**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** In order to see the power of what Jesus said, sometimes, we need to look at what Jesus didn’t say. Jesus said a lot of things, but Jesus also clearly didn’t say a lot of things. We’re looking at 4 things Jesus didn’t say and discovering the Truth about these commonly misunderstood topics.

**Week Overview:** The world says to follow your heart, and if it feels good, do it. When we follow Jesus, sometimes, we take this as a “get out of jail free” card, and because we are forgiven, we have a free pass to do what we want. Jesus didn’t die for us so that we could follow our hearts, but He died for us so that we could “go and sin no more.” Jesus died so that we could live in Freedom.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro): Story about half-listening**

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** Culture says to follow your heart, and do what makes you happy. But, do we use God’s forgiveness as an excuse to do what we want?

**Text: John 8:3-11; Matthew 7:11; Psalm 116:7; 1 Cor 10:13**

**THP**: Live in Freedom

**Supporting Points:**

Jesus didn’t die so that you could be holy and miserable. Happiness and Holiness are tied together.

**Application (call to action)**:

Live in Freedom. What do you need to do differently to live in the Freedom of God’s forgiveness over the trap of sin that promises to fill you up but always leaves you empty?

Message Series: Things Jesus Never Said

Message Title: Do What Makes You Happy

Key: [Media] Scripture Slides

Have you ever thought you heard someone say something, but it’s only because you half-listened?

Like, maybe your parents said “Sure, you can go to your friends house…and you stop listening before they finish by saying “after you do your homework.” Or, maybe you heard your teacher say “you don’t have to do the homework…but you forget to hear the part where she says “but we will have a quiz tomorrow.”

Many times, when we’re listening to God, we only half listen, and we hear what we want to hear…so, sometimes to hear what Jesus did say, we have to look at what He didn’t say.

Story about when you only half-listened if you have one. It can stand alone, but personalize it if you can. I’m king of half listening… ex… a time when you responded to someone’s question, but you only heard the last thing they said… a time when you got caught verbally responding to someone but you honestly have no idea what they said. A time when a teacher called on you and you got the answer wrong or said something dumb because you didn’t hear the question, etc...

We miss out when we don’t fully hear what people are saying. To show the power of what Jesus did say, we need to see what He clearly did not say when it mattered most.

Jesus didn’t say “Go into the world and preach what makes people happy. Go into the world and do what your heart desires. Do whatever you want because I’m going to forgive you anyway.” **…one more funny example.**

One thing Jesus didn’t say: Do What Makes You Happy

Don’t get me wrong…he also didn’t say, go live a miserable life. So many times, people don’t become a Christian because they think that they become a Christian, they’ve just taken a hard pass on they chance they had on having any fun. In fact, that may be you.

And there’s also this new wave of belief coming up in culture that says, “only God can judge me, and He’ll always forgive me…” and while that’s true, it’s usually an excuse to abuse God’s grace so that we can have the fun we want while also having the forgiveness we want. Or, maybe it’s more like this: God is love. And if God is love, then as long as I’m not hurting anybody, I’m not doing anything wrong…there are desires inside of me, and if I follow my heart, how is that wrong?”

But Jesus didn’t say this…We may have wanted him to say this. I may have said this, but Jesus didn’t say this.

So, let’s take a look at what Jesus said in John chapter 8 when a woman caught in adultery is brought to him. Because what Jesus did say has the power to change our lives. Read with me.

At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. John 8: 3-11 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

When I read this, a couple questions come to mind that I’m sure Jesus was asking this as well… it says it was bright and early at dawn, and this is brought to Jesus’s attention.

But hey, what were you peeping at in the night to catch her? And why was only the woman brought to Jesus? Where was the man because he’s guilty too?

They put Jesus in what appears to be a no-win situation…according to the law of Moses, according to one of the 10 commandments that says someone should not commit adultery.

And it’s amazing…Jesus’s response says something so powerful. He bends down and writes something in the dirt. I wonder if Jesus is writing against each of these men…maybe writing down other laws or things they may have done that would also put them in the wrong.

It goes to show, it is so easy to point the finger… If anything, Jesus wants to show them they should point the finger at themselves before pointing a finger at others. And Jesus’s response does say that we aren’t called to just judge and catch people in sin…but he says something more.

And one by one, they went away…It’s as if they have a moment that they realize that either embarrassed them or convicted them and they dropped the rocks they had in their hands, and they walked away to deal with their own sin...Because I’m sure they still had sin in their lives.

And if you’ve been a Christian for very long, you’ve probably gotten rid of all of the sins that aren’t as tempting to you. And now you’re just left with all of the sins that you really like. Here at Northview Students, we are going to be a rock dropping student ministry…one that looks at our own lives before judging others sin. None of us is innocent.

And Jesus knows this. And Jesus didn’t say, “hey, just because you’re not the only one, it makes it okay. He didn’t say, only I can judge you, so you’re forgiven…and he didn’t say that what she did was okay.”

Listen to what He said. Jesus said “Go and sin no more”…You can be free right now! In other words, he said “ Live in Freedom.” What you thought was going to make you happy only leads to your destruction. What you thought would fill you up has left you empty…and I don’t need to give you a “dad talk” on how I’m not mad, I’m just disappointed. He calls it out, recognizes the sin, but he doesn’t let her sit in the embarrassment, the shame, and the unforgiveness. He says “Go and sin no more! I don’t condemn you, and no one else is judging you!”

Jesus looks down on her, not in disappointment, not in disgust…not wondering why she sinned. But he looks down on her, full of love and grace. And he lifts her spirits to live in freedom. He raises the bar and challenges the quality of her life. So that she can do the tough thing, not the happy thing to deal with her temptations.

Why do we give into temptations so often? I know why: It looks fun. But it’s only fleeting pleasures of fun...it doesn’t last. If you don’t think sin is fun, you didn’t do it right…but it will mess you up. Sin promises satisfaction at the cost of disobedience to God and eventual pain to you.

Get into the mind of the woman. Put yourself in her shoes. She’s caught in a sin that’s not only embarrassing and shameful, but she could have been killed for this. Do you picture an evil woman? Someone with no morals living fast and loose? Odds are, she wasn’t…Odds are she started out decent. She probably grew up saying she would do all of the things she ended up doing. Maybe just the way we end up doing some of the very things we told ourselves we wouldn’t do when we were little.

Maybe she was in a marriage that was flat, and he took her for granted. Maybe her husband was verbally abusive and just wanted to be appreciated.

Maybe you got caught in something not because you’re evil, but you just made some bad decisions. You went to that party, and you didn’t plan to drink, but everyone else was…You didn’t mean to look at that site on your computer, but it just popped up. You put others people down not because you’re a bully but because if you didn’t, your friends would put you down. You didn’t mean to go too far with a significant other but in the moment, your better judgment lost.

The world says follow your heart…So, step by seemingly innocent step, she finds herself barely dressed and publicly shamed. How did she get there?

Sin promises satisfaction at the cost of disobedience to God and eventual pain to you. Jesus didn’t say that we shouldn’t sin because He doesn’t want us to have fun. In fact, it’s not even because Jesus is a rule keeper…Jesus is a freedom giver. And he knows that sin will only lead to us being owned by the sin. We think we’re the ones in control, but the sin controls us. We find ourselves being led by our passions and our hearts lead us down a trail that leave us empty and alone.

It goes deeper than just picking what makes me happy. The root problem is this: we think happiness and holiness are at odds. We think that if we obey God, we have to miss out on fun. Listen, God did not die on the cross so that we could be holy and miserable. Jesus did not go through all of that effort of living a sinless life so that He could prove it to us that we didn’t need to sin. He did it so that we could live in freedom…and living in freedom is having the most fun you could ever have.

God is a giver. And He wants to give you the best life you could possibly have… Matthew 7:11 shows us this: Listen. “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

God knows how to give good gifts, and He has given us the best life possible through His Son Jesus Christ. And, he wants us to experience the best life possible through his plans for life. You were created to live for things not of this world. That is why sin promises to please but never delivers.

Holiness and happiness are so tied together…holiness is the true pathway to true meaning, happiness and joy. Holiness is the character trait that follows when we are seeking to follow God. Holiness is not just the absence of sin, but holiness is the presence of God in our lives. When God gives instructions to obey Him, it isn’t to say we have freedom so anything is fair game. What He does is he shows us the boundaries so that we can freely enjoy what He’s given to us. We most at peace and truly happy when we are following God’s plan for our lives!

For example, imagine you’re a little kid, and you’re parents take you to a playground. There is a fence all around the playground, and your parents say, you can have as much fun on this playground as long as you stay in the fence. You can swing on the swings…go as high as you want! You can go on the monkey bars (even though I’ve heard they’re taking some of these away from public playgrounds), you can go down the slide, but just stay within this area.

Our immediate thought as kids is, “what is outside of the fence? My parents must be keeping something awesome from me! If they really loved me, they would let me do whatever I want!”

We do this to God all the time. We wonder, what is He keeping from me? If He loved me, he would let me wander freely. But guys, it is loving that Jesus clearly showed us the boundaries so that within this boundary, we can enjoy life. He showed us all of the things that will help us and not harm us, and we still try to wander…

Psalm 116:7 says You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

God gives a joy that lasts, not fleeting pleasures that promise to fill you up, but always leave you empty and ashamed after awhile.

The woman was caught in shame filled moment. Jesus didn’t say, “I’m embarrassed by your behavior.” He said, Listen, There is something so much better. Go now. Leave the things of this sin filled earth and live for the things that truly matter.

When we start feeling empty, we try to escape the pain by doing something that we think will fill us up. Personal story of how you tried to escape pain to do what makes you happy.

When I was in high school, I often felt empty…way more than any of my friends ever knew. So, in order to avoid the emptiness, I turned to pornography. I believed the lie that this would make me happy…I believed the lie that this would fill me up, and instead, it just led me down a dark path that promised to fill me up, but it always left me feeling more defeated than before…

Many of you know what I’m talking about because that’s also your story. And that’s the lies of the enemy. He tempts us with what we think will fill us up, and it leaves us wanting more…but none of these things will truly satisfy.

What do you do when you feel trapped? Do wrong things and you’re not they are wrong? Can’t find your way out?

Maybe for you, it’s Food…We all love ice cream, but when Ben and Jerry are your best friends because you have to eat your emotions, you may be avoiding something.

You might feel empty, so you think that approval from other people will fill you up. You get some praise, but you still listen to the critics, and you’re always looking for a bigger audience.

You might feel Emptiness so you buy shoes, the next iphone, or video games to do a little therapy. You may have a Critical spirit and you deal with it by picking other people apart…if you can’t feel happy, why should other people?You might be in a Lustful prison, and it leaves you Sick and shamed. You might look for love in the wrong type of relationships- and what you thought was love actually left you feeling empty and dirty.

And this may feel real, but the Truth is there is a way out! 1 Cor 10:13 says No temptation[a] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[b] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,[c] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

God created you for a better life than what you are experiencing now. Jesus didn’t say do what makes you happy. No, he said something better. He said “I’ve got a better path for you…go be free!”

You might be in this room, and you feel spiritually flat, and you’ve wanted to feel alive, or maybe you’re looking for life in all the wrong places…you feel empty and you’re constantly trying to get out. Live in freedom.

What do you need to do differently to live in the Freedom of God’s forgiveness over the trap of sin that promises to fill you up but always leaves you empty?

Imagine a life where you didn’t have to feel empty and lonely inside. Imagine a life where you knew that God was with you, and you trusted him to clearly mark out what His boundary for you was….and what if you trusted His plan that you’re not missing out on anything.

How would that change you? How would you live differently? I promise, it would change your life. It has changed mine…and that’s available to you too. You don’t have to live in sin. Go and sin no more, and live in freedom…true freedom that will always satisfy.

Pray with me.