

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: Re:Solution

Week 2: Something to Show for It

Self-improvement. What should I do about me? How do I make me a better me? How do I ...? But there is a bigger, broader, really a better question to ask.

And if you have ever had anybody do anything for you when you were in need, it's because somebody asked this question, **what needs to be done around me?**

So the question that we're going to begin asking today is how do you know what you should do? Last week—Nehemiah: **What breaks your heart?** As you look around the world, there are lots of needs. And you can't meet every need, you can't change the world.

And as you wrestle with what breaks your heart, how would you answer this? **At the end of your life, what would you like people to thank you for?** That's a profound question.

Problem with "what breaks your heart?"—it will require something of you. And I this is why we shrink back. It's I don't have time. I'm just one person. I'm don't have resources. I don't know anybody.

Because the truth is, at the end of the day, if you decide to move in the direction of what breaks your heart, it will require something of you. It's going to require some time, some money, missed opportunities in some other area of life. Ultimately, **it will cost you some life.**

And the problem with it costing us some life is that we are by nature **LIFE PRESERVERS**. I'm by nature a life preserver, and you are by nature a life preserver, a life saver. It's all about you. It's all about me. That's why New Year's becomes the question "what do I do about me?"

And the problem with what breaks my heart is at some point I must begin letting go of my time, my money, my reputation, my opportunity, my advancement, my forward progress, and whatever I am involved with. And that's the tension. And if you decide to lean in the direction of what breaks your heart, and you decide to get involved; it's going to cost you. It's going to feel like you are giving away a part of your life.

And as we wrestle with that tension, Jesus comes along and says this: **Whoever devotes themselves to themselves will have nothing but themselves to show for themselves.** If that's what you have at the end of your life, your life is a total loss. In an attempt to save your life, to be a life preserver, you've actually given it all away with nothing to show for it.

Jesus was constantly surrounded by crowds, needy people... They wanted to touch Him. Everywhere He went, He was surrounded by crowds. **LUKE 14:25-26**

Jesus is talking about a willingness to allow Jesus to be the ultimate decision maker in one's life instead of one's family. Jesus was talking about who's going to be in control, who's going to be in charge, who's going to call the shots. **A person who doesn't decide once and for all who's in charge cannot be My disciple.** To hate your own life is to decide, once and for all, that you aren't going to call the shots, that you're willing to submit your life to Jesus.

New Year's resolutions are all about us, and **suddenly we find the tension that Jesus creates around making me a better person and following Jesus:** Deciding how do I spend more time on me so that I can be better, and following Jesus. Jesus points us to this overpowering, daunting, intimidating tension, and essentially, He says this, that **the essence of following Jesus is self-denial, not self-improvement.**

That's hard. Jesus isn't against self-improvement. He's not against you being the best you can possibly be. But **You can't say I'm going to be a disciple of Jesus, a follower of Jesus, and decide that somebody else is ultimately going to make the decisions.**

Jesus says that if following Me you're about to discover it's really more about self-denial than self-improvement. **Luke 14:27.** You can be my traveling buddy. You can eat the free food. I'm willing to heal you and your relatives, but don't kid yourself, you are not My disciple until you decide to come & die to you so you can say yes to Me.

This was His way of saying I have some-thing better for you. I'm making you a better offer. **You will never be able to say yes to my better offer until you learn to say no to you.**

Mark 8:34. This isn't about self-improvement as much as it is about self-denial. It's not so much about becoming a better you because you focus on you. It's about becoming a better person because you focus on something else.

And then He goes right to the heart of our struggle. **MARK 8:35.** What He means is: Whoever lives every single day and their ultimate priority is themselves and self-preservation, whoever wakes up every day and thinks it's really is all about me, if that is your approach to life, whoever wants to save their life ultimately you're going to lose it, the very thing that you will have spent your life trying to gain, you give up.

But He says whoever loses their life for Me, this is someone who's willing to say Jesus, "You are the supreme authority in my life over my parents, over my children, over my family, over my boss, and yes, even over me."

This is hard. Here's what I want you to hear. This was not a call for His followers to throw away their lives. This was not about irresponsibility. This was a call to give their lives away to

something bigger and better and far more fulfilling. In other words, **“To deny yourself” it is to say no to you so you can say yes to something bigger than you.** The bottom line: **As long as I'm all about me, I can't really be all about anything else. And as long as I'm all about me, I can never say yes to the things that are outside of me. And if you decide to wrestle with, “what breaks your heart?” you will ultimately be led away from you.**

Suddenly it's not about self-improvement. At some point it becomes about self-denial. Jesus says, and I'm inviting you into that life because I am offering to rescue you from you. Jesus says that if you live for yourself at the end of your life, it is a total loss because you will have nothing to show for it but you. **Whoever devotes themselves to themselves will have nothing but themselves to show for themselves.”**

Here's what I know. **You are not enough for you to live for.** There is more to you than self-improvement. This is an invitation to significance, an invitation to step outside of yourself. This was Jesus invitation to live a life of **PURPOSE.**

But here's what I've discovered. At some point along the way, everybody asks: Does any of this matter? Does any of this count? Is any of this going anywhere? Does it even matter?

Answer: if it is all about you, NO, it does not matter. Jesus says YES but it is not found in self-improvement. Because you can be the most self-improved person on the planet and be empty, but you cannot give yourself away and be empty.

This is the problem, the confusion, the tension. You are not enough for you to give your life to.

And the heart of what Jesus is inviting you to is that **once you've tasted purpose it's impossible to just go back to normal.** And This is why we shrink back. This is why I'd rather go & eat less and work on myself. It's just easier. I can control all of that, right?

Purpose. Purpose is always found just on the other side of the border of what's in it for me. Purpose is always found just over the line and outside of your comfort zone. And Jesus says, “come on, Follow Me.” Jesus called it abundant Life.

And here's the tension. Here's the thing that doesn't make any sense. **The best thing that you could do for you has very little to do with you. It's really in your best interest not to be so interested in the things that you're interested in.** Jesus says trust me. Say no to you, so you can say yes to something bigger, better and broader than you. Step outside your comfort zone because there you will find life. Give it away so that you can be filled up. Take a risk at what looks like a loss, because in this you will find the greatest success.

What breaks your heart?

Because to make the world a better place, you must say no to you so you can say yes to something bigger, better & broader than you. At some point you have to say no to you. And we believe that when you do, when you engage in the needs of others, when you decide to carry someone else's burden, you have entered into the activity of God. Because when God looked at this world and saw sin, it broke His heart and He didn't just change the channel. His broken heart compelled Him to send His son into this world and wade in hip deep into your sin, into my sin, and to bear the burden of our sin. Because it broke His heart, He sent His Son way outside His comfort zone.

Whoever devotes themselves to themselves will have nothing but themselves to show for themselves.

But if you devote yourself to more than yourself, you will have more than yourself to show for yourself.