



“Altared Reality”
— Ctrl+Alt+Delete—
Small Group Plan

On Sunday we learned that two commonly confused words, have more in common than we might have known at first.

Al·ter – a verb from the Latin *alterare*, “to change and make different”

Al·tar – a noun from the Latin *altāria*, “burnt offerings”
a verb from the Latin *adolēre* “to burn up as a sacrifice”

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How are “altar” and “alter” usually confused?
- For the person of faith, how are they connected?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

WHEN REALITY IS PLACED ON THE ALTAR

James 2:21-24

²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

- What is the relationship between Abraham’s “faith” and “actions?”
- During this season of resolutions, what is the difference between a trivial change and a transformational change?

WHEN CHANGE IS TRIVIAL

Luke 18:18-25

¹⁸ A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁹ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good — except God alone. ²⁰ You know the commandments:

‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”²¹ “All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.²² When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”²³ When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth.²⁴ Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!²⁵ Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

- Is Jesus saying that wealth is evil? Explain.
- Why does Jesus say “you know the commandments” (v. 20) and then only give a partial listing of the Ten Commandments?
- Which commandments did Jesus omit at first? How did Jesus bring them to bear on the young man’s life later (v. 22)?
- Why is it so difficult for the comfortable and self-satisfied to enter the kingdom of God?
- Why could this man not give up his wealth?

WHEN CHANGE IS TRANSFORMATIONAL

Luke 18:35-43

³⁵ As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.³⁶ When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening.³⁷ They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”³⁸ He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”³⁹ Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him,⁴¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord, I want to see,” he replied.⁴² Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”⁴³ Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

- What obstacles were working against this blind man?
- Why did people “rebuke” the man and tell him to “be quiet” (v. 38)?
- What did he see — the obstacles or the opportunities? Explain.
- Since Jesus knew that the man was blind, why did he ask, “What do you want me to do for you?” (v. 41)

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- How does wealth create a false sense of security? What can open our eyes to this illusion? How can we make everything available to God?
- The blind man wanted to see – Explain the value of being specific about the change you want in your life.
- The blind man called out to Jesus – Describe the power of seizing the moment.
- The blind man cried out over the crowd's objection – Why is persistence imperative to bring change to your life?
- The blind man clearly made his requests known – Why does transformation require faith and expectation?
- The blind man immediately began to follow Jesus – Why does long-lasting change require a long-term commitment?
- Close by asking God to make the first few steps of change very clear, and then reaffirm your long-term commitment to follow God.