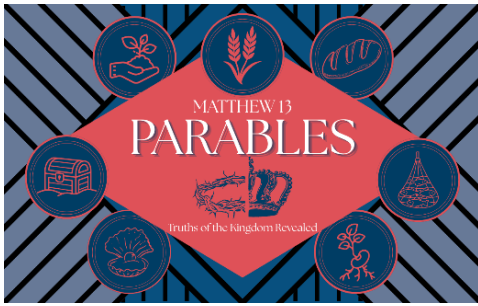




Sermon Notes: "Just Jesus"

Matthew 13:53-58

8.30.26

The Origin Trap

- Amazement is not the same thing as faith.
 - Nazareth used Jesus' origin story to disqualify Him.
 - Never use your origin story to disqualify yourself.

Too Familiar

- It's more comfortable to shrink Jesus to a size we can manage.
- Familiarity doesn't produce faith; it produces assumptions.

Rejected, Not Ignored

- They weren't confused about Jesus. They were threatened by Him.
- He wasn't powerless in Nazareth. He was unwelcome.

So What?

Only Jesus. Nothing added, nothing subtracted.

For Study, Reflection, Discussion During the Week:

Life Group ICEBREAKER: The sermon opened with Joshua Bell playing a Stradivarius in a D.C. subway — one of the world's greatest musicians, ignored by a thousand people. The Washington Post called it "art without a frame." When has something extraordinary shown up in your life in an ordinary frame — and you almost missed it? What made you stop, or what made you keep walking?

REVIEW: Review the sermon notes from Sunday. Was there a particular point that stuck with you? What was it and why did it resonate with you?

READ: Matthew 13:54-57 | Romans 3:23

- Nazareth was amazed in verse 54 and offended by verse 57 — same evidence, same morning. The sermon said amazement costs nothing; faith costs everything. You can find Jesus fascinating, quotable, and admirable — and never bend a knee. Where in your own life has amazement at Jesus stayed at arm's length from actually following Him? What's the gap between the two, and what would it take to close it?
- Darin said familiarity produces assumptions, not faith — and that we can come to Christ and then build Him a nicer, Christian-looking box that He won't stay in either. Is there an area where your picture of Jesus has quietly shrunk to something more manageable — something that doesn't interrupt your plans or ask about the closed files? What would it look like to let Him be bigger than your current category for Him?

READ: Matthew 13:58 | 1 Corinthians 6:11

- The sermon closed with the two questions Jesus sends us home with: Where are you calling God's hand a coincidence? And what is it about Jesus that currently offends you — not in general, but right now, specifically? Take both of those honestly. The sermon said if you can't think of a single place where following Jesus is costing you anything, it's worth asking whether you're following Him or just comfortable around Him. What's your honest answer to both questions?
- 1 Corinthians 6:11 says "some of you were once like that" — past tense, on purpose — "but you were washed, made holy, made right with God by calling on the name of Jesus." The sermon said your origin story is where you started; it is not who you are. Is there a file you're carrying on yourself that's years old and hasn't been updated? Where are you using your own story to disqualify yourself the same way Nazareth used Jesus' story to disqualify Him?

DEPLOY:

1. **Stop Calling It a Coincidence.** *This week, name one thing you've been filing under luck or coincidence that might actually be the hand of God. Write it down. Say it out loud to someone in your group. Then ask: what would it cost me to call it what it might actually be — and what would it free me to do?*
2. **Open the Closed File.** *The sermon's closing charge: identify the one place where Jesus is asking about something you've closed the file on — a relationship, a habit, a grudge, a part of your life marked "not up for discussion." Open it. Say it out loud to your group or find someone to bring it to. Don't carry it out of this week alone. Be one of the few who stopped.*

Don't Forget:

- Consider signing up to help at Church at the Lake on September 6th. There is a sign-up sheet on the Welcome Desk, or you can sign-up on our Church Website under Events.
- Today, August 30th, is the 5th Sunday potluck! Stick around after service for a time of food and fellowship.
- If you signed-up to volunteer at Church at the Lake; We're having the All-Volunteer meeting this Thursday, September 3rd, at 5:30 here at ECC

Prayer:

Father, we don't want to be Nazareth. We don't want to sit close enough to be amazed and walk away unchanged. Forgive us for the files we've closed on You — the places we decided You were figured out, the areas we marked as ours and quietly kept off the table. Forgive us for calling Your hand coincidence because coincidence doesn't ask anything of us. And for those carrying a file on themselves that's years old — remind them that "were" is past tense on purpose. They've been washed. Made new. Their origin story is where they started, not who they are. Give us the posture of the few who stopped. Not better evidence — just a different posture. He walked uphill to Nazareth. He's here this morning. Don't let us walk past Him. Only Jesus — nothing added, nothing subtracted. In Jesus' name, Amen.