

Years ago, I was in Texas City, Texas and was at McDonald's with a friend who was instrumental in me coming to know the Lord. We're sitting there talking, and this family came in, a very beautiful family. The little girl looked like she had come from a dance recital or something. She had a little dress, dance outfit on with little black buckle shoes, her hair was pulled up with a bow. She was just about as cute and beautiful as you can be. So I just kind of watched her. She was just real precocious or as we say in our household, "sassy." Sassy doesn't get you beat, sassy is cute. She was on the line, but it was really cute to watch. I was eating my burger, and I just caught a whiff of something other than McDonald's. This lady walked past me who looked homeless. She stopped and talked to the little family and then went up and ordered a fish fillet, which seriously, don't order the fish fillet. Why would you order that sandwich? She got her sandwich and paid with some loose change. So we're sitting in this booth, the cute family is sitting in this booth and she sits in the booth on the other side of them. I just remember getting nauseated by her. Seeing this old lady who is missing teeth and the teeth she did have weren't the correct color wolfing down this fish fillet sandwich made me feel sick. I didn't want to finish my sandwich. I thought she was gross. And to make matters worse, she kept talking and playing with this little girl. I don't know why but I had this thing in me where I'm like, "Hey ugly, leave her alone." So she finished her meal, threw her stuff away and came back and started talking to the little girl and the little family again. And then she bent over and said, "How about a kiss?" And I'm not proud of any of this, but I felt anger in my heart. I was thinking, "You nasty woman. We will not defile that little girl's lips with your nasty face." That's where I am. That's where I'm located. And so the little girl looks at mom, mom gives her a nod, and the little girl leans out and kisses that nasty lady on the cheek. And then she hugs her and says, "Jesus loves you." "Aw" nothing. The Lord used this little three year old girl to blow me up. Do not "aw" that little girl. God used that little girl like a crowbar that day. And then here's the thing. Thinking back on my journey here's some things about my heart that I really hate. I'm self-righteous and I hate it. Maybe some of you non-believers are in here going, "You're a Christian. Of course you're self-righteous." Why don't we pump the breaks there a little bit because I was self-righteous long before I was a believer in Christ just for the record. But looking back on it, I grew up in a pretty bad spot. God has been miraculous in my family in that my father has become a believer. He actually works in our step studies. My older sister is a believer who is here. Her husband, even in the last couple of weeks, has started coming and we've started having conversations about the gospel. God's been very powerful to come out of such a dark place. Here's what happened to me, and these may seem like polar opposites, but I want to contend with you out of the text this morning that it's not. I was self-righteous because I was loathing. I felt like I couldn't be loved and there really wasn't anything good in me, so in order to hide that I had this persona on the outside that was quick to judge, would rarely extend compassion and thought that everybody should be as good as I was despite the fact that in the deepest core parts of my heart I didn't really care for myself. Does this make sense to anybody else? So there was bravado on the outside, but on the inside there was just fear. So is it possible to struggle with self-loathing/self-righteousness, arrogant self-hate? I honestly think they're the same sin working itself out in two different directions. Because if we put in on a scale and go all the way towards self-righteousness, then you end up getting a full on narcissist, which honestly is pretty popular in our culture. It's accepted, which is kind of strange. And if you go all the way towards self-loathing, you end up with somebody who is absolutely paralyzed and destroys all their relationships because they just can't imagine that anybody would love them. So even if somebody tries to give them love, they'll shut it down, they'll kill it. Most of us are tormented somewhere here in the middle, fluctuating between the two.

So that brings us to Luke 10. Starting in verse 1, "After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go." So let's set up what's happening.

Jesus pulls together, in addition to the twelve, the disciples that are following him, He breaks them into teams of two and goes, "Okay, you guys are going to this town, you guys are going to this city, you guys are going to this place..." And He basically gives them assignments, and He gives them this speech. And it's parts of this speech that I think are very interesting. "And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves." Now I'm urban. I've always grown up in the city. I'm not an expert on things that occur in the countryside, but I know enough to know this is not a good thing. You don't have to be a rancher to know there's not a lot of stories about wolves getting whipped by sheep. You're not going to hear a lot of that. When wolves and sheep mingle, the sheep get the bad end of it. "Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house." He's saying, "So eat, but don't feel like you're entitled to go from house to house and get food. That's not how we're going to do this game." Verse 8, "Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town." FYI, it went really bad for Sodom. Fire fell out of the sky and killed everybody, and even one woman, Lot's wife, turns around and just glances back at her house that she loves so much and gets turned into salt. A bad day all around. Now this next part of the speech is where I think it would be interesting to be in that group of seventy-two. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades." Now if you're one of the two guys about to go to one of those towns, aren't you like, "Wait a minute, I'm going to Chorazin. Say man, you want to trade me? I'll go to Ephesus, you go to Chorazin?" And then these seventy-two men head out.

Now upon their return is when things get interesting. "The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless..." That word "nevertheless" is going to be pretty huge for where we're going. "Okay, good. The demons obeyed you, nothing could hurt you. That's good, but..." Now look at what comes next. "Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." So these men come back and go, "We can do these mighty things. We can do these great things. We've accomplished some powerful things. We did this, we did this, this occurred and this happened" And Jesus goes, "Okay, those things are good. There should be joy there, but we don't rejoice in those things. We rejoice that God could use such men as us. We don't go, 'Look what I'm capable of.' We go, 'How amazing is God that even through me something like this could occur?' You don't rejoice that you can do mighty acts, moral acts and powerful acts. You rejoice that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. You rejoice in the gospel." And then this is where it gets even more weird. Let's go to verse 21. By the way, in my research the last month in this text, everyone I could find that had preached this chapter have completely removed this text from its context. They've pulled it out and made it its own self. This is a part of the story that we're in, and it does not stand alone. I know this because the Bible says it doesn't stand alone. Look at verse 21. "In that same hour..." There are some times in the Bible where on one page it's this year and on the next page it's a year and a half later. But not here. And "in the same hour" doesn't necessarily mean an hour later. In the same hour that he said "nevertheless," He starts to rejoice Himself. Look at what He rejoices in. "In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will." Let me ask a question here. Does anybody see any little children

in this story? Did Jesus send out seventy-two 3rd graders? “Don’t take your Dora the Explorer backpack. Don’t take any lunch money. Go. I send you out as sheep among wolves.” There are no children in this story. This is not about childlike faith. That’s not what this is about. Who is in the story? Jesus and the seventy-two. “I thank You, Father, that you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned. I praise You, Father, that You’ve given me this group of morons and yet have revealed to them, according to Your gracious will, Your power and Your might.” Jesus is overwhelmed that God would use such guys as these in this culture and at this time, the religious establishment would have identified very who the sharpest minds were, who the most charismatic personalities were, and they were able to train them to be Sadducees and Pharisees. Everybody else was sent back home by the time they were six or seven to learn their father’s trade. All of these guys are fishermen or have some other of trade. Which means that very early on, they were identified as not the sharpest knives in the drawer. And throughout the entire ministry of Christ, they will prove that to be true.

And then I love verse 23 and on. “Then turning to the disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!” For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” So here are these men who are as simple as you can imagine that have already been identified as not the sharpest knives in the drawer to whom God in the flesh is saying, “We have not chosen to reveal ourselves to the sharpest of sharp, the most gifted of the gifted, to some kind of established elite, but rather We’ve given it to you. The fishermen, the welder, the garbage men, We’ve given it to you.” Now this swings both ways, so follow me here. If you’ll just read the Bible, you’ll see over and over and over again God does some of the most miraculous, unbelievable things through some of the most questionable characters. Abraham tried to whore out his wife to save his own life. I’ve been married 9 years; that’s going to come back on you. I don’t care how godly your girl is. There’s going to be a night, 20 years from then or whenever, when you come in and go, “What did you make for dinner?” “Uh, I don’t know.

Remember that time you tried to whore me out to save your life?” I mean, that’s coming back on you. That one doesn’t just get dealt with quickly. And we can go through the list here and you can have your pick. In the entire Bible, outside of Jesus, there are only four men who don’t have something written against them in regards to moral flaw: Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel. I don’t know that there’s anybody else outside of Jesus who doesn’t have a moral flaw. Rahab is a prostitute when God uses her. She wasn’t a former prostitute. Ruth, I love Ruth. I love Ruth because some of us get stuck in this generational thing where we look at our dads and we look at our dad’s dads and we look at our dad’s dad’s dad and we go, “Man, I come from 100 years of gunk an garbage and sin and in deep, dark depravity. I’m not God’s kind of people.” And Ruth, in the lineage of Jesus, is the great- great granddaughter of incest. Lot got drunk with his daughters and slept with them and impregnated them. Ruth is the granddaughter of this. So I don’t know what’s behind you, but I’m guessing it doesn’t get that dark. Sampson had the worst taste in women in the history of the world. He’s codependent and he’s probably got lust issues. That woman tried to kill him multiple times. She tries to kill him, and then a couple weeks later he’s like, “She’s just so fine though. I’m going to call her.” His boys are like, “Don’t. She tried to kill you, dude. Why are you calling this woman?” Not only that, but if you remember that the great thing that Sampson gets so much glory for is his power, his strength and the might by which he slaughters the Philistines. But if you’ll remember, he picks up the jawbone of a donkey to do that. Did you know that by touching of the jawbone he’s breaking his Nazarite vow? He was to touch no unclean thing, nothing that was dead. So as Sampson breaks his vow to God, God empowers him. Moses was a murdering stutterer. Elijah struggled with depression. David is a murdering adulterer whose emotions swing from place from the other so often his writings come across as schizophrenic. If you read the Psalms, it’s like, “Praise You, Lord. You are near, You are good, You are beautiful. You would never abandon Your servant. Where are You?!? How long will You forsake me?” Immediately you’re reading that going, “This cat is not stable.” It does not look like he ever gets into a rhythm. The disciples, the guys that Jesus chooses to follow Him, they range from everything to being so boisterous, out of control, over the top He-Men to being so shy it’s painful. I mean, I don’t know how Jesus ever dealt with Peter without snickering. He’s like, “Even if I must die, I would never betray You.” Jesus is like, “I’ll tell you what, buddy. You ain’t going to make it to tomorrow morning.”

But this is what happens and the reason why it's so important on both ends to see whether your border on narcissism or err on self-hate, all these men and women are very, very flawed because that's the state of every human soul. And yet God powerfully moves through them despite their flaws as a healing part of getting rid of those flaws. Here's the thing about both groups no matter where you are on the scale. Both completely misunderstand the gospel. The self-righteous, the narcissists, they don't need God. They got it. They clean themselves up. In fact, God is grateful to Himself for them. They keep the rest of us in line. Because they don't see themselves correctly, they lack compassion, they lack grace and they will use truth to beat the trash out of people. That's what happens with full-scale narcissism. They also think that the cross makes much of them. And there's been all sorts of bad teaching to reinforce this. For instance, there's the thought that the cross makes much of you. That's really bad teaching. The cross exists to make much of the glory of God. That's what the cross is for, it's not there to make much of you. So that's the error on the self-righteous side. The error on the self-loathing side is you're the one human being whose past is so dark that Jesus is thinking about retracting His offer. Can I ask a time line question? How many of your sins were future sins when Christ was having the flesh torn off His back and getting nailed to the cross? Unless you are the oldest man alive, all of them were. It's really hard to surprise an infinite, all-knowing being, isn't it? Do you think you surprised Him with how dark it's gotten? You haven't surprise Him; He knew it was coming. It's why He went. So the essence of the gospel is in verses that I quote to you every week. I try to work them into the sermon every week. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." "If righteousness could be obtained through the law then Christ died for nothing." And my favorite, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. So here's a little exercise we can do. That moment where you went farther than you ever thought you could go, that moment that felt shameful and wrong and wicked but for whatever reason the lust of your heart, the tear of your mind couldn't get you out of it, that moment where afterwards wave upon wave upon wave of shame and guilt pummeled you, that's the moment Christ died for you, that's when He goes to the cross, that's when He gets His back scourged, that's when His lungs fill up with blood, that's when He screams out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?," that's the moment. So self-loathing is just as arrogant. It puts you above and beyond the cross. The self-righteous man doesn't need the cross because he's good enough to pull it off, despite the fact that all your righteous works are as filthy rags to Him. And the self-loathing person puts himself beyond the cross as if it's power can't have any effect on him because of the darkness that he's been through. And then can I tell you about the collisions that start occurring? You let a self-righteous man marry a self-loathing woman or vice versa? You've got this guy going, "You stink, you can't do anything right, you can't make me happy..." And their little mantra is, "I stink, I can't do anything right, I can't make him happy..." And this guy builds himself up by absolutely pummeling this one, or vice versa. There's not a male role here and a female role here. You let a self-righteous man raise children? A self-loather raise children? There are all sorts of things that start going horribly wrong when we don't understand that it is by grace that we have been saved through faith, and even the faith to believe is not ours but given to us by Christ so that no one can boast in anything except the cross. So if somebody comes and goes, "Man, that was phenomenal. That's such a gift," yeah that is a gift. It's not mine. Praise God that He would use such a scoundrel as me because I really know what my heart is. Contrast that to allowing yourself to get into self-deceit and go, "You know, I'm very good. You're right. I impressed myself on that one." Or compare it to the other end of, "God can't use somebody like me." Because this is just as exhausting as that. That is exhausting because you always have to pretend that you're better than you are and you buy into your own hype, and then you live a lie that everyone else knows is a lie except for you and those who are self-loathing around you. But then over here, you end up getting involved in everything you can because you think that if you can get yourself cleaned up a little bit, maybe God would love you. So when you introduce religion into self-loathing, it's exhausting.

I love this place. It will be six years in December for me. I am not planing on ever leaving this place. We've laid roots down, my whole family is here, Lauren's who family is here now. We couldn't leave without being physically harmed to begin with. And then what God has done here continues to just blow my mind. We thought God would do some cool things here, but we were not expecting this. So one of the things that happens just because we're sinful, myself

included, is we start thinking that the way we do it is the way it's done. And so then you really start sounding dumb. The way we do things is a way, it's not the way. When I talk about money and say this is how we're going to raise money, I don't think everybody should raise money that way. I just think that we're trying to be obedient to what Christ has asked of us, so we're going to be obedient as far as we understand what He's asked of us. But I don't think that church A or church B or church C is wrong because they do it differently. We're not into buildings. If we get some cooperation going with other churches, no church in Dallas would ever need to build a building again. So we're not going to do it. We're not going to go build some 50, 60, 70, 120, 240 million dollar facility. It's not coming. But I'm not judging or saying that somebody who does that is wrong or sinful or wicked. We don't have a double-decker basketball court here. That's because I don't have game. If I had game, we might build one. So even a church that's spend \$10 million on a youth facility, they're going to stand in front of God and give an account for how they pressed in and they heard and they fulfilled their acts of obedience just like me. And the reason I'm saying this is because a lot of people land at the Village because they got beat up at some place. So they come here and go, "Oh, this is how it's supposed to be done." You're wrong. This is a way. Now do we think we're right in how we're doing it? Yes, but not when laid against somebody else but when laid against what the Holy Spirit has impressed on the elders and leaders of this church. Any other way of seeing is self-righteous, it's wicked. I'm not going to stand and give an account for First Baptist Lewisville, their folks are. And they're going to press into God, they're going to hear and they're going to be obedient. And here's the thing about the church. God hasn't just kind of lost control. So praise God for First Lewisville and Valley Creek and Crossroads and Cross Timbers and Fellowship. Praise God for Fellowship. "Well Chandler, they have some theological holes." Okay. Who doesn't? No, we contend for the truth, but we do it with grace and mercy. And you don't put philosophy off to the side and go, "This is the way church is supposed to be done." Instead you go, "We're going to be obedient. We're going to walk in obedience." I've told you this before. My grandmother thinks the drums are evil. She would hate this place. She has taken me to the book of Psalms, she has shown me "Praise Him with horns..." and she has pointed out, "Do you see a bass drum in there? Do you see kick drum in there? Do you see snare?" I was like, "I see cymbals. Cymbals are drums." And she didn't talk to me for a couple of weeks. She would not like this place. She would have a very difficult time worshipping here. But she has a ferocity for the Lord and a passion for the lost. In fact, I don't know that I've ever talked with her where she didn't ask me, "How many decisions have been made?" I needed some help with that. I was like, "Well, I picked up these pants..." And she was like, "No, how many people have come to know the Lord?" I've never talked to her where that's not her question about the Village. "How many decisions? How many decisions? How many decisions?..." And my 90 year old grandmother, barely hanging on to life, is not interested in the numerics of it but wants to rejoice in salvation. You're just in a real ignorant place if you're going, "This style of church, this way of doing church is wicked." It might not be us, which is okay, but you've got to guard your heart against that. And I'm preaching just as much to myself.

The other thing I fear over here, because we get so many people who are banged up, is that you'll sit around and spend the rest of your life waiting to get a little bit better before you'll let the Lord really use you. You're going to be waiting around forever. The funny thing is it's actually when you're being used by God that He does start to work on those things. I'll give you an example right out of Scripture from one of the most sacred offices there is. The bible tells us that there was a man named Apollos, who was good with a face mic. He could preach, he would teach, he could do those things.

So he's preaching and teaching one day when Priscilla and Aquila, who were pretty good at doctrine, sat out there listening to him and are like, "This kid's good, but he's a little off there doctrinally." So Priscilla and Aquila take him out to lunch. They sit down with Apollos and say, "Hey, you've got a gift. The Holy Spirit has gifted you, but you're a little off here and let me try to explain why." And they show him why, and he receives it and begins to minister even more powerfully. It's him going, "Okay Lord, I'm Yours," and He begins to chisel away, begins to work, begins to empower. "Well surely there are seasons where we shouldn't be in leadership." Absolutely. I'm not saying that. I'm saying if you're waiting around to be perfect, you're always going to be waiting around. I haven't met a perfect man yet. In fact, there's almost always that moment of disappointment when you meet somebody and are like, "How amazing is this person.

How unbelievable is this guy?" And then they'll say something three weeks later and you're just like, "Aw man! Seriously? You watch Project Runway? Man, you were so close." Could I plead with you a little bit? If there's anything good in you, anything lovely, anything worthy of pointing at, any bit of self-discipline, any freedom from sin, any success in marriage or with children, that is God's grace to you. For you to walk with a swagger in it makes you a blasphemer. And if there's an area that's dark and wicked that haunts you, if there's this moment you can't get out of your head or your heart, if you've got these wounds that haunt you and chase you, then the cross is for you. It's what the cross was about. In that moment, whatever that thing is, Christ dies, absorbing God's wrath towards it so you can be free from shame and guilt. But you've got to go towards Him. You can't run from Him because of that; you've got to go to Him because of that. That's the beauty of the gospel.

People outside of the church go, "Church is full of hypocrites." Do you know how you can just absolutely dissolve that argument? "It sure is. Absolutely. Golly, it's horrible. Take a guy like me." Now we don't want to do that. That's not the rugged man individualistic American way, but watch Paul. "I'm the chief of sinners, a violent man, blasphemer." Watch David. "I will not keep quiet about my struggles in the great assembly. I'll sing about them. 'My sins have overtaken me. I can't see...'" I mean, doesn't that destroy the argument? "I don't know, Christians are just..." And I'm like, "I know. Sometimes I dislike them myself...and I am one. Praise God for the cross and grace, huh? Oh, you don't know that part? Okay, let me unpack it." This is why I preach against preaching sometimes. When you set Christianity up that we're morally better than other people, our marriages are stronger than other people's, when you set it up like that, you've become a liar. Because it's not true and because the essence of the cross is not our perfection but His and His glory in that perfection seeing us as perfect because of the cross. That's Christianity, it's not religion. Religion is outside of Him; Christianity is a worship of God, because while we were yet sinners, He died for us. God help us.

Let's pray. "Father, help us. I just pray that You would be in this place this morning. For the self-loathers I pray that You would remind them that it's not their righteousness, it's not their goodness, it's not their talent, it's not their abilities, but it's You in them that is the hope of glory. I pray for the self-righteous in here, Father. I just pray for a brokenness of heart, that You would begin to chisel away and work at our judgment on others, how quickly we judge their motives. I pray even right now that You would bring up individuals that we think that way about, that we see in that way. We thank You for grace, we thank You for the cross. We boast in it and it alone. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen."