t believe Satan crawled under my house and broke the pipe
 - Spiritual maturity also helps us through the storms of life
 - Imagine spiritual maturity as a ship on the ocean
 - The larger the ship (your spiritual maturity) the bigger the storm it can endure

- This is why two Christians can go through similar storms – one is shipwrecked and the other seems to sail right through it
- I would like to leave you with three constants of spiritual growth
- Before I give you those things – spiritual maturity takes time
- Also, you can't really do it alone – Paul said **1 Corinthians 11:1** **Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**
- Three constants which if you do them faithfully should lead to spiritual growth and maturity
- First constant – **Small Group**
- We have found that groups of about 8 to 12 experience the greatest spiritual growth
- We call our small groups Life Groups – we believe that life happens better in a small group
- Awesome having you here – but faith grows faster and deeper in a small group
- Second constant – **Discipleship/Counseling**
- This is one-on-one or couple-on-couple relationships to focus on specific areas of spiritual maturity
- You should be either being disciplined/counseled toward spiritual maturity or you ought to be the one doing the discipling
- I grow spiritually as I am helping others to grow
- Third constant – **Life Friends**
- We all need someone in our lives who knows us well enough to see the danger signs of weak faith or when we might be vulnerable to spiritual attack
- I am so thankful for men like Pastor Randy
- Recently he sensed that I was not where I needed to be spiritually
- He encouraged Kelly and me to come over and he and Debbie prayed for us and encouraged us – just what we needed
- Sometimes I feel like Peter – I can walk on water if Jesus asks me to
- Other times I am look at the storm and start to sink
- If that is you – call out to Jesus – then start working on these constants
- Get into a small group – be disciplined or disciple someone – be a friend
- Then trust God to grow you to be more like Jesus - **Pray!**