

JSL: Think Like Jesus:
March 30, 2022

[Video - Love is an Open Door]

Don't worry. **[1 Hans and Anna]**
I'm not going to talk about Love...
Again tonight.

Even though...
The song we just heard is called...
Love is an open door.

And the two characters... just met...
They don't really know each other.

But they both have an agenda...
That the other doesn't quite understand.

The guy... is Prince Hans...
From a kingdom in the south.
He has a nefarious plan...
To take control of the Kingdom of Arendelle.

Now... Anna's older sister Elsa...
Is going to become the queen...
But she's not interested in marrying this...
Strange dude from the south.

So... he goes after Anna... who is a princess...
Who will be next in line...
If something would just happen...
To happen to her older sister.

Anyway. In this animated movie...
They just met.
Hans wants the kingdom.
Anna wants what every Disney princess has wanted...
Love and romance and freedom.

But the bottom line is...
They don't know each other.
At all.

They act like they're in love...
But they have no idea.
Proven by one of the funniest song lyrics...
In Disney's history.

They sing...
We finish each other's...
Sandwiches.

You get why that's funny right...
They're supposed to say...
We finished each other's...
SENTENCES...

But they go on....

Hey! That's what I was going to say.

I've never met someone...
Who thinks so much like me.

Our mental synchronization...
Can have only one explanation...
That you and I were meant to be.

OR... I have an alternative theory.
They don't know each other.
Their lack of mental synchronization reveals...

They don't know what the other person...
Is really thinking... deep inside their hearts...
In their brains.

So... they don't understand...
The motivation behind...
The other person's actions.

I know. It's just a cartoon.

But when people know each other.
I mean... when they really know each other...
You can almost anticipate...
What the other person is going to say...
And/or do.

Because you start to understand...
Who they are...
And how they think.

Shall we play a game tonight?
Yes? Well... certainly... I aim to please.

Can I get a couple to volunteer? **[2 Wedding Shoes]**

Now... at some of the wedding I have attended...
In the last couple years...
The wedding couple...
The bride and the groom...
Play a game... called...
The Shoe Game.

I'm not going to ask you...
To take off your shoes...
Because that's icky.

Instead... I will give each of you two signs...
One says HER...
One says HIM...

And all you have to do...
Is answer the questions I ask...
Honestly.
Without seeing how the other responds.

We shall see...
How much you know about one another.
Ready... let's play.

[QUESTIONS.]

Let's have a big round of applause...
For Joe and Tyke.
Those crazy love birds.

Oh. By the way...
How long have the two of you...
Been married...
Living together...
Learning about each other?

48 years? That's great.
Congratulations.

So the key to knowing the other person...
How they actually think...
Takes time...
And investment.

You can't just pretend...
Like you know.
You have to work at it.

Tonight... I would propose to you... **[3 JSL]**
That part of living a Jesus Shaped Life...
Is learning... to think like Jesus.

It's interesting to me...
That we don't talk about HOW...
Jesus thought.
Very often.

We talk about what he did.
We talk about what he said.

But rarely... do we talk about...
How he thought...
How he took information...
From the world around him...
Into his brain...
Processed it...

And then...
Either did something...
Or said something.
In response.

We act like...
Because he was the Son of God...
He just automatically knew...
What to do.
What to say.

But isn't it important...
To talk about this.

Because if we want to live...
A Jesus Shaped Life...
To see the world...
The way Jesus saw the world.

To listen to people...
The way Jesus listened to people.

To assess situations around us...
The way Jesus assessed and reacted...
To the situations around him.

We need to change how...
We see the world.
How we hear things...
That people say.

How we take information...
Into our brain...

And consider what kind of filter...
We run that information through...
In order to decide how WE act...
And what WE say.

In other words...
If we want to act like Jesus...
If we want to talk like Jesus.
Then somewhere along the way...
We have to stop and think like Jesus.

And I know what you're going to say.

That's too much.
We can't do that.
Because well...
He was... is...
And always will be...
The living Son of God.

He is special.
Like God is special.

He is different...
Like God is different.

I've been a pastor for almost 29 years now... **[4 God]**
And pretty much every year...
The new confirmation students...
Would ask me the same question.

They would tell me...
That they understood...
God created us.

But the real question is...
Who created God?

And I have to explain...
That God is different than us.
God is immortal...
God is uncreated.
God has existed...
Even before time.

God cannot die.
God can create.
God is all powerful...
All knowing...
All present.
All that.

They have a hard time...
With the idea...
Of the Alien Nature...
Of our God.

But YOU get it.
God is different than people.

THEREFORE... we think...
We have no hope...
Of thinking like Jesus.
Because he thinks like God.

And the bibles says... **[5 Isaiah]**

In Isaiah Chapter 55... verses 8 and 9...
My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Neither are your ways my ways,
Declares the Lord.

As the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are my ways higher than your ways
And my thoughts than your thoughts.

So I fully acknowledge...
That we cannot know the mind of God.
And I don't even think...
It would be a good idea...
If we knew everything that God knows.

We humans would find a way...
To misuse that information...
To our own advantage.

But I digress...
My point is...
Some of you may say...
It's presumptuous to think...
That we humans could think...
Like God.

HOWEVER...
Let's take a break...
From the sermon.

Let's join together...
In confessing our faith...
With the words of the Nicene Creed.
[NICENE CREED]

Did you notice... **[6 Flesh]**
Jesus was not just God.

Sure it says... all those God things...
He was God from God.
Light from Light.
True God from true God.

But it also says...
He came down from heaven;
Was INCARNATE by the Holy Spirit...
And the virgin Mary...
And was made human.

AND he WAS fully human.
He experienced everything...
It means... to be ONE OF US!

He was angry. happy. sad. frustrated.

He needed time away...
From other people.
Have any of you ever needed time away...
From other people?
So did Jesus.

He needed to rest.

He needed to pray.
When he was unsure.
When he was afraid.
When he was trying to do...
What God called him to do.

He laughed.
He loved.
He lived.

Incarnate...
In the flesh.
Just like us.
In every way...

A human bag... of...
Flesh and bone...
Skin and hair...
And yes... a brain.

Filled with synapses...
Firing and working...
Drawing conclusions...
Making plans...
Thinking ideas...
Hoping hopes...
Dreaming dreams.

And all those hopes and dreams...
And fears and joys...
And thoughts...
Were expressed...
Came out of him...
Through his words and deeds.

Would you agree...
That's how it works...
Generally speaking...
Our actions and our words...
Follow our thoughts.

We think a thing...
And then through our words or deeds...
That thing becomes real.

Didn't really want to bring this up tonight... **[7 Will]**
But Will Smith at the Oscars...
Right?... He sat there...
And thought some thoughts...
Stewed about things...
For a quick minute...

And then... against all better judgement...
He acted in a way...
That caused violence...
To another human being.

I'm not saying...
He didn't have the right to be angry...

But what if...
He had chosen to do...
Something different...

What if he remembered...
In the heat of that moment...
That God had called him...
To think... and to be...
Like Jesus.

What would have happened?

Part of me wonders...
How much more powerful...
The moment could have been...
If he had stood between...
Chris Rock... and the camera...

And said to all of America...
Actually to the whole world...

THIS IS WHAT... my wife has been struggling with.
This is the pain that we are going through.
This is why this joke...
Is not funny.

What would have happened...
If he had taken the power...
Out of the joke.
Out of the situation.

If he had made himself vulnerable...

If he had emptied himself...
Of all the pride and anger.

If he had really acted out of love.

Like Jesus.

What kind of impact could that have had...
On the world?
I'm not saying Will Smith is a bad man...
I think he's probably a very good man.
And I think he wants to protect his wife.

And I'm not sure...
How I would have reacted...

I'm just saying...
If we think like Jesus...
We know that that violence...
Only causes... more violence.
Because he said so.

But in order to think like Jesus...
We need to change...
How we think.

The apostle Paul wrote... **[8 Renewed]**
In the book of Romans...
Chapter 12...

Do not be conformed to this world...
But be transformed...
By the renewing of your minds...
So that you may discern...
What is the will of God.

What is good...
And acceptable...
And perfect.

See... Paul thought...
It was possible for us...
To change our minds.

That we had the ability...
Within us...
Assisted by the Holy Spirit...
To have our minds renewed.

Made new.
Made different.
Made more like Jesus.

Because we all know...
That genuine change...
Doesn't happen...
As a result of what happens...
In the world around us.

It will always be the same.
Sometimes good.
Sometimes bad.

But how we react...
To the world around us.
Flows directly from...
How we think.

Our actions begin as thoughts.

We need our minds renewed
Because we can't live a Jesus Shaped Life...
If we think like the world.

We can't enjoy a life of peace,
Faith,
Hope
Power,
And love

While our minds are filled with doubt,
Fear,
Anger,
Bitterness,
And resentment.

So we need to be transformed...
By the renewing of our minds.

So. How do we do that???

Well... let's go back to the beginning.
Anna and Hans from FROZEN...

They didn't know each other.
They both had their own personal secret agendas...
So they pretended to be close...
In order to get what they wanted.

The antidote...
To not knowing...
Another person...

Is taking the time to get to know them.

The answer to changing our minds...
To think and be...
More like Jesus... **[9 Jesus Time]**

Is to spend more time with him.

Learning about him...
Listening to the words he speaks.
Watching the actions he takes.

And thinking about...
What Jesus was thinking...
In every story...
In every situation...

Ask ourselves.
What is he seeing.
What is he hearing.

What information is he receiving...
That is influencing...
What he says.
And what he does.

Because that must be...
The heart of what he believes.

And I want to think...
More and more...
Like Jesus.