

THE BIG IDEA: The key to being in love is being loved by the King of love.

The Take-Off

Think for a minute about the best teacher you ever had and the worst teacher you ever had.

What made the difference? It probably wasn't subject matter, or even their method or approach. It's tempting to think it's because one was like-able and one wasn't, but that probably wasn't it, either.

What sets the good teachers apart from the bad ones is an ability to help students connect the dots between what they're teaching and what can be done with what they're teaching.

Matthew and Mark both record that Jesus was like that. They said that crowds were amazed because Jesus taught with authority - an authority that the teachers of that day didn't have.

But it wasn't his volume or vocabulary that gave him authority. It was his ability to take earthly things and connect them to a heavenly truth.

Jesus spoke in ways that people understood in order to speak greater things to them that they needed to understand. He used common things to communicate uncommon truth, and that's exactly what we're doing in our series, "The Gospel According to Taylor Swift."

We're using music that most everyone has heard (or at least heard of) and showing the reality of the gospel in it.

Last week we talked about her song, Shake It Off, and we learned that the world shakes people off and turns its back on them, but Jesus allows us to shake offenses off and turn ourselves back to the offender.

When Paul did that in Acts 28, it opened a door to share the gospel, and it will for us, too. We said it like this: sometimes shaking off an offense is the best defense of the Gospel.

For all you football fans, when we do that, it makes the church a really special team.

Get it? Offense, defense, special teams. The magical football trifecta!

You've already enjoyed (?) a lip sync of this week's song, and so let's take a closer look at one of Swift's first hits - Love Story - and explore how it might help point people to the gospel.

The search for love and happiness is something everyone can relate to, and that theme has made Taylor Swift a ton of money.

But the problem with Love Story - and every Disney movie ever made - is that they simply aren't real life.

1. The Gospel According to Taylor Swift

- a. This catchy song basically says, "If you can find the right person, everything will be ok."
- b. So we spend out time and money looking for something elusive because we're in love with love.
- c. Need proof?
 - Romance novels (a billion dollar industry) bring in more sales than mystery and sci-fi.
 - We spend 20B on Valentine's Day
 - The average courtship costs just under 24k
 - American singles spent 82B on dating last year
 - The total money lost last year in romance scams was 85M
- d. We are desperate for love and for the hope that we'll live happily ever after, and that desperation has made Taylor Swift a ton of money
- e. I'm not saying she's bad for writing songs about love, because there's a market for it
- f. The struggle for love is real; the fairy tale myth isn't, even though Swift and Disney sell it well
- g. [Picture of Charming and Snow kissing]
- h. I know that sounded harsh and unromantic, but hang with me
- i. This isn't a message about marriage or singleness, so I'm not saying it's wrong to do any of those things
- j. But let's meet a woman who probably had a Taylor Swift playlist on repeat

2. The end result of the Swift gospel

- a. Jesus had an encounter with her in John 4
- b. This woman was an outcast among outcasts
 - a Samaritan (hated by Jews) and divorced, not once, but 5 times.
 - she's given up on the idea
 - Jesus meets her at a well looking for water, but she's got another thirst even worse
- c. Remember that amazing teacher? The one who helped you connect the dots?
- d. This woman is like so many of us. Her life is a bunch of pieces that don't add up. Fragmented.
- e. The conversation is all over the place: racial tension, religious tension, relationships, worship

- f. And then, in verse 26, Jesus connected the dots.
- g. After promising her living water that would forever quench her thirst, Jesus simply tells her that he is the one she had been looking for.

3. The Gospel According to Jesus

- a. And that is the difference that Jesus makes.
- b. The gospel according to Taylor Swift is true to a point: we all need love and want a love story.
- c. But only the love of Jesus truly satisfies us, and until we realize that, our lives will be unfulfilled searches for an elusive fairy tale.
- d. Because no one needs a fairy tale when you can have a real love story.
- e. The gospel is this: Jesus wants you. He wants the broken you, and his love can heal you.
- f. Look at John 4:4 - Jesus HAD TO GO through Samaria! Jesus is more than Prince Charming or Romeo.
- g. He is more than the soul mate we search for.
- h. He is the healer of our soul, and his love makes our souls able to love.
- i. The Big Idea says this: **the key to being in love is being loved by the King of love.**
- j. In fact, 1 John 4:19 tells us that we can't love until we've been loved by Jesus.

The Landing

Some of us can relate to this broken woman at the well, looking for water - and a love - that could satisfy.

Like trying to blow out those birthday candles that keep relighting, you know the frustration of trying and trying only to fail again and again.

Rejected 5 times and not even trying the 6th time, there seemed to be no hope in sight of ever having a love story.

And then, in a moment with a teacher who connected the dots in her life like no one else could, the woman who was an outcast of the outcasts was loved by the King of love, and suddenly, she was full.

She left her water jug (v. 28), and the people who only knew her as love's reject suddenly saw her as love's object, and they came to see the man who made the difference.

That is a love that will change the world.

Everyone wants to be in love, but Jesus wants everyone to be loved by him because he knows the power of his love.

Taylor Swift understands that we need to be loved, but only Jesus truly knows how to love us.

You see, the heart is either a hole that can't be filled or a reservoir that can't be emptied. Jesus makes the difference.

The key to being in love is being loved by the King of love.