

Do Something Great With Your Life

Session 4: If You Want to be Great, You Have to Start Here

Edited Transcript

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Good morning. Hey, I want to just add a little blurb about two weeks. So in two weeks, we have John Rivers coming. We're going to start doing these events quarterly where we try to have an outside speaker come in. We need a name for the ... We want to have a speaker series, like a quarterly speaker series that we use to equip you guys to bring new people in to learn about the Bible study. We want to really focus on getting some guys that maybe aren't active in a church, very active in their faith, but they want to learn of maybe a little bit more about why you're different and how they can be around some other guys in a very nonthreatening environment and hopefully reach everybody, sort of reaching somebody behind them spiritually, somebody behind them maybe even in age.

We've only got about 20 spots left. Everybody's been signing up online on the website. We've only got about 20 spots left. So we're going to cram the room. We're going to put a few more tables in. We'll add chairs to the tables, and John Rivers is going to come and really share just about how his faith has impacted his business. We're going to have this quarterly series. We've already got our May quarterly speaker lined up. You want to hear who it is?

Hey, you don't sound like you really want to know. It's Ed Kobel. Ed Kobel is the ... I think he's the president of DeBartolo Development, which is one of the largest mall owner companies in the world, but they also have owned different sports teams. Ed's got a great story, and he's going to talk about his business. Then every quarter, we'll have a bit probably mostly focused on business leaders come in and do the speaker series. So, if you have an idea for what we should call the speaker series, and the Man in the Mirror Bible study Speaker Series was Pat's idea, so please help me.

We have to do better than that, okay? So if you have an idea for the name for the speaker series that we could do, I would love to hear it. All right. So any questions about that, come see me or Jim Angelakos. Like I said, we've got about 20 spots left, which means ... By the way, we have a capacity in here of about 200. So that means 180 people have signed up to come. If you have not signed up, sign up to come, all right? Because we're going to have bouncers. Y'all need to wake up because only three people are laughing at anything this morning, all right? Did he hurt you with that shoulder rub thing? Did that ...

All right. So here we are. We're in our series: Do Something Great With Your Life. Let's do some shout outs. We've got a group of guys in Burnet, Texas. They have a group called Watering the Seed — Man in The Mirror, group of guys led by Eric Woodrum. They meet on Mondays at 6:00, and they watched the video together, and then they do the discussion questions. The purpose of this small group is promoting the faith, freedom and fulfillment, which every man has and doesn't know that they have it. So, welcome to those guys.

Then our shout out for our team member out in the field is Chris Tatum. Chris is the area director for the Gulf Coast ... Alabama region, and Chris as an area director, he says, because his passion is to mobilize churches, come alongside pastors who wants strong men and to inspire men one by one that they too can leave a kingdom legacy by seeing men get on fire for God. So let's give these guys a big welcome, a big Man in the Mirror Bible Study welcome. One, two, three. Hooah.

All right. All right, so what are we talking about? In the series called Do Something Great With your Life. So, what is the something great that you can do with your life? That is to serve. The great thing that you can do with your life is to serve. We've been looking at this parable of the talents. So if you have a Bible, turn to Matthew, chapter 25. You guys know I grew up in-... Boston. That's right and thank you. Man, this is going to be tough. I grew up in Boston, and we have some vernacular in Boston, some things that we say that are a little off base. We park our cars, right? And we love our socks and our Pats, and go Pats, six rings. Six rings, five great rings and one really boring one, right? We say things like wicked like, "That was wicked cool. That was wicked awesome." Or the ultimate, "That was wicked bad." Now, that seems weird, right? Like wicked. My wife went to a school outside of Boston and in a town called Peabody, which normal people would pronounce Peabody, but it's "Peebuddy".

So they used to have a saying at the school. "Ah, there's a wicked bad potty in Peabody," right? So, wicked. Wicked, in Boston, in the vernacular, means the opposite of wicked. It means good. It means excellent. But we're going to look at what it means to be wicked today in this passage, and we're going to find out what does it mean to be wicked. So, let me ask you, "Are you wicked?" I don't mean in the Boston like wicked awesome sense, but I mean in the Jesus evil sense. Are you wicked? Any wicked man in here? Some guys say they're wicked. Other guys think it's a trick question. They're not sure, so they raise their hand.

GOOD AND WICKED ARE NOT BEHAVIORS

Are you wicked? What does wicked look like? Pat's been talking about, "What does faithful look like?" Well, today, we're going to talk about, "What does wicked look like?" Are we wicked, and how do we know? So, let's look at this parable that's.... Our first thing I want to share with you today is that good and wicked are not behaviors, all right? You don't do good or do wicked. I know we use that phrase sometimes, doing good or being a do-gooder, but wicked and good are not behaviors. They're something much deeper than that.

So let's read this parable and let's jump into this. Verse 14. For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

Now after a long time ... This is important. After a long time, the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them, and he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, "Master, you delivered to me five talents. Here, I have made five talents more." His master said to him, "Well done," what?

Good and faithful servant. So we've talked a lot about faithful, but we're going to talk today about good. What does good look like? "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." He also who had the two talents came forward, saying, "Master, you delivered to me two talents. Here, I have made two talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master."

Verse 24. He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours." His master answered him, "Well done, good and faithful servant." No, what does he say? He says, "You wicked and slothful servant." That word slothful could be lazy. In some translations, it's the same thing. "You wicked and slothful servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?"

Now, he's not actually admitting to that. He's just saying, "Really? You thought this was true? And based on that judgment of me, this is the choice that you made? This is the decision that you made?" These other two guys, is the master any different? Same master, right? Right?

And yet, what did the other two guys do? They went out and they were industrious. They went out. They had been entrusted with something. They knew what the expectation was, and they invested it, and they turned it into something more. This guy, same master, last responsibility, and he buries it. He doesn't do anything with it. Verse 27, very practical. "You ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming, I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the 10 talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance."

"But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away and cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." So not a good picture of this third servant, right? Not a good picture of this. Not good and faithful, but what? Wicked and slothful. So faithful, what a faithful man ... Faithful was about action, okay? So if you're faithful, you take action. If you're not faithful, you're lazy, so faithful and lazier, faithful and slothful, those things are about what you do, but good and wicked are about who you are.

Good and wicked are about who you are. It's your character. It's your heart. It's your soul. So this is what the master's really upset with. He's not really upset that he didn't get ... I mean, he's already gotten seven ... He gave these first two guys seven and got seven more. He's already got the 14. Getting one more on top of that is probably not that big a deal to him. That's not the point. The point is, is that he's looking at this servant and the servant is wicked and slothful. So what does he say? What does he do? Look at verse 25.

He says, "So I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours." But his master said, "You wicked and slothful servant." So in other words, he said, "You weren't afraid. You were lazy." So here's what we're going to do. We're going to Build our Big Idea. Part one of the Big Idea is this is that it's very clear from this passage that inaction, inaction ... When God gives you something to do, He gives you a calling. He gives you a purpose. He shows you a path that you're supposed to take.

If you are inactive, if you do nothing, that is a sin. So, **inaction is a sin**, all right? Then part two is this. **Fear is an excuse.** Fear is an excuse. Think back to the garden. Adam's standing there while Eve is talking to the serpent. Though you've heard me say this before, the worst four words in the Bible is when it says that Eve turned to Adam who was with her and gave him the fruit to eat, right? So Adam was inactive. God said, "I'm giving you this helper to help you. I'm giving you this garden to take care of. You're one flesh. Adam, you're responsible for taking care of my creation."

What did Adam do when this test came? Nothing. Inaction is a sin. So then they go and hide, right? God says, "Adam, where are you?" Adam said, what? "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid, so I hid." What does the servant say here? "You're a hard man. I was afraid, so I did nothing." Fear is an excuse. I'm not saying it's not real. We have fearful things. There are things that we have to do when we take risk that can cause fear, but fear is an excuse. It's not a reason to do this or to do that when it comes to obedience. It's an excuse.

So inaction is a sin. Fear is an excuse. So the servant says, "I was afraid because you're a hard man," not, "I was afraid because I'm a horrible investor." Like, "Master, seriously man. I mean, I put money in the bank, and the bank gets taken over, and I lose my money. I'm the worst investor in the history ever." Okay? He doesn't say that. He says, "No, no, no, no. I was afraid because you're a hard man." Adam says to God ... You know what he says to God? "That woman you gave me," not, "I was afraid because I realized I sin." "I was afraid, Father, because I didn't do what I was supposed to do. I was afraid because the serpent intimidated me, and I didn't step up when I should've. No, no, no. That woman you gave me."

So **inaction is a sin. Fear is an excuse, and blame is a coverup**, and I have to tell you, this is not a sweetness and light Bible study. Have you figured that out yet? But I see a lot of men that this is their lifestyle. This is their lifestyle. They don't move forward, and they say they're afraid, and then they blame everybody else for their problems. Do you know what that is?

It's, yeah, the American way. It's wickedness. That is wickedness. That's why I called it the wicked Big Idea not because it's a Boston wicked Big Idea, but because it is truly a wicked Big Idea. This is wickedness. Inaction is sin. Fear is an excuse. Blame as a coverup, and we as men do this all the time. I do it. You do it. Sexual sin, you know you're not supposed to go there. You know you're not supposed to look at the porn sites. You know you're not supposed to masturbate. You know you're not supposed to go and see a prostitute or commit adultery. You know you're not supposed to do that. The action that you're supposed to take is fidelity to stay true to the woman that God gave you.

But you're afraid. "Well, I might miss out. I'm afraid I might not be happy. I'm stressed. I'm stressed." So you blame, blame your wife, blame your stress, blame whatever you want to blame, and then you just go down that road. That's wicked. That's wickedness. Or you've got a wife who isn't following Christ, who doesn't think that things of faith are important. She'll go to church. She'll maybe even go to the small group with you and host the parties once in a while, but she's not really following Christ.

And you know in your heart of hearts that your job is to present your wife as holy and blameless. That's your job. That's our job as men. So, are you speaking into your wife's life? "No. You know what? I don't want to ... I'm afraid. I don't want to make waves," right? "I don't want to make ... I mean, seriously, then she might not sleep with me, and now I've got the first problem again." So what do we do? We don't step into it. We're wicked and spineless and weak and fearful. It's an excuse.

Then what do we do? Who do we blame? Either her or God or both. "I mean, really, that woman you gave me won't follow you, Lord. I've done everything I can. I mean, I drag her to church every week." Do you pray for her? Do you pray with her? Do you challenge her when she says things that aren't consistent with the gospel? Not browbeating, not being ... like loving, like that's how you love your wife. If you won't step into that, if you are going to be a man of inaction, you're wicked. You are being wicked.

I am being wicked when I do those things because inaction is a sin. Fear is an excuse, and blame is a coverup. So that's our Big Idea. Where does that come from? Where does that come from? Turn back 12 chapters to Matthew 12 and let's look about where wickedness comes from. So remember we said wickedness and good. Good and wicked are not behaviors. They're a matter of character. They're a matter of heart, okay? So look at this in Matthew 12:33.

"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers." Who do you think he's talking to? He's talking to the Pharisees there when he calls them vipers. "You brood of vipers. How can you speak good when you are evil?" How can you speak good when you are evil? How can you speak good when you are evil, when you are wicked? For Adam, the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. Excuse me. "The good person out of the good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil."

A BAD TREE CANNOT BEAR GOOD FRUIT

"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Now, as he's saying that, your righteousness comes from your actions? No, he's saying, "Your actions are an indication of what's going on in your heart." Luke 6:45 says ... It's the same story. He says, "Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks." So a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. The fruit is the actions, but the tree, your heart, your soul, your character. That's where the fruit comes from.

So wickedness is a matter of the heart, not a matter of the behavior. The behavior is just the end result. If a bad tree cannot bear good fruit, if goodness comes from a good tree, if out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks, and you're saying, "Well, my fruit isn't good. There's no hope. I guess I'm just wicked. I guess I'm just evil." If I left off with that and sent you home, that would be a tragedy because that's not the gospel.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WICKED

The gospel is what happens next. So inaction is a sin. Fear's an excuse. Blame is a cover, but there's good news. So what do you do if you are wicked? What do you do if you are wicked? So what do you do? Will you repent? You repent. You confess your sin and fear to God. You step forward. Don't be inactive. Don't stand still. Step forward and be faithful, and you might say, "Well, that still feels really worksy. That feels like my own effort to do things." Yes, but you're wicked at heart. You can't create good fruit unless your heart changes. So can your heart change? Yeah.

Turn to Ezekiel. Ezekiel 36. Look at this amazing promise to the people and that extends to us. Ezekiel 36:25. Feel the hope. Feel the hope in this. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness. Anybody feel unclean this morning? I felt very unclean this week. If you just sit in that uncleanness, you know what you'll do? Nothing. You'll just sit there, and you'll say, "Well, I can't do

anything. I'm unclean. My sin disqualifies me." Your sin does disqualify you, but Jesus takes the sin, and he changes the marrow of the tree.

He changes the heart of a man. He sprinkles us with water. He cleans out the uncleanness, and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. I will deliver you. How many of you have idols that you need to be delivered from and cleansed from? I do, and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes.

See, now, there's the fruit. Cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. What do you do if you're wicked? You repent and you accept the fact that Jesus cleans you, and he gives you a new heart, and he gives you a new spirit so that you can walk in his statutes, so that you can walk in his statutes, not stand in his statutes. You can walk in his statutes, you can lean in, and you can be active. Jesus changes you.

You might say, "Well, Brett, that's Ezekiel. That's Old Testament. That doesn't count." Romans 8, turn to Romans 8. Just for the few of you that are thinking that. Says, "There is therefore," verse one, "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." You feel wicked. You feel condemned. Paul says, "There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," and then drop down to verse 14. "For all who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God, for you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into," what?

"Fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we also may be glorified with him." Listen to verse 16. The spirit himself bears witness. That means that the spirit is standing in front of the father and saying, "Brett, this guy, Brett, he's your son. Jesus and I, we're brothers. We're heirs. If you think you're wicked, don't stay there because Jesus sprinkles our hearts and cleans out the uncleanness and removes the idols, and if we'll step into that, if we'll obey God we can do that, because the fear can be taken away and we don't have to blame anyone."

So here's our Big Idea, right? Inaction is a sin. Fear is an excuse. Blame is a cover, but let me give you the corollary. Here's the corollary. Good men take action, avoid excuses and own up to their mistakes. If inaction is a sin and fear is an excuse and blame is a cover, then the antidote to that or the answer to that for a man who believes the gospel and who's following Christ is that a good man, a Christian man takes action and avoids excuses and owns up to his mistakes. Let's pray and then we'll go to the tables.

Father, thank you so much for this parable, this deep, rich parable that shows us what it means to be a servant, what it means to be faithful, and then what it means to be good, and also what it means to be wicked so that we can, Lord, take action. We can be obedient to the calling that you give us. We can put our fears aside. We can overcome it because we know where sons and heirs of the most high God. We can stop playing the blame game and we can just take responsibility for our own sin, Lord, because when we take responsibility, then we can repent, and then you can clean this from it, and then you take it away from us, and you give us a new heart.

We need a new heart, Lord, every day. So Lord, make us good trees who bear good fruit to build your kingdom and bring you glory. In Jesus' name, amen.