



## DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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### The Life Question: What Do You Want?

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By Dr. Matt Hook

– John 1:35-42

What is the direction of your life? What are you seeking? What do you want in life? My life was shaped thanks some great people who asked me great questions. When I was about 10, I was playing chess with my Uncle Peter from Madison, WI. He asked me “If everything went your way, what do you see doing in 30 years?” I thought he was crazy: in 30 years, I’ll be OLD! ☺ But I must have seen a show recently, because I remember what I said to him: “I’d like to affect the trends on Broadway,” and make it more God-focused. (Crazy!) My dad would ask the 4 of us “Do you want to make a living or do you want to make a life?” He also said “You can do anything you want in life. What do *you* want to do?” At the time I was like “Easy for you to say. You’re a great athlete and businessman and church leader and dad.” Me, on the other hand: I can play the piano and the accordion and I like soccer, skiing, Tolkien, and comic books. What am I supposed to do with *that*?! Major in trivial pursuit??? I can’t even come up with anything funny to write on my facebook status update! (Talk about trivial pursuit!) As I look back, it’s no wonder my dad wanted to get me thinking bigger! ☺ But at the time I wanted to say I’m not working on anything! I’m working on nothing. I have a little life! You have a big life!

Is it just me, or is it true that most of what we’re consumed with is ourselves? (Facebook helps). But when it comes to what we want especially, we do get pretty self-occupied. After all, you gotta figure out what to eat, what to do, who to date, what to wear. But how much of that is a whole lot of time wasted looking for little stuff!

Are you just going to wait for Monday to get here, so you can get to Tuesday, and here comes the weekend, and a vacation, that’s it? Are you just going to take what’s coming to you, or are you going to work on something BIG, that God wants you to do?

It’s a great question. Because if you’re not careful, you’re just going to go on day to day and be consumed with the minutia of life and never push back, and what am I seeking? **What would God have me work on Big** and not just who I’m dating or what’s going on, and can I pass this test, and can I make this deal, and all this junk. But it forced me to think outside the context..

THIS IS FOR YOU, not somebody else... Maybe the biggest thing this morning is that the Lord is calling you. Listen to Jesus first words in the Gospel of John. 1:35 “*The next day John the Baptist was there in Betharaba across the Jordon River again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, John said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" 37 When the two disciples heard John say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.*”

At first when you look at Jesus’ question, it can be irritating, because he forces us to look in the mirror and admit “I don’t want anything big. I just want to get through the week. I’m just working toward my next vacation, or my next purchase, or my next time to go out that person...but in terms of big, grand stuff that matters, I’m not want anything big. I may not be sure I want you, right now, Jesus.

Andrew and John had heard John the Baptist say “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ...I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and the Spirit remained on Him.” John said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” 37 When the two disciples heard John say this, they followed Jesus.” (How cool that would be if when people heard us, they should follow Jesus).

So Andrew and John start following Jesus. And here’s the cool thing: Jesus sees them, and asks the basic question: “What do you want?” Andrew and John probably had no idea, other than John pointed Jesus out to them as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” They didn’t know what to say. But their answer’s not bad: “Rabbi, where are you staying?” Jesus says “Come and you will see.” And in their answer, they honored Jesus. I want to ask you this morning, what do you want? **What do you want that will honor God?**

If God is God, and God asks you the question “What do you want?” What could you say that will honor God? Are your prayers all for yourself? What’ll I eat? What’ll I drink? What’ll I wear? Jesus says in His Sermons “The pagans worry about that! People who don’t even know God – that’s all they want! Jesus says that’s going to take care of itself. There’s so much more!

When it comes to your life, when it comes to Jesus calling you, asking you “What do you want?” **Ask for something BIG.** When you talk to God in your prayers, are you seeking something big, that only God can do, or are you praying for minutia that will either take care of itself, or that you can take care of yourself, with or without God? Be consumed with his kingdom and his righteousness. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says “**Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**” What are you praying for? What do you want that’s BIG? Your prayers are consumed with the minutia of life: “Help me close this deal, meet this deadline, get a date, give me sweet dreams, help me find my keys, help me pass my finals this week....”

If you were to pile all of your prayers, you could probably put a sticky note on them and label it “Minutia.” God says “If I didn’t answer any of those prayers, don’t you think you’re going to make it through that? Do you really want to spend another season coming to me with that stuff? Even if you’re feeling overwhelmed with the details of life, what if, instead, you asked like Andrew and John “Where are you staying, Jesus?” I’m sure they weren’t thinking “We’d better answer this way, so that people 1000’s of years later can write a sermon about our deep, theological answer.” They just wanted to get to know Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Getting to know Jesus. That’s BIG. And it stayed that way for Andrew and John. They impacted the world, and changed it for the better. And it was a life-long journey. Tradition holds that Andrew was killed upside down on an X-shaped cross in Patrae, Corinth. John was exiled to Patmos, the only one of the 12 that wasn’t martyred. It was there that he wrote.

What about you? What do you want that’s big? **What are you working on BIG, beyond the minutia of life that’s going to consume all your attention and time?** Want something big. Ask for something BIG. The kind when you have to say “God, if you don’t come through, I’m through.”

If you don’t want anything big, I want you to commit to latch on to something that’s bigger than you. Be relentless in seeking that God in your prayer till God comes through. God’s not bothered by that, but honored by that. Do you have anything that big? Are you asking God anything that honors God’s size and his magnitude, or do you just spend time asking God for things that are going to work out anyway? (Like the pagans). Are you asking God for stuff that’s ultimately going to work out in a positive direction? If that’s what you want to spend your time asking God about, fine, but you’ll never end up with Jesus and where he lives...piling on in your prayer life.

The size of your prayers communicates the size of your God to your children? Is their God no bigger than “a safe trip to Grandma’s”? Or is it so much bigger than your life. We’re going to ask God for something BIG and look and see what he does.

If you’re not a Christian, you don’t get this. We get together and take prayer requests. We sit in a circle, until

someone says “O, I got one!” If it took you 3 minutes to think it up, it’s not that big. If I need prayer, it’s for stuff that is so big that it’s intimidating. That if it doesn’t happen, you’re afraid you’re going to have to defend God to someone else. Jesus says “Ask. Seek. Knock.” He tells stories of persistent people who just don’t give up. Who are bold. Over and over.

**Most Christians don’t pray like that. Is it any wonder that so little happens in our lives? In our churches?** What do we want that’s BIG? *Who* are you asking for BIG? Some of you are here because someone wanted you BIG. You were so uninterested in God. You are so disinterested in church. But your mom and dad or friends wanted you to know Jesus. They kept praying. And you got worse and worse and worse, and they said: “God, we’re not going away, I’m asking you to bring my son back, I’m asking you to rescue my daughter.” You got further and further away. And they sought for years.

Bill Bright was a young business man. He made good money, but God began to rattle his cage. God burdened his heart: God wanted to call college students who hadn’t heard. He and his wife Vonnette laid a map on their kitchen table and prayed “God give us the world for you.” And God honored that prayer: 100s of 1000s of college students have been impacted by Campus Crusade.

“God, would you please give us the resources so we can impact the world, so we can fulfill your great commission here and around the world.” What do you want? Want something that shocks us. Way beyond our capability. Pray to impact Kenya. Or Haiti. Or pray that this church would lead and serve the whole area around Dexter. God, use me to connect 10,000 people who would come to know “where you are staying.” Committed to multiply.

PRAYER: Thanks for men and women who aren’t afraid to want big things for you, God. Dump your heartfelt burden on us. Students, small groups, we would carry the burden, and we would pray with passion and urgency. And would you lead us to where you are? We don’t have to know how, just who...Please don’t use your power to help us find our car keys. Help us want what you want. Amen.

(Some thoughts based on a sermon by Andy Stanley.)