

Give me that Old Time Religion (x3)

It's good enough for me.

It was good for your father (x3)

It's good enough for me.

It makes me love everybody (x3)

It's good enough for me.

Give me that Old Time Religion (x3)

It's good enough for me.

It was good for the prophet Daniel (x3)

It's good enough for me.

It was good for Paul and Silas (x3)

It's good enough for me.

African American Spiritual

Do you know who it wasn't good enough for?!

**JESUS!** x

(**pause**) When I was eight years old you could still watch black and white shows and movies on TV. I remember this movie, "Seargent York." (**raise my hand**) Do y'all remember the movie, "Seargent York," with Gary Cooper? (**pause**) One Sunday afternoon I was watching, "Seargent York," and there is this scene where Alvin York gives his life to Christ. There in the church they are singing this song. It's a catchy tune and one or two verses became stuck in my head. So of course I kept singing those same verses over and over. Eventually, my Dad lost his patience. He interrupted me by asking, "Do you know who it wasn't good enough for? Jesus!" I've gotta tell ya. That shut me up pretty quick. Suddenly I had a lot to think about.

I have had a lot to think about this week. (**pause**) I have been stepping on all y'all's toes a lot here lately. I have made several of you feel uncomfortable. I have made some of you feel worthless as if all I'm ever gonna do is make you feel bad about yourselves. My first reaction is to apologize; however, as a pastor a part of my job is to afflict the comfortable. (**pause**) As I have continued to think and wrestle with it this week I may have been afflicting the afflicted. (**pause**) I confess I do not have all of this figured out yet so this morning I am presenting this message as a Father's Day message.

**And after some days Paul says to Barnabus, "Come, let us return and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are" (Acts 15:36).**

Paul and Barnabus were apostles; teachers, preachers, church planters, and evangelists. They had planted churches all over Asia Minor, parts of Greece and in modern day Turkey. Now they were headed back to those churches to see how things were going. Much the same way a farmer would never plant a field and then leave it for the weeds Paul and Barnabus were heading back to make sure those churches were doing well. It is during this second missionary journey Paul really begins to take on the role of father figure and corrector of theological doctrine.

Paul argues with Barnabus about whether John-Mark should go. The two part ways with Barnabus taking John Mark with him to Cyprus. Paul chose Silas as his traveling companion. The two travelled through Syria and Cilicia. When Paul and Silas came to Derbe and Lystra they met a disciple named Timothy. Timothy had a good reputation throughout the community. His mother and grandmother were devout Jews. Timothy's father was Greek. Everybody knew Timothy's father was Greek. That meant Timothy's father had a different set of morals and values than Timothy's mother and grandmother. Everybody knew it. Which meant everybody knew Timothy was not circumcised as a baby. As we discussed last week that was a BIG problem for the Jews. The Jerusalem Council concluded the Holy Spirit can and does save people without circumcision so Paul should not have had to circumcise Timothy for Timothy to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. However; Paul circumcised Timothy anyway. I do not think Paul intended for Timothy to be just another disciple. I think Paul intended for

Timothy to be a future leader of the Church. Very often leaders are held to a higher standard. I think the higher standard is why Paul circumcised Timothy. The Scripture reads;

**“Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:3).**

Circumcision is very painful. Especially in an age before antiseptics and pain killers. It was dangerous. This could be the reason why circumcision happens to babies. Paul hurt Timothy. Paul hurt Timothy with circumcision in order to build Timothy up as a leader in the church.

Sometimes pruning is necessary. There is a butterfly bush planted out by the walking trail. It died this year. It never came back after last summer. I was talking to Tennille Morris about it this week since the bush was planted in memory of her mother. Tennille seemed to think the reason the butterfly bush died was because it was not pruned back last winter.

All of this has been rolling around in my mind this week. Why did my Dad correct me that way? Why did Paul circumcise Timothy? Why did God the Father send God the Son to die on the cross? Why is the Holy Spirit acting in this way? Today is Trinity Sunday so it seems fitting to ask questions of all three in one. Why God, why must we be stepped on and cut back? What is the purpose behind stepping on our toes? Is God trying to make us feel bad about ourselves? Certain not! The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy (John 10:10a). The thief will whisper sweet nothings in our ears, and offer sugary goodness until we are good and lost with a tummy ache. No! Jesus has come that we may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10b).

Let me ask y'all something. By a show of hands, how many of y'all have ever carried something really heavy for what felt like a long time? (**raise my hand**) How many of y'all had to carry your Dad's tools, or work with a heavy wheel barrow? Do you remember what it felt like to finally be able to set that load down? I can tell y'all from experience carrying babies is great – until they get big enough that it starts to hurt your back and shoulders. But they still want to be carried all the time. At some point we have to do something different. Instead of carrying the baby around we have to play with the baby in the floor.

When y'all have heard me ask, “What would it look like?” “What would it look like to be more open to the Holy Spirit? What would it look like to search for new ways to reach out to people in the community? What would it look like for every leader of our church to be involved in a small group or Bible study?” I am not trying to dump shame on you. My intent is to encourage us all to put down the heavy things that keep us from having an abundant life, and to pick up new things that make our lives; the lives of our family members, and the lives of those in our community better. Jesus tells us, **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”** (Matt 11:28-30). My hope for this church is that our tomorrow will be better than our yesterday. The way to do that is for our church to be an abundantly fruitful church. To be abundantly fruitful we must let go of the things that weigh us down and dream of the things in Christ which might lift us up. I am not saying any of you are bad or horrible. I am saying a life lived by putting down the stuff of the world and taking up the stuff of Christ is more abundant.

My Dad was straightening out my theology early on. Paul was making sure John-Mark and Timothy were ready for what they would face. I am trying to lead by example, and offer areas for growth. Let us ALL ask, “What is God calling me to do?”

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.