

“False Positive”

Acts 8:4-25

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Jul 28, 2019

4 “False Positives” That Will Keep You From Jesus

I. False Positive #1: “I’m kind of a big deal.” (pride)

Acts 8:9-10 - ⁹ But there was a man named Simon...saying that he himself was somebody great. ¹⁰ They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.”

- A. An inflated view of self is all it takes to block us from accurately seeing our need for Jesus.

Galatians 6:3 - ³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

- B. If you’re clinging to your pride, it is *impossible* to be saved.

James 4:6,10 - ⁶ “...God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble...” ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Luke 18:14 - ¹⁴ “...For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Simon’s inflated view of himself distorts his vision of reality, and essentially blocks him from seeing the truth of the Gospel and his need for salvation.

II. False Positive #2: “I saw the sign.” (miracles, rituals, etc.)

- A. The Samaritan Christians saw the signs that Philip did, but they didn’t stop there. They went beyond the signs to what they were pointing to - Jesus!

Acts 8:12 - ¹² But when they **believed Philip** as he preached **good news about the kingdom of God** and the name of **Jesus Christ**, they were baptized, both men and women.

- B. As a magician, Simon was amazed at the signs that were being done, but he wasn’t gripped by what, or Whom, they were pointing to.

Acts 8:13 - ¹³ Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. **And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.**

III. False Positive #3: “I can afford it.” (merit-based salvation)

- A. That Simon offered money for the ability to give the Holy Spirit is telling. His view of God as a commodity for personal gain shows his lost condition.

Acts 8:18-19 - ¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

- B. God gives salvation and blessings to His children, and does so freely. Nothing God has to offer can be bought or earned.

Acts 8:20-21 - ²⁰ But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

Isa. 55:1 - ¹ “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk **without money and without price.**

IV. False Positive #4: “I bought fire insurance.” (fearing hell vs. loving Jesus)

- A. Simon's response shows he's only concerned with the temporal effects of this sin, but not his eternal standing with God.

Acts 8:24 - ²⁴ And Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.”

- B. He desperately didn't want to perish, but that fear didn't lead to a love for Jesus that is required to be saved.

1 Cor. 16:22 - ²² If anyone has no **love for the Lord**, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!

Questions for Community Group and/or Personal Application:

- (1) Which of the 4 “False Positives” resonates with you?
- (2) Pastor Peter said “We typically just don't get grace.” Do you agree with that? In what ways have you struggled with the notion of truly free grace & mercy?
- (3) How is pride evident in your life? Consider asking 1-3 people “How does my pride manifest itself?” or “In what ways do you see me being proud?”
- (4) Pastor Peter said “Fearing hell is not enough to give you heaven.” Can you explain why that is?