



Bible Study on the Sermon series “have a little faith” based on the book by the same name written by Mitch Albom.

Greetings welcome! If you are reading this I’m assuming that you have already read the book, and if not then hopefully this study will move you to do so!

This study is put together in the following way: After Reading Mitch’s book I went back and looked for themes that spoke to me. Then I went to scripture to see what God’s word had to say on the subject. Then I just put the two together. So here goes..the first theme is.....Strange Bedfellows

Mitch begins by introducing us to the main characters who are two strikingly different men. One is Mitch’s own white suburban rabbi, and the other is an African-American Christian pastor who grew up poor and, who for awhile, lost the battle to drugs, crime and violence. In so many ways these two men were totally different from each other and yet I was struck by how they ended up with the same passion, devotion and love for people and their God. Thus the title - Strange Bedfellows.

So I’d like you to begin by thinking about the people you have known in your life. Do you know people who are very different and yet have come to have the same goals and passions in life? Now once you have these people in mind ask yourself

this question. In spite of there differences how did they come to share the same goals and passions?

What power is there which can bring people together who are so different? Let's look to scripture for answers. Read Deuteronomy 6:1-7

The book of Deuteronomy is a series of speeches that Moses gave to the people of Israel. Moses has led them out of Egypt and now they have been wandering in the wilderness and they are about to enter the promised land of Canaan. In this new land they will be challenged by other nations, other religions, and other ways of living that could turn them away far from their God. In the section, that you have just read Moses is giving his people the statues and ordinances that they will need to keep them close to their God.

In verse 5 Moses gives what we now know as the Great Commandment; to love God with all of your being. It's called the Great commandment because this is how Jesus described it when replying to the Pharisee's question

In Mark 12:29-34; Luke10:27-28, and Matthew 22:36-40. Remember that by the time of our Lord the Pharisees were all about keeping themselves separate from other people; especially the non-Jew. Jesus makes it clear that our love of God can bring us together and is more powerful than our differences.

Now read Psalm 22:27-31 in this text the Psalmist gives us the striking image of all the nations of the world remembering, turning to God, and worshipping before Him. How is this possible? You and I both know the nations of this world are VERY DIFFERENT! What could ever bring them to the common action of worshipping God? For the Psalmist the answer is clear it's because God has "dominion." (Which means to have supreme authority over others), and He rules

over all the nations of the world. Question: Do you agree with the Psalmist? Is part of our problem that we fail to realize that God is in charge? What do you think the world, with all its differences would be like if we all believed that God was greater than all others and God was in charge?

Take some time to think on these questions. Then write your own description of what the world would be like if we all believed in the power, authority and rule of God.

Now read Ephesians 4:1-5 one of the major themes of the letter to the Ephesians is the description of a world torn apart by discord, disharmony, and disunity. Nation is divided against nation, individual against individual, and class against class. Now in chapter 4 Paul begins to sketch out what each Christian must do to carry out his or her part in the plan and purpose of God. In verses 1-5 Paul is telling the early Christians that they must set an example by living a life of humility, gentleness, and patience. And he uses this unique phrase we are to be “bearing with one another in love.” Question what do these words mean to you? How do you bear someone in love?

To bear another has to do with carrying them. So Paul is suggesting that as followers of Jesus we are to support one another. Question: Do you believe this? Is it our role – our duty as members of a congregation to care for each other in this way? Now if you say yes; then my now question is how can we do this? Paul responds to such a question in verse 3 by saying we do this by making an effort to maintain our unity. Question: our unity in what? Why in the Spirit of course, and we do this in peaceful ways.

Then Paul ends this section by describing everything in our faith in terms of one. One body, one faith, one Lord, and on and on he goes. Are you beginning to see a

pattern here? For Paul it's never about differences. It's all about the greatness of God, the love of God, and our love and worship of God which unites us.

Now read mark 3:31-35 this is a painful passage of scripture to read. Our Lord is seems to be turning away from his own mother, brothers and sisters. What about the commandment to honor our parents? This seems to be such a harsh action, but go back a little bit and read verses 20-21. There you will see that members of Jesus family are trying to keep him from going about and doing his ministry.

He will have none of that! Now in this apparent rebuke of his family in verses 31-35 we see our Lord breaking down all the difference between us when he says in verse 35 "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

This is a powerful verse to end our study. Now I have just one more thing to say which I hope will tempt you to come to church and hear the sermon Strange Bedfellows. How do you think I'm going to relate this to Mitch's description of the two main characters in his book?

See you in worship!

PM