

Sermon February 14, 2010

Core Values: Favor

Acts 2:47 and Acts 3:1-10

Summary: Values: Favor. The first Christians found favor with those around them. Why? Because they allowed God to work through them to bring His power into impossible situations.

I. The Quest for “Favor”

A. Snack Attack

- 1. How much is 30 seconds worth?**
 - a) 2 cents or \$2.6 million – all depending on how you look at it.**
- 2. The top ad for this season’s Super Bowl was Dorito’s “Snack Attack.”**
 - a) The ad cost over \$87,000 per second, or something in the range of \$2.6 million.**
 - b) The ad was watched by 116.2 million people – the most ever in the history of television advertising – which means that it cost just 2 cents per viewer.**
- 3. 2 cents for 30 seconds of your time – to make Doritos your favorite snack.**

B. Favor

1. **“Favor” is a funny thing.**
 - a) **Favor is not something you can make for yourself or compel from others.**
 - b) **Favor is something that a person gives because they feel like it.**
2. **The ancient Greeks had a word for it: Charis.**
 - a) **Charis means ‘grace,’ ‘gift,’ ‘help.’**
 - b) **It can mean ‘graciousness,’ ‘attractiveness.’**
 - c) **It can also mean ‘respect,’ or ‘favor’ that is given by others.**
3. **“Favor” is what Doritos was looking for when it coughed up the \$2.6 million for its 3rd quarter commercial.**
 - a) **Just hoping to make us all – at 2 cents a piece – feel a little love toward those corn chips.**
 - b) **Just hoping that on our next trip to the quick stop or the grocery store we might buy a bag and have our own snack attack.**
 - c) **After all, at \$2.99 per bag you can get your 2 cents back in a hurry!**

C. Core Value: Favor

1. **Favor, Respect, Grace can never be bought; it can only be earned.**
2. **The first Christians understood the importance of Favor – not only from God, but also from those around them.**
 - a) **Acts 2:46b NIV They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,**
 - b) **Acts 2:47 NIV praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.**

3. Favor was a Core Value for them – evidence that they were effectively sharing God’s love with their world.

II. The Favor of All the People

A. A strange encounter

1. So how did these first Christians find such favor with “all the people”?
2. Luke gives us the answer in the very next verses by telling us the story of a strange encounter.
 - a) Peter and John went to the Temple at prayer time – 3:00 p.m. – as was their custom.
 - b) When they got to the gate they encountered a handicapped man begging for a handout – as was his custom.
 - c) To put it another way: two Christians on their way to church bumped into an impossible problem – a man who was crippled by disease or deformity and enslaved by poverty.
3. They could have walked by, or perhaps they could have put a coin into the man’s hand; instead, they dared to reach much higher:
 - a) Acts 3:3 NIV When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.
 - b) Acts 3:4 NIV Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!”
 - c) Acts 3:5 NIV So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.
 - d) Acts 3:6 NIV Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

B. The Gift of God’s Favor

1. Think for a moment about this encounter:

- a) If you are the handicapped man, your whole world is reduced to hoping that people give you a little change on their way to the Temple.**
- b) You don't need "religion."**
- c) You don't need to be somebody's project.**
- d) You need money to pay the rent and buy some food. Period!**

2. So how are you going to respond to two deadbeat Christian apostles who look you in the eye, tell you their broke, then grab your hand and tell you to "walk" in the authority of some prophet named Jesus?

- a) While you are looking them in the eye you are probably trying to discover whether they truly care about you.**
- b) Secondly, you are trying to see whether they really believe in what they are saying.**
- c) You have to decide whether or not to trust them, respect them, let them into your world.**

3. The handicapped man dares to receive what he never expected on that day or any other day:

- a) Acts 3:7 NIV Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.**

4. As a result, this man, just like the other Christians, responded by praising God for His grace and favor:

- a) Acts 3:8 NIV He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.**

C. The Favor of all the People

1. Luke tells us that the effect of this man's healing was an outburst of wonder and amazement at God's grace:

a) Acts 3:9 NIV When all the people saw him walking and praising God,

b) Acts 3:10 NIV they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

2. Luke goes on to tell us that the Jerusalem officials did not dare come down too hard on Peter and John precisely because of the favor of the people:

a) Acts 4:21 NIV After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

3. Luke summarizes the situation by connecting God's miraculous power and the people's favor:

a) Acts 5:12 NIV The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade.

b) Acts 5:13 NIV No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.

III. The Key to finding Favor

A. What we can do:

1. Be who you are – don't try to be someone or something that you aren't.

a) The apostles didn't put on any airs.

b) They didn't pretend to have some fancy agenda.

c) They simply said, "Look at us!"

d) **Meaning: we're nothing special.**

2. Give what you have.

a) **They didn't have money, but they did have Jesus.**

b) **So, they gave the gift of Jesus' healing to a needy person.**

3. Lend a helping hand.

a) **They didn't leave the man to struggle with the command to walk – especially given the fact that he had been crippled since birth and was now in his 40s!**

b) **They took him by the hand and helped him up.**

B. What only God can do:

1. **Ultimately favor or grace is something that only God can make happen.**

2. **The early Church did not hire a consultant to run a public relations campaign in Jerusalem.**

3. **It relied on letting God touch people's lives with His Presence and Power.**

4. **When threatened, all they said was:**

a) **Acts 4:19 NIV “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.**

b) **Acts 4:20 NIV “For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”**

C. Give what you have

1. **The true test of our reputation in our community will not be based on how many come to church, how big our budget is, or how many programs we can put together.**

2. **The true test will be whether or not we touch people in our community with God's Love and Presence.**

- a) **People are worth more than 2 cents/30 seconds.**
- b) **God values them in terms of eternity!**
- c) **When He touches them, they are changed forever.**

3. And to make that happen, all we have to do is “give what we have.”