

What Should I Do?

1. Warm-up Question: Jeff started Sunday's sermon with several riddles. Here's one he didn't share. See if your group can figure it out. What did the duck say when she bought new lipstick? (The answer is found at the bottom of p. 2.) Anybody know any other "good" riddles?
2. As Jeff asked God for guidance for what to say in this week's sermon, God answered in a dream with a simple, riddle-like statement: "Life is the product of proximity and circumstance." As Jeff pondered what that might mean, today's Gospel passage came to mind. Read Luke 17:7-10, reproduced on p. 3.
 - a. Jesus saw himself as a servant (Matthew 20:28) and in the parable we just read, he invites us to see ourselves in the same way. What do you think it means to see your life through the eyes of a servant? How does this idea of being a servant sit with you?
 - b. Imagine yourself as the servant in Jesus' parable. You've been tending the sheep in the field all day, but now you're headed back to the house. At the end of a long day, what would you personally be thinking about and looking forward to?
 - c. When the servant got home, he realized he would have to prepare and serve the master's meal before his own. Thinking back over the past couple weeks, can you remember a time when you have had to defer personal desire in order to do something for someone else? How did that make you feel as you were doing it? How do you feel looking back on it?
 - d. In Mark 8:34, Jesus said, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, but those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it." What do you think this verse means? What does it mean to lose our life by saving it? And to save our life by losing it?
 - e. Jeff noted that the servant in Jesus' parable did, in fact, get to enjoy his own delicious meal, but only after first doing his duty to the master. From this Jeff drew the first of two key principles: **Give priority to doing what you're supposed to do and personal satisfaction will follow.** Jeff gave the example of spending two long nights in the hospital with his father. When in your life have you experienced this principle at work?
3. It's fine to say, "Do what you're supposed to do." But that still leaves a very important question unanswered: How do I know what am I supposed to do? Jesus' parable also answers that question. The servant in Jesus' parable didn't get up in the morning and wonder, "What am I going to do today?" He wasn't on some kind of mystical quest of existential self-discovery and actualization. He didn't have that luxury. When he got up in the morning, he knew exactly what he was going to do.

He was going to do what he was told. Most of us find ourselves in a similar place, which brings us to the second key principle: **Life has a way of telling us what to do.**

- a. By way of example, in the Old Testament Esther found herself thrust into a terrible situation. She had to decide whether to hide her Jewish heritage to protect herself or to out herself and risk death by advocating for her people. When confronted with this dilemma, her cousin said to her, “Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.” Esther 4:14. Imagine God saying to you, “You have come into _____ [fill in the blank with some difficult situation in your life] for just such a time as this.” What difficult situation comes to mind? And for what purpose might God have raised you up for just such a time as this?
 - b. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” What does that verse tell us about how we find “God’s will” in our life?
4. James Reid says, “The way out of life’s frustrations is found not by resenting our limitation but by accepting the place of frustration as the sphere of God’s purpose.” Jeff said, “Life may say, ‘You’re going to have a period of unemployment,’ or ‘You’re going to experience a divorce,’ or ‘Your child is going to experience special challenges,’ or ‘You’re going to face a health crisis.’ These things are not a disruption of your destiny. They are your destiny. Respond as best you can and you will achieve your destiny and live a deeply rewarding life.” Do you agree or disagree with these statements? Explain why.
 5. John Powell says, “I have a sign in the mirror of my room. I see it every morning when I first wake up. It says, ‘What have you got going today, God? I’d like to be a part of it.’” He goes on to say, “I have to find my place in God’s plans, rather than make my own little plans, then ask God to support them: ‘Come on, God, give me an A in this course. Come on, God, do this for me.’ Instead, I pray, ‘What have you got going today, God? You love this world. You loved this world into life. We’re all yours. What’s my part in the drama? I’ll play any part you say. Want me to be a success? I’ll be a success for you. Want me to be a failure? I’ll fail for you. Whatever you want.’” How would you feel about praying that prayer? As you look back over today, what do you think was your “part in the drama” today from God’s perspective?
 6. We’re in the midst of the coronavirus crisis. What we’ve studied this week suggests that you were meant for “such a time as this.” What do you think that means for you? What might it look like for you to respond well to whatever the coronavirus crisis is serving up for you?

Answer to the riddle in Question 1: Put it on my bill!

Luke 17:7-10

⁷ Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, “Come here at once and take your place at the table”?

⁸ Would you not rather say, “Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink”?

⁹ Do you thank the servant for doing what he was told to do?

¹⁰ So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have done only what we ought to have done!”