

McCabe United Methodist Church
Asking The Right Questions (part 3)
What Does It Mean to Build Your Life on Jesus Christ?
Philippians 3:13-14 * John 15:1-5: April 27 & 28, 2013
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A long time ago, when I was a young pastor, I thought I needed to learn how to play the piano. It just felt like the right thing to do.

I didn't think it would be hard. I could count. I was fairly coordinated. I had the desire. What more did I need? I found a piano teacher, bought a couple of beginning piano books and started taking lessons. It didn't take long to realize that this piano business was going to require more time and more work than I was willing to spend. And so I quit after about a month or two.

I was interested in learning, but I choose not to spend the time and effort to learn. Life is like that. It's full of choices.

Today, eight young confirmation students will be confirmed. They've spent the last eight months studying the Bible, learning about the Trinity, the church, church history, discipleship, prayer, the sacraments, death and dying and faith. They've learned a lot during these past eight months or at least, I hope they've learned a lot. Now, growing their faith stronger will be up to them. Whatever faith they have right now, it will be up to them to grow that faith or not. After today, they will be responsible for all things related to their faith. It will be their choice.

This is the third message in our series we're calling *Asking the Right Questions*. The message today is asking the question, *What Does It Mean to Build Your Life on Jesus Christ?* It's the perfect confirmation message. What does it mean to build our life on Jesus? And if not Jesus, what are the other alternatives?

One night, an old Sioux chief told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside of people. He said **“My son, the battle is between two wolves. The one wolf is selfish. It's full of anger, envy, greed, resentment, lies and arrogance. It doesn't care about other people. It doesn't care what happens to their neighbors. It doesn't care about God. This wolf is fighting the other wolf who is good. This other wolf is full of joy, peace, love, hope kindness, generosity, truth and faith. This other wolf does care about helping other people. It does care about serving God”**

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked, **“Grandfather, which wolf wins?”**

The old Sioux chief said, **“The one you feed.”**

This isn't rocket science. If we feed that side of us that doesn't care about growing our faith or serving God or following Jesus, than this will be the side of us that wins.

But, if we feed that side of us that does care about growing our faith, serving God and following Jesus, than this will be the side that wins. It's just that simple and it's just that hard.

Do you remember the fairy tale *Alice in Wonderland*? One day Alice fell through a hole and ended up who knows where. She walked down the road a bit until she came to a 'Y' in the road. Do you remember how upset she became because she didn't know which road to take? Alice was in tears when she happened to notice a Cheshire cat sitting in a tree.

“Oh dear,” Alice called out to the cat, **“which road should I take?”**

“Well,” this wise-old Cheshire cat replied, **“that depends on where you want to go. If you don't know where you're going than any road will do.”**

If we don't know where we're going. If we just get up in the morning and take whatever it is that life has to offer us, than it doesn't matter which road we take or what we do.

But, if we believe that God has something better planned for us. If we believe that God has given us certain gifts and talents to use in this world. If we believe that Jesus Christ died for us and for the forgiveness of our sins, than the road we choose does make a difference.

Which brings us to today's question: *“Do we build our life around Jesus Christ or not? Do we follow Jesus or not?”* This is our own personal 'Y' in the road. Which road do we take? Which wolf do we feed? Do we serve God? Do we follow Jesus? Do we grow our faith? Or, do we serve whatever happens to come along today or tomorrow?

It's our choice. It will always be our choice. I believe that everyone in this room today has some level of faith. You wouldn't be here if you didn't. Now, whether your faith grows or not, is up to each one of us. We have the choice to feed or nourish our faith by getting involved in the church, in youth groups, by praying, by reading and studying the Bible, by doing your level best to follow the ways of Jesus Christ.

Or, we can choose to feed the first wolf and take whatever road we feel like. It's up to us.

Do you see how it works?

In John 15, Jesus said to his disciples, **"I am the vine, you are the branches."** In other words, **"Stay connected to me, and you will live and thrive and bear much fruit. Apart from me, you will wither and die."**

There is a legend about a beautiful ring with a diamond set in the middle. According to the legend, whoever wears this ring will become brave and honest, wise and strong.

Now, the ring was always passed down from father to son and it always did its work. The person who wore the ring would always become brave and honest, wise and strong.

According to this legend, one time the ring belonged to a father who had three sons. He loved each one equally. The question was this: *"Who gets the ring?"*

The father, being brave and honest, wise and strong made two other rings identical to the first one and on his death-bed he gave them to his three sons. The father died.

It wasn't long before the three sons started arguing about who had the real ring.

Finally, they went to see a judge who settled the matter by saying, **"Your life will be the judge of who has the true ring."**

Your life, my life, will be the true judge of the kind of choices we make and the kind of persons we turn out to be. So, which road do we take? Which wolf do we feed? Make your choices wisely.