

“...Teaching Thousands...”

Acts 19 * October 21, 2007

“Our dream is to joyfully become a growing Christian church, that reaches tens of thousands, teaches thousands, unleashes hundreds in New England and beyond.” (Grace Baptist’s Vision Statement)

I. *Dumb ‘ole BlackJack – and what he teaches about our greatness*
The greater a creature, the greater it’s capacity and need for

_____.

What did Jesus say we are to do after we ‘go and make disciples’?

We need to be teachable – submissive to the truth – which the Holy Spirit brings through the _____ and through God’s

_____.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.” ~ Colossians 3:16

Three Levels Of Teachability

II. *First come the mules – whose _____ prevents them from being teachable at all. (Vss.23-27)*

A. *Who are the mules in this story?*

B. *Why should we not be surprised when the gospel gets thrown back in our faces?*

C. *Why was John the Baptist great? After all, he had such a short, pitiful, low-impact ministry.*

D. *Can Christians be guilty of stubbornness also?*

E. *What will it take to break the mule?*
Only _____ and humble _____
to the truth and reality of God.

III. *Then come the fools – who _____ for _____ how teachable they will be.*

A. *Who are the fools in this story?*

Prov.12:15 – “The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.”
Prov.18:2 – “A fool finds no pleasure in understanding, but delights in airing his own opinions.”

B. *Do people still do this today with Jesus?*

C. *What will Jesus do with them?*

IV. *Then there are the horses – they have very _____ spirits.*

A. *Who are the horses in this story?*

B. *What sets spiritual horses apart?*

1. *They love _____ of Scripture (2 Tim.3:16)*

2. *They are trained to discern _____ from error and are not easily _____.*

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“Our dream is to joyfully become a growing Christian church, that reaches tens of thousands, teaches thousands, unleashes hundreds in New England and beyond.” (Grace Baptist’s Vision Statement)

- I. Dumb ‘ole BlackJack – and what he teaches about our greatness
The greater a creature, the greater it’s capacity and need for being taught.

What did Jesus say we are to do after we ‘go and make disciples’?
Teach them to obey everything he had commanded.

We need to be teachable – submissive to the truth – which the Holy Spirit brings through the Scriptures and through God’s people.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.” ~ Colossians 3:16

Three Levels Of Teachability

II. First come the mules – whose stubbornness prevents them from being teachable at all. (Vss.23-27)

A. Who are the mules in this story?

Demetrius and his fellow Ephesians rioting on behalf of their goddess Artemis.

B. Why should we not be surprised when the gospel gets thrown back in our faces?

People by nature are in this stubborn, resistant spiritual state. By nature, we are enemies of God, the Bible says. Which is why it is all the more imperative that we preach the gospel to them. Jeremiah 23:29 says, “Is not my word like a fire,” declares the Lord, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?” If a person is ever to be saved, then their stony hearts must be beaten upon by God’s Word. What this means is that early on in our

attempts to reach a lost person, we’re probably not going to get very far.

C. Why was John the Baptist great? After all, he had such a short, pitiful, low-impact ministry.

The spiritual climate when John first appeared was as hard and stoney as you could imagine. John you see, was God’s hammer. Sent in advance of Jesus to break up as many stoney hearts as possible, preparing them to meet their Messiah. Pioneers, the first ones in to a wilderness territory, will always have a harder time of it than those who follow. Their lives will often be harder and shorter – but without them, that wilderness would never be tamed. And because of John, the impact of Jesus’ ministry was greater yet. And because of Jesus 3-year ministry, the apostles were able to enjoy great success in bringing people to faith.

D. Can Christians be guilty of stubbornness also?

Stubbornness can be an affliction within God’s people as well. Why, after all, do so many churches die, or split apart? You can be sure of it – somewhere in the mix the virus of unteachable stubbornness is at work. A resistance to the Holy Spirit has set in. What are the 7 last words of the church? “We’ve never done it that way before.”

E. What will it take to break the mule?

Only repentance and humble submission to the truth and reality of God.

III. Then come the fools – who decide for themselves how teachable they will be.

A. Who are the fools in this story?

The sons of Sceva, who presume that Paul is in the same business as they, take it upon themselves to plagiarize the name of Jesus thinking it to be nothing more than some magical incantation. But the sons of Sceva are fools. They have taken only the part of Paul’s teaching which fits their thinking, and discarded the rest, and almost comical mischief results. What made them fools is that decided for themselves how teachable they would be. A fool treats learning like a smorgasbord, like a buffet, and they are the ones

who decide which pieces of truth they will put on their plate, and which ones they reject. They put limits on their teachability

Prov.12:15 – “The way of a fool seems right to him,
but a wise man listens to advice.”

Prov.18:2 – “A fool finds no pleasure in understanding,
but delights in airing his own opinions.”

B. Do people still do this today with Jesus?

It’s very fashionable today for people to beg, borrow and steal a little bit from Christianity. They treat the Bible like a mystery chest you find up in the attic. We’ll take the Beatitudes, they’re nice. The parable of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, great stories – we’ll keep them. What’s this? A cross, yuk! Get rid of this. There’s a group of supposed scholars who call themselves the ‘Jesus Seminar’ and every so often they get together and they go verse by verse through the gospels, literally voting on which words they believe Jesus actually said or not. It’s a farce. New Age teachers like Wayne Dyer who has these enormously popular specials on PBS abound today who quote Jesus but do not bow the knee to him. Thomas Jefferson did this centuries ago, going through the Bible with scissors, cutting out anything he found offensive.

C. What will Jesus do with them?

Jesus doesn’t allow you to treat him like a buffet table. “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,” he said. Substitute anything you want into Jesus’ sentence, the point is the same. Anyone who loves...his business more than me is not worthy of me. Anyone who loves her makeup...his golf clubs...her house...his car...her career...anyone who loves these things more than me, is not worthy of me. Jesus will have nothing to do with your fashionable religion. He’ll spit you right out. It’s all or nothing.

IV. Then there are the horses – they have very teachable spirits.

A. Who are the horses in this story?

The disciples of John the Baptist whom Paul encounters in Ephesus. They submit to Paul’s instruction that they need to follow Christ and receive the Holy Spirit.

B. What sets spiritual horses apart?

1. They love all of Scripture (2 Tim.3:16)

2. They are trained to discern truth from error and are not easily misled.