

Open Doors #3

Who's Your One?

What's your biggest regret in life?

A question like this will cause you to revisit parts of your life that perhaps you'd just as soon forget. This very same question was posed to people of New York City recently in the form of a question on a blackboard and a piece of chalk to record their responses. Here's a short recap of how people responded to this question: "**What's Your Biggest Regret?**"

Play the Biggest Regret video.

Did it surprise you that the vast majority of responses were things that individuals regretted never doing? Included in this list were such items as:

- Never speaking up
- Never going to college
- Not saying I love you
- Not playing enough sports
- Not staying in touch
- Not following my artistic passions
- Not making the most of every day
- Not going to Montana
- Not getting out of my comfort zone
- Not trusting my gut
- Not always being myself
- Not being a better friend
- Not doing what I want and like
- Not accepting myself always
- Not pursuing acting
- Not challenging myself
- Not hugging more often

Would your biggest regret begin with the words "**Never**" or "**Not**". These answers are pretty revealing to what often haunts a person. Open doors of opportunity that at one time lay before them but they never walked through them. They never seized the opportunity and before they knew it the door closed on them.

Today, on the Christian church calendar is a pretty significant day. Can anyone tell me what day today is? It's the Day of Pentecost. The day that always occurs 50 days after the Jewish feast of Passover. And the reason that's significant for the Christian church is because it was on this day that the apostles who'd been waiting in a room for several days praying and waiting for the promised power of the Holy Spirit to come upon them experienced that phenomenon early in the morning. They all began speaking in tongues which grabbed the attention of those around and then the Apostle Peter stood up and began to preach the very first sermon of the church. In that sermon Peter boldly proclaimed:

"God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ..Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." (Acts 2:32-33, 36)

The text says that the people were cut to the heart and asked what to do now. And Peter replied, *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all*

who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:38-39) And the response to this call to action was tremendous. About 3,000 people accepted the Lord and were baptized that day. I would think that this day had to have made Peter’s list of the 10 greatest days of his life.

However, if you go back about 50 days prior to this, I would guess that Peter’s actions one night probably would make his list of biggest regrets. The night that he didn’t do as he promised. The night when he didn’t stand up boldly in defense of Jesus while he was on trial but instead denied him 3 times in order to save his own life. And yet during those 50 days in between Peter’s denial and his bold sermon his courage was restored as Jesus specifically reached out to restore Peter. We’re told that after his resurrection, Jesus appeared specifically to Peter and on a sea shore with a meal of broiled fish, Jesus reaches out and restores Peter and gives him the confidence and the responsibility to lead the church going forward.

And the story of Peter can easily be all of our stories as well. God doesn’t dwell on your biggest regrets but rather God wants to use those regrets to shape us and mold us to be used by Him to tell and show others His love for them, just as he did for Peter. Peter continued to be used powerfully by God throughout the remainder of his life to spread the good news of Jesus Christ as it began spreading like wildfire throughout the world.

Similarly, God took the Christian persecutor Paul and turned him into one of the greatest evangelists that God has ever used to tell others about God’s love for them and their need for a Savior. And one of the keys to Paul’s success is that he was always looking for and recognizing the open doors God laid before him to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

He recognized that God often opened doors for him to preach the gospel to Gentiles (*Acts 14:27*)
He recognized that God opened doors to preach the gospel in Ephesus (*1 Corinthians 16:8-9*)
He recognized that God opened doors for him in Troas to preach the gospel (*2 Corinthians 2:12*)
And Paul asked the church at Colossae to pray that God would open a door to proclaim Christ while he was in prison (*Colossians 4:2-4*)

I think it’s pretty safe to say that Paul was passionate about praying for God to open wide doors of opportunity to share the message of Jesus everywhere he went and when God opened those doors of opportunity he eagerly walked through them and began to tell others about this Jesus who had so dramatically changed the direction of his life.

On two separate occasions before Jesus returned to His Father in heaven, he emphasized to his disciples, and to us that we are called by God to be His witnesses of His love for them and exactly how God took it upon Himself to pay for our sins and restore us into a right relationship with Him through Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.

In *Matthew 28:18-20*, which is often referred to as the Great Commission he commands that as we go out into the world we should be making disciples by baptizing them and teaching them to live a life of obedience to Jesus. And as we do this Jesus reminds them and us that we’re not on our own to accomplish this. He didn’t just pat the apostles on the back and say, “Good luck with that. I’ll be praying for your success.” No, he said that he would be with each of us – guiding us and empowering us to be his witnesses. It’s more about making yourself available to what God is desiring to do in and through you.

I love the apostle Paul’s prayer in *Ephesians 3* where he prays that God’s love for each of us might become more and more real to us and that it might permeate down to every nook and cranny of our heart to the extent that we are filled to all the measure of the fullness of God. (*Ephesians 3:17-21*). This seems astounding that this is even a possibility. But then Paul adds this incredible promise.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21) Did you notice how God plans on accomplishing making his love real and powerful inside of us? *“According to His power that is at work within us.”* What is that power? It’s the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

Back to **Matthew 28:18-20**. Is our goal to make converts to Christianity? No, the goal is to make disciples. A disciple of Jesus is someone who is committed to following Jesus with all of his life. It’s kind like a mentorship or an internship where the goal isn’t just to learn a specific trade but rather to become just like that teacher or rabbi. In the first century culture disciples would follow their rabbi everywhere. They’d eat and sleep and listen to the teachings of that rabbi with the hopes that they could become just like him. They were totally sold out to following the rabbi. There was no such thing as a part-time disciple. Jesus didn’t just offer night classes for his disciples to take and then go back to their regular lives. If you want to become a disciple of Jesus, following him and telling others about the difference he’s made in your life and wants to make their lives becomes the driving passion of your heart.

Last Sunday I was visiting with Tim Thorman’s brother, **Peter**, after church and he was pretty excited because he’d just recently purchased a motorcycle. And then he shared an incredible story of how he had previous to this attempted to purchase a motorcycle from someone but ended up totaling the bike before finalizing the purchase. So, he told this recent seller that he really didn’t know how to ride a motorcycle. So, this gentleman offered to teach Peter how to ride it. So, the seller began by having Peter ride behind him on the seat while he drove it. Then he got behind Peter and instructed Peter as Peter began driving the bike and then eventually Peter began driving it without the man on the bike. And that’s a pretty good example of what it means to make a disciple. You work with them teaching them about Jesus and showing them what it looks like to live a life pursuing Jesus.

I was recently visiting with some friends that informed me that a man by the name of **Paul Ridgeway** passed away. I first became acquainted with Paul while working for Carlson Companies, before I went into the ministry full time. Paul was an executive at Carlson Companies and began offering an early morning Bible study once a week for anyone that was interested. I attended his Bible study on a couple of occasions and found Paul to be an excellent teacher and a man who was clearly passionate about being a disciple of Jesus. He had an incredible passion for telling others about his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. More recently he was a Christian talk show host on a local radio station where he talked about Jesus.

These friends shared with me that during Paul’s funeral they offered 3 separate invitations for people to come forward and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. And everyone in attendance received a small pamphlet that explained how to have a relationship with Jesus. Here was man who loved the Lord and wanted as many people as possible to know Him also even after he’d gone home to heaven to spend eternity with Jesus.

We are called to be Christ’s witnesses to a dark and sinful and in many ways hopeless world. A world that desperately needs to hear the message that there is a God who loves them and has a plan for their lives and promise for an eternity spent in a much better place with Him where all violence and hatred and sin and darkness will be removed and replaced by God’s love and intense light. No more darkness or misery or suffering or disease.

My hope is that we never look back at our lives in answering the question, **“What’s Your Biggest Regret”** and have to list the regret that we never told anyone about Jesus Christ. Sometimes we might think, there’s other people that are much more effective at this than me. What difference can I make. Let me show you a short video clip that will astound you with the difference one person can

make with their life by following through with Christ's command for everyone of us to be disciple makers.

Show video.

The video presents two contrasting lifestyles:

1. Normal good Christian life
 2. Powerfully effective disciple making life
- Which lifestyle is closest to your life right now?
 - Which lifestyle is God calling you to live?
 - What would it take to live the life God is calling you to?

So, let me leave you with the question: **Who's Your One?** Who's the one person who God has opened up a door to for you to show them God's love and tell them about Jesus. If no one comes to mind then I'd suggest praying each and every day that God would make it crystal clear to you who that ONE is that He is opening the door for you to share God's love with. If you already know who that ONE is – I'd encourage you to write that name or names down on your outline and continue to pray for God to fill you with His love and equip you to share that love with others.

Open Door Sermon #3 "Who's Your One?"

What's your biggest regret in life?

God doesn't dwell on your _____ but God wants to use those _____ to shape and mold you to be a powerful _____ of His love to others.

According to Jesus' command in Matthew 28:18-20, what are you supposed to be doing with your life?

How does Jesus equip us to do this?

Who's Your One Video presents two contrasting lifestyles:

1. A _____ Christian life
 2. A powerfully _____ making life
- Which lifestyle is closest to your life right now?
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Who's Your One?

In what ways are you discipling them right now?

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