

Coincidence, Consequence, and Conviction

Coincidence Vs Purpose

Wk. 1

Have you ever heard anyone say, "What a coincidence?" What is a coincidence? Give me an example.... A coincidence is something that "just happens". A coincidence could be something as simple as planning to go to the beach on Friday and it "just happens" to be sunny or it could be something a little more complicated. A few years ago when Becky and I were coming back from Pooler, I was subbing at the time at South and I was frustrated because I just gotten out of school we had yard sale prep that night and Becky wanted me to go get air in her tires. I drove up and down highway 80 for 15 minutes trying to find a gas station that had air. I finally find one only to see that Beck's van didn't need air. So now I'm on my way back and I'm short on time and I'm frustrated with my wife. I'm about half way back to the church when God was like "Rick, there's a reason for this". There was a reason alright. I gave beck back her van at the church and followed her home, one car in front of her, maybe like three seconds in front of her, some runs the stop sign that used to be at 17 before they put the light in and hit the car in front her off the road and into the ditch. It was a nasty accident, I stopped to help by the time we got the people out of the car, I had blood all over me, these kids were messed up and they had to land a chopper on Hwy 80 and med-evac them out.

So what do you think, was it a coincidence that Becky and the kids were three seconds away from getting nailed or was there something bigger going on? Some of us here will say, that was just a coincidence, you guys got lucky and you might be right, but I wouldn't bet on it. Because last I checked the God of the universe has everything under control. Things don't "just happen", there is a purpose in what happens and why. Please understand me when I say that just because you and I do not understand the reason doesn't mean there isn't one. Think about the story of Job for a second. Job was a righteous man. He was in right standings with God and beyond his wildest comprehension there was a spiritual conversation going on regarding his integrity. All at once Job has everything taken from him, in a matter of minutes and he has no idea why. You know what, God never tells him, never. Near the end of the stuff Job is going through Job finally loses it and asks God, what in the word is going on? Listen to God's reply,

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said: Job 38:2 "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Job 38:3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. Job 38:4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Job 38:5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? Job 38:6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— Job 38:7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? Job 38:8 "Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, Job 38:9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, Job 38:10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, Job 38:11 when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'? Job 38:12 "Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, Job 38:13 that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it? Job 38:14 The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment. Job 38:15 The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken. Job 38:16 "Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Job 38:17 Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the shadow of death ? Job 38:18 Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this. Job 38:19 "What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? Job 38:20 Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? Job 38:21 Surely you know, for you were already born! You have lived so many years!

Do you get the point, this goes on for another twenty verses or so, and if I were to take God's word and put it in my own words, what God is telling Job here is that it's none of his business. It's too big for Job to handle, it's beyond his understanding. Now does that sound fair? Most of us would say "no, it doesn't sound fair, it's not fair". You know what? You'd be right; you know what else, grace isn't fair. The fact that we can mess up over and over again and God stills

wants us, he still loves us. That's not fair either; in fact for a loving Holy God to even associate it himself with us is totally unfair. We don't deserve it, but that's ok because of Grace.

You see at some point, as a Christian, we have to stop believing that everything that happens to us, every person we interact with, every decision we make, and every step we take is more than just a coincidence. It's more than just a step, just a conversation, just a decision. There's a greater value and importance in the things we do and the life we live than just a coincidence.

Illustration

Look at what God's word says about you,

Ps 139:13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. Ps 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Ps 139:15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, Ps 139:16 your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Jer 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.

Mt 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

Mt 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Does that sound like you or your life is a coincidence? No, to me it sounds like there is purpose in our lives, there's meaning. In fact scripture goes on to tell us what that meaning and purpose is...

we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 2Co 5:15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again... 2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Jn 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Did you know that Christ sacrifice on the cross wasn't a coincidence? There was purpose and meaning behind it and that purpose and meaning is found in God's desire to be near you.

Do you want to be near to Him? James tells us to

Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Jas 4:8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Jas 4:9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Jas 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

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There are plenty of people today in the world who go from one thing to another, there kind of like waves, up and down back and forth. It's a really laid back way to live, but there is no

purpose in it. You live, you breathe, you do stuff, and you die. Everything is "just a coincidence". As Christians though we don't have to live from one wave to the next, life isn't a coincidence, you're not a coincidence. You and I were given life so that we can live life not for ourselves but for the one that gave his life so that you can live and enjoy the life you were given to the fullest, the way God intended for you and me. But will we choose to live life that way?

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. Looking back at your life what are some things you may have deemed a coincidence that were not?
2. What are some pro's and con's to living by coincidence, to living with purpose?
3. Who are some people you know of or can think of which lived by coincidence, who lived with purpose?
 - How did their life turn out, what were similarities and differences?

Biblical Characters who lived with Purpose:

1. Paul: *Phil 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death*
2. Daniel: Daniel 1:8-21

Biblical Characters who lived by Coincidence:

- Those that live without faith in Christ: James 1:6-8, Lk. 19:11-26 (highlight vs. 21)