Radical Reputation

Sunday, February 26, 2012

Philippians 2:7 – "*Jesus made Himself of* <u>*no reputation*</u>*"* (KJV)

- DOES NOT MEAN: to be without distinction or honor
- DOES MEAN: He was so empty that there was nothing left of Himself—nothing left but He and the Father
- He lived His life without being consumed with Himself or what others thought about how He lived His life

His reputation wasn't one of riches, fame or playing it safe—it was a radical reputation.

- His reputation was that He met the needs of people (healing, deliverance, feeding them), He built friendships with people nobody else wanted to associate with and He challenged religious duties that had no heart behind them

Our reputations are defined by the choices we make, our actions and who we spend time with.

> *Reputation* – a widespread belief that someone or something has a particular habit or characteristic!
>
> - Martin Luther King, Jr.—civil rights/ending racial segregation; Hitler—nearly 6 million Jews; Mother Theresa

Jesus had some particular habits and characteristics that ruffled feathers and challenged the religious leaders

- That didn't matter to Him—He knew who He was and Who sent Him
- He was not focused on building His reputation, but on building the Kingdom of God.

His greatest opponents were the religious leaders—they viewed His reputation as scandalous

Religious Leaders

- Viewed God as far away
- Were consumed with the law and their traditions and regulations
- Put great emphasis on their reputations
- Made it obvious when they were fasting so people would notice them
- Prayed prayers that would impress others
- Announced it when they gave to the needy so they would be honored by men

- Taught that righteousness was external—religious acts of worship that were empty of heartfelt, true and genuine worship

Jesus

- Came on the scene connected to the Father and a heart overflowing with love for people
- Challenged their legalistic approach to the law and went after their hearts—He taught righteousness was internal
- Religious leaders taught that it is was wrong to kill someone else—Jesus went deeper and into the heart and said that you should not even hold anger or hatred in your heart toward someone
- Religious leaders taught the people to stay out of someone else's bed—Jesus went to the heart of it and said that adultery should not even be committed in the heart

3 Characteristics of Jesus' Radical Reputation

HE WAS CONNECTED TO THE FATHER

He lived in the presence of His Father

John 10:30 – "*I and the Father are <u>one</u>*"

- Intimate term
- *heis* (Gr.) – one in agreement, personality, substance

1. He consistently pulled away to be with the Father
   - He pulled away after amazing times of ministry
   - John 8:38 – *"I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father."*
   - John 14:10 – *"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather it is the Father, living in me, who is doing His work."*
   - When you're connected to the Father – all the things that surround (opinions, religious duties, obligations, fear) become shadows

2. He partnered with the Father
   - He never ministered alone
   - John 8:16 – *"I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me."*
   - John 5:19 – *"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*
   - John 8:28 – *"I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."*

- John 14:31 – *"I love the Father and…I do exactly what my Father has commanded me."*
- Jesus didn't talk about what HE came to do, but about what the Father gave Him to do
- He was so connected to the Father that he never apologized for who He was or what He was called to
- We are also called to partner with the Father
- Partnering with Him in everyday things
- We were never called to minister alone

Ask Him what He's doing when you're at school, at work, praying for your kids at bedtime

- What to do with what He shows you
- You're hearing more than you know

When we are connected with the Father, His perspective becomes ours and we are willing and able to do anything He's doing—no matter the cost!

HE WAS MOTIVATED BY LOVE

Love flowed from being connected to the Father

- His love for people was greater than His own needs and wants
- His love for people was greater than His love for His reputation
- His love went beyond sermons and words

Matthew 8:1-3 (NLT) – *"Large crowds followed Jesus as he came down the mountainside. Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached Jesus. He knelt before him, worshiping. 'Lord,' the man said, 'if you want to, you can make me well again.' Jesus touched him. 'I want to,' he said. 'Be healed!' And instantly the leprosy disappeared."*

After preaching the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), He should be protecting His credibility and reputation (playing it safe) so He can accomplish His calling—instead, He risked it all to demonstrate love

<u>Lepers</u>

- Must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of their face
- They must cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" so they could warn people lest they get close and touch them
- They must live alone and live outside the camp
- To get within a stone's throw of them would jeopardize your own righteousness and reputation

Jesus could have spoken a word that healed him from a distance (Centurion's servant)

- Instead, He gave this man the one thing he needed—touch
- **Before He healed him, He touched him**
- Jesus was moved with compassion to touch him and then He healed him

When love is our motivation…

- We are not building a kingdom for ourselves with selfish motives or self-protection—we are building the Kingdom of God with Jesus
- We will no longer care about our reputation in the eyes of the world—accolades from success or rejection when the end result is different than what we expected

HE STEPPED OUT

Jesus didn't just love on the inside, He loved on the outside and stepped out

Mark 2:15-17 (MSG) – *Later Jesus and his disciples were at home having supper with a collection of disreputable guests. Unlikely as it seems, more than a few of them had become followers. The religion scholars and Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company and lit into his disciples: "What kind of example is this, acting cozy with the riff-raff?" Jesus, overhearing, shot back, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? I'm here inviting the sin-sick, not the spiritually-fit."*

- He was a friend of sinners
- He allowed women with scandalous pasts to take care of Him and the disciples
- He had dinner with tax collectors and Pharisees

Luke 7:36-48 (MSG)

Here's a woman that's been touched by real love and finds Jesus at a Pharisees' house and invites herself in

- The men in her life most likely didn't stand up for her, but looked for what they could get from her
- Jesus stands up for her
- He didn't look at her in light of what she did, but who she was
- Some could view this as a bold step on Jesus' end, but it was simple to Him—He knew His calling and why He was there, so He just did it
- Because He was connected to the Father, He was motivated by love and put action to His love, while not being distracted by others' reactions

Love has to be put into action

- You don't have to please any man but Jesus and you are already pleasing to Him
- If you don't see the results you expected—rejoice that you stepped out!