

The Missing Puzzle

by Ray Comfort

Ray Comfort's sermon explores how understanding the missing pieces of biblical narratives can lead to deeper insights into faith and redemption.

Scripture: 2 Kings 5:14, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Galatians 3:24, James 4:6

Topics: "Gods Wisdom", "The Cross"

Description

Ray Comfort preaches about the importance of seeing the whole picture before making judgments, using examples like a hot plate, a woman named 'Banana' in honor of her late brother, and biblical stories like Adam and Eve, Noah's ark, and Naaman. He emphasizes how God deliberately chooses seemingly foolish things to confound the wise, illustrated by a children's club where the meek and sickly children were given candy first. Comfort highlights the humbling principle of the cross, stating that it may seem foolish until the Moral Law of God is understood, bringing clarity to the gospel message.

Transcript

I recently had dinner at a high-class restaurant in North Carolina. As we were waiting for the meal to be served I noticed a large rectangular steel plate sitting right in the middle of the table. It looked a little out of place, but I didn't want to seem stupid by asking why it was there, so I simply reached out and touched it with my finger. The moment my finger burned (and I said a familiar "Ouch!") I understood that it was a hot hot plate, there to keep hot plates hot. Had I noticed the lighted candle under it, I probably wouldn't have touched it. Then again, if you have read Comfort, the Feeble-minded you would probably doubt that.

It's understandable that you and I can make a wrong judgment if we don't see the whole picture. Often, all it takes is one piece of information--the missing puzzle that causes a picture make sense. Take for instance a woman who works for our ministry. Her name is "Anna." She's a very intelligent lady, but from the moment I met her she insisted on calling herself "Banana." I thought that the name "Anna" had class, while the name "Banana" sounded demeaning, even if it did rhyme with her name. That's what I thought until I found the missing puzzle. Years ago, her little brother, Lee, continually called her "Anna Banana." He did it to deliberately annoy his sister...and it certainly did. Anna hated it. The turning point came the day that their family got some horrible news: Lee had leukemia. Tragically, he died at age 14. Anna now calls herself "Banana" in honor of his memory.

Here are some stories that may cause you to make a wrong judgment: Adam and Eve--Noah's ark--Jonah and the Whale--Sampson and Delilah--Moses and the Red Sea--Joshua and the Walls of Jericho. Do you

believe that they actually happened? Before you answer, here is the missing puzzle piece: God, has deliberately chosen seeming foolish things to confound those who think that they are wise. Who would believe such silly stories? --Certainly not those who have any pride or intellectual dignity. God has made the door of salvation so low, only those who are prepared to intellectually humble themselves can enter.

This incredible biblical principle was clearly illustrated years ago when I ran a children's club. I told about one hundred kids to line up for free candy. As I looked at the line, I noticed that the big bullies had pushed their way to the front of the line and the quiet, meek and sickly children was at the other end. So I told the kids to turn about face. Then I took great delight in going to the other end of the line and giving candy to the quiet, meek and sickly kids first.

In a world where bullies come first, where the rich and powerful stomp on the poor and weak, God has turned the line around. He has chosen seeming foolish things to confound the wise.

Think of the biblical story of Naaman. Naaman was the proud captain of the Syrian guard. Unfortunately, he contracted leprosy. He was destined to live as an outcast and to be "unclean." Then one day, he heard that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal leprosy. So Naaman decided to seek him out, and he did so laden with gifts.

When he found him, he waited with his horses and chariot at the prophet's door. But Elisha the prophet didn't even come out of his home. He simply relayed a message saying that the leper should go and wash seven times in the river Jordan and that he would be healed. Naaman expected that the prophet would at least do him the honor of coming out to greet him, and then wave his regal hand over him in the name of God. Instead, he told him to go bath in a dirty little river. He was outraged at such stupidity and angrily rode off on his high horse.

Then his servants reasoned with him and said that if the prophet had told him to do some great thing, he would have done it to be healed. Why not do this simple thing? He had nothing to lose but his dignity. So, having no other course, this proud warrior humbled himself and waded into that dirty little river and bobbed up and down seven times like a rubber ducky. On the sixth time he went down into the water as a leper, but when he came up after the seventh, the Bible says that his skin was like that of a little child. Once again, we see God in His great consistency, using a foolish and humbling principle.

The Bible tells us that this same principle was used in the redemption of humanity. It says that the preaching of the cross "is foolishness to those who are perishing." The cross makes no sense until the missing puzzle comes into play. What is the missing puzzle? What is the piece that will make a foolish cross make sense? It is the Moral Law of God. When the Law fits into its rightful place, the gospel is no longer a puzzle to those who allow it to be a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ.

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