

DEEP SIX STUDY

October 17th, 2021

The Story Project – “A Life of Discovery”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS (You can view the full message on Facebook or at live.capecodchurch.com/live)

Opening: The Big Idea that binds The Story of the Bible together is this: God wants to give us – those he created in his image – the gift of full, abundant life. This week we wrestle with a difficult question: As people who’ve been given this gift of life, why do Christians sometimes sound like moralizing hypocrites – people who aren’t exactly full of life, but instead are... *full of it*?

1. A Life of Discovery... (Genesis 1:26-27 NIV; Genesis 3:8-11 NIV)

- As Christians, when we allow the certainty of our beliefs to become “weaponized” against others, an ugly mixture of morality and superiority can creep into our lives as we become “moralizers.” This hypocrisy is glaring to those looking at our lives from the outside.
- The question for us becomes, “How can I be *moral* without becoming a *moralizer*”? In other words, “How can I live by the truth without becoming a bully?” This question gets to the core of what Christianity is – and what it *isn’t*.
- Re-reading the creation narrative, we see that God created us “in his image” – we were meant to be *like* God, but not *the same as* God. He created us unfinished, intending us to be on a journey of discovery with him, becoming more and more like him as we journey.
- The picture of Adam and Eve’s (fallen) journey – walking with God, then “hiding” from him, then returning to him through “awkward conversations” – is a picture of the Christian life. This realization that we’re always on a journey (and never “arrive” in this life) is critical to living the life we’re called to (and have been “gifted”) as followers of Jesus – a life of humble discovery.
- The life of discovery we’re called to *isn’t* a life of “self-discovery”; while walking with God will reveal much about ourselves, the journey is about learning about God, not about *me*. It’s also not about lists of do’s and don’ts – and it’s not even just about a one-time decision of faith.

2. ...That Sets Me Free to Authenticity (Luke 18:9-14 NIV)

- Jesus told the parable about two men praying to illustrate the danger of moralizing – of thinking we’ve “arrived” as Christians. The tax collector recognized that he was on a journey of discovery, and this humble recognition set him free to be authentic before God and others.
- Living the (full) life of discovery with God means that we’re always learning and growing – and we’re always being reminded that “we’re not there yet.” This realization allows us to be honest about our weaknesses, not just our strengths – so we can live a life of authenticity.
- This humility – this recognition that I haven’t arrived, and won’t in this life – allows me to share my journey with others without moralizing about their journey. I can authentically pursue a life of truth without feeling (or acting) superior to those who are at different places in the journey of discovery, because I know that the gift of a full life is just that: a gift.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. Verses from NLT unless otherwise noted.

Proverbs 11:2; Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 7:1-5; Philippians 2:3-8; Colossians 3:12-13

Video of the Week: [Psalm 8](#) by the Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. As defined in the message, “moralizing” is what happens when we allow ourselves to feel (and act) superior to others because we think we’re doing a better job of living by God’s truth than they are. What’s one area of behavior/morality that you’re prone to moralize about? Explain your answer.
2. Why is moralizing by Christians so detrimental to our ability to spread the message about Jesus to a lost and broken world?
3. How do you react to the statement from the message that the Christian life “isn’t even just about a one-time decision of faith”? Isn’t becoming a Christian as simple as making that one-time decision to trust and follow Jesus?
4. Re-read Luke 18:9-14. Jesus didn’t present the Pharisee as a “bad” person, necessarily – just someone who was “confident in his own righteousness.” Assuming he started out as a moral person trying to follow God’s laws, how do you think he became a “moralizer” who looked down on others?
5. Paul tells us in Romans 3:22 (and elsewhere) that our faith in Jesus makes us “righteous” before God. Doesn’t that mean that we’re “there” – that we’ve received the gift that God has to offer us? Why or why not?
6. Going back to your answer to Question 1, how can you use the perspective of this week’s message to help prevent future “moralizing” about areas of your life that you feel superior to others about?