

THE BIG IDEA: WHO we have in common is more powerful than WHAT we don't.

The Take-Off

Last week we kicked off our Party of Twelve series and we're taking 7 weeks to take a closer look at the group of men that Jesus gathered around himself

As we begin to look at each of the 12, I want to make sure that we don't forget that Jesus is the one who matters most Remember, WHO we have in common is more powerful than WHAT we don't

We allow our differences to drive wedges between us, but Jesus overcomes those differences in a way that is almost unbelievable

D.A. Carson put it like this: these men weren't natural friends, but natural enemies.

Church, this is the unity that we need to experience and that the world needs to see

We tend to do life and faith with people who are like us, but Jesus called together 12 men who not only weren't alike, but probably didn't exactly like each other!

When we have churches that look like that, we'll have churches that the world will notice again

There are a number of lists of the twelve in the Bible, and while they all have different orders, they all group them in 3 groups of 4.

Peter is always 1st, Philip is always 5th, and James son of Alphaeus is always 9th.

The 3 groups of 4 always have the same 4 in them, just some change positions.

No surprise here, but Judas Iscariot is always last in every list.

So we're going to start with Peter and his brother, Andrew.

First up, the man who was the first to meet Jesus: Andrew

1. Andrew: God uses people to reach people

- a. **[VIDEO - Andrew tells Simon]**
- b. 2 things strike me about Andrew
- c. One, he was a bringer
- d. Every time Andrew is mentioned in the gospel of John, he's bringing someone to Jesus
 - John 1:40-42 / He brought Simon Peter
 - John 6:8-9 / He brought the boy with bread and fish
 - John 12:20-21 / He brought Greeks who wanted to see Jesus
- e. Two, he was humble enough to know who was the hero
- f. It wasn't him - he was bringing people to Jesus
- g. What do we learn from Andrew? That **God uses people to reach people**
- h. Are we willing to be the bringers? Who do you know that needs to see Jesus? Are you willing to get less glory in order to get people to the King of glory?

2. Peter: God uses messy people to reach people

- a. Now, let's turn our attention to the one disciple who makes all of us feel better about ourselves: Peter
- b. **[VIDEO - Jesus calls Simon]**
- c. The biggest observation I want us to see right way is this: the more clearly we see our Savior, the more clearly we see our sin.
- d. **Luke 5:8 (NIV)** / Peter saw Jesus as Lord and immediately realized he wasn't worthy
- e. The lesson we learn from Peter's life is that **God uses messy people to reach people**
- f. I'm not sure why we are so afraid of being real and making mistakes - we aren't impressing God or others
- g. God meets us in the mess and gives us a message!
- h. I mean, just listen to the list of messes Peter made:
 - Matt. 15:16 / Peter doesn't understand Jesus
 - Mark 10:13 / Peter doesn't share Jesus
 - Matt. 14:22 / Peter stops looking at Jesus
 - Matt. 17:24 / Peter speaks for Jesus
 - Matt. 16:23 / Peter tried to stop Jesus
 - John 13:8 / Peter refuses Jesus
 - Matt. 26:40 / Peter fell asleep on Jesus

- Matt. 26:74 / Peter denies knowing Jesus
 - John 21:3 / Peter quits on Jesus
- i. Clearly, messes don't scare the Lord away, and if Jesus could use Peter, he can use any of us

The Landing

Just in case some of you are still on the fence - still thinking that somehow your mistakes past, present, or even future - will scare Jesus away, let me close sharing something with you that I heard this past week that blows that stinking thinking away

At the end of John 13 we find Peter making a very bold claim - "Lord, I will die for you!"

Jesus knew what was going to happen and so in the very last verse of chapter 13, Jesus tells Peter that what he's actually going to do is deny him - 3 times!

We know that chapters and verses weren't in the original manuscripts - they were added later to make it easier to find things in the Bible - and so this conversation didn't end there but continued on into chapter 14

What does Jesus say right after dropping the future failure, denial bomb on Peter and the rest of this Party of Twelve? "Don't let your hearts be troubled - I'm going to prepare a place for you."

Jesus knew that Peter was going to fail him - again - and yet he reassured him that His love for Peter was greater than Peter's denial of Him.

God uses people to reach people, and not only that, but he uses messy people to reach people, too.

Good news for all the messes in the room.

Let's pray