

Honor Among Thieves

Luke 22:25-30; 42

Whose goal is it anyway?

Putting God first is the only way we can experience unity.

Greeting/Intro

- Married, kids, pets
- Early church life
- Church planting
- GATM

Movie Intro

- #4
- Not a D&D player
- So. Many. Themes.
- Stats
 - o Last year
 - o \$\$
 - o Drama & awards
 - o Critics

Themes

- Power of creativity
- Relationships
- Teamwork
- Honor, justice
- Failure, how do we respond to failure
 - o “We must never stop failing. Because the moment we do, we’ve failed.”
- Grief, guilt

D&D Game

- Big idea: working together as a team. Save the day!
- Movie description: “A charming thief and a band of unlikely adventurers embark on an epic quest to retrieve a long lost relic, but their charming adventure goes dangerously awry when they run afoul of the wrong people.”
- Group projects?

Unifying factors

- One man’s goal of obtaining one item
- All thieves
- Worked together for a few years

- None of these are enough to cement long-term good working relationships. There has to be *more*
- From the beginning, the team is off...

Movie tagline: “Who needs heroes when you have thieves?”

- Fantasy, not reality
- Thief and honor??

Honor:

- Noun: high respect or great esteem; adherence to what is right or to a conventional standard of conduct
- Verb: regard with great respect; fulfill an obligation or keep an agreement

My thoughts:

- Is: honesty, respect, understanding, high regard, accountability
- Is Not: manipulative, self-focused, having an angle/end goal, cancelling somebody because they didn't live up to my expectations or do things in the way that I want them to be done

Biggest underpinning: manipulation of people or circumstances for personal gain

- Movie opens with manipulative storytelling
- Lead character isn't upfront about his true motivations through all his planning
 - Comes back to bite him with the team and his daughter
 - He has not been honoring or respecting them
 - Working for his own personal goal
- Team = multiple people, all with their own goals
- Two characters working counter to the team
 - Mr. Shady – wealth, glamor, safety. Wealth at any cost.
 - Conspires with: Danger Lady! They ruin all the plans!
 - Ultimately, Mr. Shady plays into her plans for world destruction.
 - She manipulates his manipulative behavior

Layers of manipulation and dishonesty

- No adherence to what is right or to a conventional standard of conduct - no honor
- No fulfilling obligations or keeping agreements - no honor

Same goal: themselves!

- Not working as a team, none of them putting the same goal first

The big and small “save the day moments” that they're working towards don't come until they put aside personal motivations and work for others first. Saving the day doesn't happen until they are actually being honorable.

These apply to Bible characters too!

- Open to Luke 22
- Bibles available

Background: gospels

- Jesus calls the 12
- 3 years together
- Teach, perform miracles, break religious and cultural traditions...
- He knows what his end goal is and is trying to teach them to live in that way.
- Live for this goal of God's purpose on earth, putting God before everything.
- Read the gospels, see how Jesus moved on his path to this destination

Luke 22:1-6

- Judas, one of the adventurers
- *The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is also called Passover, was approaching. 2 The leading priests and teachers of religious law were plotting how to kill Jesus, (they have a unified goal) but they were afraid of the people's reaction. 3 Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples, 4 and he went to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. 5 They were delighted, and they promised to give him money. 6 So he agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him when the crowds weren't around.*
- One of the originals, called three years ago
- Every waking moment together
- Learning from Jesus, hearing Him teach, seeing the way He lives out His devotion to the Lord
- Still had his own expectations. They weren't being met – Messiah was supposed to be different
- He had an ideal, and Jesus was not accomplishing what he wanted the goal to be
- Conspired against Jesus. Went to religious leaders
- Betrayed Jesus for some money. Not honoring the Lord.
- He conspires with another group to manipulate the situation, but he ended up playing into the machinations of others and in doing so led to his own destruction. Mr. Shady.

Keep scrolling down and verses 7 through 20 Jesus during the Passover meal establishes the New Covenant.

- Communion today!
- These Jewish men *knew*
- Still broke out squabbling
- When Jesus says one among you is the man who will betray me, in **verse 23** "*The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.*" Not me,

must be you! *“Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them.”*

- Missed the message! Jesus has to explain to them again
- In **verse 25** *Jesus told them, “In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called ‘friends of the people.’ 26 But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. 27 Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves. 28 “You have stayed with me in my time of trial. 29 And just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right 30 to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*
- Be a servant. Don’t try to elevate yourself. All the honor belongs to the Father.

Verses 31-34 - Jesus tells Peter that he will deny Jesus – oof, not a very honorable thing to do - and Peter denies that he will, and then in verses 54 to 62 we read about Peter doing exactly what Jesus had just said that he would. Again we have a man who has spent three years learning from Jesus. When Jesus says something it comes to pass and yet still the idea of this **dishonorable** action is given to him and he says not I Lord, I would never!

Luke 22:42, Jesus example for all of us. *“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”* He sticks to one goal, the hardest goal, because He **honors** the Father’s will above his own.

Chapter 23 continues with Jesus’ journey to the cross and his time on the cross and the crowd continuing to mock him.

- Pick up in **verse 32**: *Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. 33 When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. 35 The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” 36 The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. 37 They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” 38 A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.” 39 One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!” 40 But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? 41 We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” 43 And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

Judas

- Walked for 3 years
- Missed it
- Self-focused decisions
- Didn't even try to go back for forgiveness because he still didn't understand
- Paid for it with his life

Peter

- Walked for 3 years
- Missed it
- DID go back to Jesus
- Received forgiveness
- Moved to putting God first

These two men who walked with Jesus for 3 years missed the message of Jesus even after spending all of their time together and hearing from him day in and day out. The criminal being crucified right next to Jesus got it in that one moment. He had one moment and he reached out to Jesus and he asked for it and he received. Our darkest moments can be the most dangerous. Who in these dark moments was the most honorable? The one who gave Jesus the highest honor.

Teamwork, unifying factors

- Apostles kept missing it
- It isn't until they come to the full realization of who Jesus is and what his purpose was in coming here to Earth, the salvation of all of us, that they are able to work together and continue on in the work that Jesus put before them.
- The unifying factor of all being misfits of society not really going to hold them together very strong, the unifying factor of living this season of life together not really going to carry forward for very long.
 - o Write to each other in 10 years

So what is it that unifies all of us? What is it that binds us together? I am not the same as you and you are not the same as this other person, how are any of us even able to sit in this room together??

Personal story:

- Young faith
- Knew what the Bible said
- Senior year winter camp
- No way to work as a team within yourself. Must be one person, participating in teams with others
- Not talking about D.I.D.
- If you're living one life in different ways you cannot live for one goal, or you cannot live for one *healthy* goal.
- Living for the feedback of others

- How long? Various lives spill over into each other. Who am I?
- I had to choose. God, or myself
- I made the decision to turn fully to Christ. Not because I wanted to be a hero or save the day but because I had been testing the waters and seen just how harmful that was.
- Following God's directions did not leave me to lead me to self-inflicted danger. I didn't want to miss what he had for my life because I was too busy chasing other people or things. I'm able to be fully myself when I honor God above everything else. Holding God highest means that I work to keep his goals my focus. Any goals I make for myself or with others have to be in alignment with his mission.
- Choosing to follow God and keep his goal first that means I choose to be in community with other believers and followers of Jesus and trusting that as long as we are all making that decision to **put God first** and have the power of the Spirit indwelling us and helping us in our daily decisions and walking with us through life, that **is the unifying factor that means that we can all work together.**

Putting God first is not a one time decision.

- Habit building, discipline. Takes time
- Will fall back
- I think that's why I like that line from movie, the moment we give up on failing is when we fail. No matter how many times I fall down I have the promises of the Lord telling me that as long as I get back up and keep going with Him, He is faithful to continue walking with me.
- Shiny! Redirect
- Any time I hear myself say, That's just not me or that's not who I am, but it's a command from the Bible... I know who's in the wrong.

How *do* we make sure we're putting God first?

- Same at the beginning, middle, and end
- Give God your first and best
- Prayer
- Being in the Word
- Being part of a community of faith
- Foundational for personal walk with Christ

Early foundational training, did not carry over to adulthood. What does that look like look like for us as adults or soon to be adults? We have to learn what following God's directions means for each of us. My faith can't be my parent's faith. My faith can't be your faith.

- **Mornings!** Yuck
 - o When I get to that point where this is my best time, I'm going to spend this time with the Lord.
- **Prayer.** Close out distractions

- Can't hold still well, tip over. Not conducive to undistracted conversation. God wants us to be in relationship with Him, wants us to talk to Him, so I have had to learn how being disciplined in prayer works for me.
- Get on the move!
- Go *with* God in prayer
- Movement is an integral part of prayer life to me.
- Reading. Bible is the living Word of God and how we get to know Him!
 - Non-fiction, yuck.
 - All energy first to the Bible, then other things
 - If I want God to be first in my life I have to know who He is, and that comes from being in His Word.
- **Working and living together**. God himself works together, we saw Jesus' example in the gospels of working together in different size groups.
 - Almost always with people
 - Did live the example of time with just Him and His heavenly Father
 - Made to be together, go you!
 - Life Groups
 - Workshops
 - Teams
 - Big team "secret"
 - Two team members in IT. Because there isn't anything that's going to unify us other than putting God first.
 - God has given me the ability to work with it
 - To get help from other people he's put people in my life that I can go to for help or training when I need it
 - He's taught me how to keep him first and how to collaboratively work with a team to keep all of us focused on his mission so that we can keep this ministry moving forward together in a way that is sustainable over longer periods of time

Being in the word, in prayer, being together, learning to give God our first and best - those are first steps, next steps, and final steps in your journey. The last thing that we hear the criminal on the cross doing in his life is talking to God in the flesh. Jesus, remember me when you get to your kingdom. And in that moment his prayer was answered. No matter where you are in your faith journey these are your next steps. What is your next step to getting deeper in the word of God? What is your next step in prayer?

- Maybe sit still doesn't work for you. Distracted with eyes closed. Go for a walk! Pray in a rocking chair!

What next steps do you need to take in togetherness?

- Serena, Life Groups
- Media and Vitality are great places to serve in more unseen ways
- Can you bake? Stir fry?
- Rachel, kids

What are you doing in your life right now to make sure that you're putting God first? You're setting aside personal desires you're setting aside the way you were raised you're setting aside whatever it is that's holding you back? Don't miss it. Don't be the Judas who misses and gives up for infinity. Maybe you're a Peter who missed it at some point, but it's not too late for you. You are alive, you can come back to Jesus and say what is my next step right now? Whatever God is putting on your heart right now for you to take is your next step. Put him first and take that step. Continue putting him first. We're all people. Yes God made us to work together but we're all different we're not going to get along all the time but we can continue moving forward together in unity if we all keep putting God first above any insults or missteps or this didn't this group project didn't go the way that I thought it should or unmet expectations. Putting God first, honoring God above all else. God wants to save your day and then he wants you to save someone else's day and the only time we hit that save the day moment is when we put God in the highest place of honor put everything selfish aside and put him first.