

Carpenter's Son: Dirty God

Intro:

I love daylight savings time... in the fall... when we get an extra hour of sleep! Spring is brutal! In fact, I think we should "fall back, spring back"! Twice a year we would get an extra hour of sleep! That would be awesome! I know, I know, eventually our days and nights would be reversed, but we'd all be a lot more rested!

Speaking of daylight savings time, I'm kind of surprised that we still have daylight savings time with all the Global Warming talk. It just seems obvious to me that having that extra hour of daylight from March through November is one of the major causes of Global Warming. I'm just surprised that the environmentalists haven't killed it by now! (beat) Some of you will get that one later today!

Have you ever formulated an opinion about someone before you actually met them and spent any significant time with them? I have. Maybe you've observed someone at school or work or maybe even here at The Well and you think you have them all figured out, right? Then later, you become friends with that person and you really get to know them and your relationship with them completely changes what you think about them.

Let me give you an example. Suzanne and I both went to Liberty University founded by the late Dr. Jerry Falwell. Probably many of you saw him on various news stations and he could seem harsh, abrasive and very TV evangelist-like. Well, I had the privilege of getting to know Dr. Falwell personally. I was on the singing group that sang on his TV broadcast every Sunday and we even got to travel with him some. I also worked for his son Jonathan who became the pastor of the church his dad founded and sang duets with Jonathan's wife, Sherry. But even the average student at Liberty got to know a different side of Jerry Falwell than was portrayed in the news. He was like a grandfather to all the students and he was a huge prankster! His favorite thing to do was driving on campus in his big old Suburban and somehow he would manage to sneak up behind students walking to class and he would blow the horn and scare the living daylights out of them. Then he'd laugh as he drove away! One day in convocation, he was congratulating a heavy-weight wrestler who had won a national tournament. The wrestler made a comment about how he could take down Dr. Falwell. He shouldn't have said that because Dr. Falwell picked him up and body-slammed him right on the stage--and the crowd went wild!

Well, today, we're in the 3rd week of our series "I AM" looking at name of Jesus given in the Bible. The first week, we looked at Jesus being the Alpha and Omega--the beginning and the end. Last week, Jeff talked to us about Immanuel, God with us. And this week, I want us to look at a another name that Jesus didn't really use for himself, but other people used to describe him--Carpenter's Son.

So, if you have your Bibles, turn with me to Matthew 13:53:58. If you don't have a Bible, raise your hand...

Read Matthew 13:53-58 p. 679

Carpenter's Son: Dirty God

This name His hometown people gave him was not a compliment. It was a put down. These were Jesus' people. They had watched Him grow up and for 30 years, and he didn't do anything supernatural. He was just a normal kid who didn't really excel at school well enough to study with a Rabi. Instead, He worked in His father's carpentry shop. Then, out of the blue, Joseph & Mary's kid is teaching in the synagogue, healing people and even claiming to be God! And they're like, "We know your parents and your brothers. There's absolutely nothing special about you. Who do you think you are? You're just the son of a carpenter!"

This morning, we will see that **for Jesus to be known as a Carpenter's Son was part God's sovereign plan and is a crucial to the redemption of mankind.**

Every Christmas, like many of you, our family uses an Advent Wreath in during the Christmas season to teach our kids the true meaning of Christmas. When we get to the 3rd candle--the shepherd candle--we always talk about the fact that the birth of Jesus was announced to the shepherds. Why? Does anyone know why that is important? His birth announcement was delivered to shepherds signifying that he came for everyone--even the lowest members of society. In that day, that was the shepherds.

But let's rewind to the beginning to understand why this is so important. In Genesis 1, God creates the universe, everything we see, and, of course, Adam and Eve. Of course, we know from Genesis 3, Adam & Eve rebel against God by eating of the one tree God told them not to eat from. They realize they are naked and in their shame, they hide from God as He comes walking through the garden looking for them. It's also here that we read of the first death in this new creation as an animal dies in order to cover their nakedness with its skin. In verse 23 of Genesis 3, Adam and Eve are "banished" from the Garden of Eden--from the very presence of God. This is an extremely pivotal moment in the relationship of God and man as Adam and Eve experience separation from God.

Human condition worsens and God eventually destroys the world with a flood sparing only Noah and his family. God continues to pursue His creation. He makes a covenant with Abram choosing Abram's descendants as His very own people. Years later, God selects Moses to deliver His people from Egyptian slavery. In Exodus 19, God is about to meet with Moses on Mt. Sinai and He gives Moses some instructions.

Read Exodus 19:10-13 p. 53

If you're an Israelite, what might you be thinking about God? He's unapproachable! "If I don't take a shower and wash my clothes, I'm dead! Oh, yeah, and if I get too close to the mountain, they're gonna kill me!" The consequences of man's sin continues to separate him from God.

At that meeting between God and Moses, God lays out the sacrificial system. In this system, God's presence would dwell in the tabernacle among His people. However, only the priests could serve in the tabernacle and only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies where God's presence dwelled--and only once a year. For centuries, the

Carpenter's Son: Dirty God

Jews followed the sacrificial system--sort of. The Jews fell into idolatry worshipping the gods of surrounding nations. If you were an average Jewish person, wouldn't you probably feel that God was pretty impersonal, unapproachable, and maybe not that interested in you as a person?

Because we have the Bible, we can see that God didn't like the separation between Himself and His creation and He was doing something about it. But, unless you were Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Moses, or one of the Judges, Kings or prophets, God probably didn't seem all that personal to you. He might have seemed vengeful, distant and unapproachable. Then God is silent for about 400 years.

People today are not all that different from the people living in Jesus' day. In his book, *Dirty God*, Johnnie Moore writes:

"We like to think of God as far way from us--like a famous person we admire but don't really know. We kind of keep track of what's happening in his story, but surely he doesn't know that much about ours, and if he does, he doesn't care to know more.

He's in heaven, after all--busy doing other things, like lightning and thunder and stuff like that.

Maybe we like this way of thinking because it makes it easier for us to ignore him when we want to assume his role of rule maker in our own lives. Or maybe it's just been reinforced by too many caricatures on too many movie screens. Regardless, it causes us to miss the beauty of his grace."

Let's look back at Matthew 13 where the people from Jesus' home town are not buying what Jesus is saying. Wouldn't you be a little bit skeptical when the son of your neighbor--a carpenter--suddenly started claiming to be God? Especially when you've known the kid for 30 years and he didn't seem all that special to you? The relationship of God and man has reached another very pivotal point. Perhaps that's why John began his gospel the way he did. Let's look at it.

Read John 1:1-18 p. 736

I love how The Message treats verse 14:

"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish."

The Jews were looking for a Messiah, but Jesus was definitely not what they were expecting. Where was the pomp and circumstance? Instead...

Carpenter's Son: Dirty God

"The gateway by which God entered planet Earth was the womb of a teenage mother from a tiny, backward village, and when Jesus was born, he was forced to breathe his first breath within a musty, smelly feeding trough.

Think about that. Jesus' first breath of air on the planet that he created was seasoned with a hint of manure and of old, dry hay." (*Dirty God*)

Read Philippians 2:6-8 p. 815

Isaiah the prophet described Jesus this way in chapter 53:2:

"He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

Don't miss how strange this is! The God who created everything we see--the beauty of the Grand Canyon, a monarch butterfly, a colorful sunset--'had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him'." Creator God wrapped Himself in flesh--100% God and 100% man--purposely limiting His immeasurable power to become one of us.

Why would God do that? Why would He be willing to literally get His hands dirty? Why would God become a Carpenter's Son? Because **God knew that if Jesus came as a Carpenter's Son, the people would kill him for claiming to be God.** He knew that most people would find it completely irrational for a Carpenter's Son to be God, and they would put Him to death for blasphemy, which is exactly what had to happen if God and His creation were ever to experience closeness again.

If Jesus had come as King David 2.0 the way the Jews were expecting, they would never have killed Jesus. The Jews were under the oppression of Rome. They were no longer an autonomous, free society. The Messiah they were looking for was going to deliver them from Rome's oppression and restore a unified kingdom. Just look at the prophecy of the Messiah in Isaiah 9.

Read Isaiah 9:6-7 p. 481

Jesus fulfilled this prophecy completely, but in a different way than the Jews expected. That's why we really need to be careful with prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled. I have a sneaking suspicion that those who have the End Times all figured out will be surprised!

Think about it. If we had a leader in Washington, D.C., who was able to deliver the U.S. from our oppression--staggering unemployment, floundering economy, the threat of terrorism, high gas prices, etc., Americans probably wouldn't care if he or she claimed to be God as long as things kept heading in the right direction! We might think he or she is a little off their rocker, but we probably wouldn't vote them out of office or execute them!

But because of our sin, Jesus had to die. And He had to die because He claimed to be God. Look at Jesus' trial in Matthew 26.

Carpenter's Son: Dirty God

Read Matthew 26:59-67 p. 691

Jesus was really a burr under the saddle of the religious leaders and they just wanted Him out of the way. They were looking for any charge they could throw against the wall and have it stick so they could put Jesus to death so they wouldn't have to deal with Him anymore. They brought false witnesses forward, but they couldn't get their testimonies to match up. The only thing that would stick was that He claimed to be God. In fact, Jesus' response, and sometimes the lack thereof, made sure that He He was crucified because He claimed to be God. In fact, with His statement in v. 64, He refers to two prophecies OT the high priest and those with him would know: Psalm 110:1

“The Lord says to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’”

And Daniel 7:13:

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Make no mistake. Jesus claimed to be God.

So, in light of this, let's look again at John 1.

Read John 1:10-12 p. 736

Isn't God amazing? Only He could orchestrate a plan like this! The people who crucified Jesus were doing exactly what God had planned--what had to occur for our salvation--so that those of us who have received Jesus as God dying in our place for our sin could become the children of God! That is why Jesus came as a Carpenter's Son.

But there's another reason. It's also found in John 14.

Read John 14:12-14 p. 749

So let me get this straight. If I believe that Jesus is God who died in my place for my sin, I will do the things that Jesus did--and even greater!? How could that possibly be? There's nothing particularly special about me. I'm not even that "religious." How could I possibly do the things that Jesus did--and even greater things than He did?

Catch this! If there was nothing special about Jesus, the Carpenter's Son (Isaiah 53:2), there is also nothing special about us--Kevin, the worship & discipleship pastor or _____. BUT! Jesus was also God--that's where the power was, that's what made Jesus so special. And guess what! If we have put our faith in Jesus as God dying in our place for our sin, Acts 1:8 says that the Holy Spirit of God is inside us! And that's where

Carpenter's Son: Dirty God

the power is! That's what makes us special. So what are the great works we're supposed to do? Have perfect church attendance? Pray before every meal? Try to avoid "big" sins? No. It's so much more than that. Look at 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 p. 803

I love verse 20: "as though God were making his appeal through us." What appeal? "Be reconciled to God." In other words, believe that Jesus was God dying in your place for your sin and then live the rest of your life on His team appealing to everyone you come in contact with to do the same. When we live our lives engaged in following the ways of Jesus and leading others to do the same, it creates an entire movement of disciples of Jesus in our wake that goes multiple generations deep. That's what it means to do what Jesus did and even greater.

The Extraordinary became ordinary so the ordinary could do the extraordinary.

1 Corinthians 1:27 says:

"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong."

What are the "weak things" that God uses to shame the strong? 2 Corinthians 12:9 says:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

The "weak things" are whatever God uses to show His power through: a Carpenter's Son, a worship & discipleship pastor, a banker, a realtor, a stay-at-home mom, an attorney, a teacher. But only if the "weak thing" acknowledges where the power comes from. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, the Carpenter's Son, prayed, "Not my will, but Your's be done." And we must do the same.

I love this quote from "Dirty God":

"It is not a weak God who associates with weak people, but rather a strong God, attracted to the opportunity to be powerful in their weakness."

Reflection: Go to the reflection stations and reflect on the verses. Then remember the reference of the verse that resonates most deeply with you right now about Jesus being the Carpenter's Son. Go to the mylar sheets and write the reference and a very brief reason for why you picked that verse. As we go to **reflection** today, I have some questions for you:

- 1. In what ways has Jesus as the Carpenter's Son had an affect on you?**
- 2. Do you believe that God wants to do greater things than Jesus did through you? If so, what are you doing about it?**