

12.8.19 Sermon Pastor Jordan Gades Matthew 3: 1-12

I feel like I've grown up watching cop shows. So more realistic than others. Some leaning more into drama, some more into humor. I remember watching Walker Texas ranger with my grandpa. I remember watching Blue bloods and the closer with my family and I know one of my favorites now is Brooklyn 99. It leans on the humor side hard but I get a lot of laughs.

But through all of them a common thing that always seems to happen is that scenario where they got the perp in interrogation room. And they are just sweating it out. We as the audience know its them. There guilty, but the cops need that admission of guilt to put them away. And what do they end up doing? Good Cop bad cop. The one goes in yelling and throwing things with threats and crazy intensity, and after they freak out and rattle the perp the other cop comes in. Cool headed calm, caring, responsible, empathetic. Wants nothing more than to just help this obviously guilty person out as best they can.

And of course, since its TV they always break. They always confess. It's only a matter of time.

And the really funny thing is that trope of Good Cop Bad Cop gets played out over and over again in our daily lives. I've seen it as a sales technique. I use it on my kids, and I'm sure more than a few parents have done that same thing. I mean we kinda even do it with Christmas. Let's all face it; Santa is bad cop. I don't think anyone wants to think about it, but there is this stalker guy in his under-ice lair, thousands of miles away, watching everything you do and judging it. And sneaks into your house once a year, no matter what. And then the joy of Christmas morning hinges on how you've acted in the last year. And then, and least Christians show the good Cop, Little baby Jesus. Jesus who loves us, cares for us, has compassion and love for us in every circumstance. But what really gets me thinking is that this tactic isn't new. As shown in our readings. These go back a couple of

And then we have Paul talking about Jesus

God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Of course, the couple of things that we really have to deal with here are

1. The fact that through this whole thing we are the perp in the room.

We are the one realizing we have done something wrong. WE are the

ones who are guilty. And 2. we are sitting here being confronted with 2

very different versions of possible outcomes. Fire and Brimstone, or

peace and grace. And we are also being presented with 2 different

versions of Our God and everything God represents. Am I bound to hell

for bad things that I've done? Is Jesus this loving savior who died for me

who did all these bad things.

So how do we sort this whole thing out? Well of course there is a

simple answer. No just picking of one side being right and one side

being wrong. But what we are really left with is the fact that both these things, Good Cop bad cop are a part of our one God. God created this world perfectly and then we broke it because we thought and still think we know better. And so, for all those things which we do wrong, God judges us against the perfection that could have been. And we have to know that. WE have to know our relationship to God in its fullness. Any relationship we have with another person is far more complex than we give them credit for. And we are talking about God. So, our relationship is one where we know we are created by God, we do things against God, and accordingly deserve punishment. But we were created by God, And God takes care of the things which God has created because God is also a loving God. God loves Creation so much that God decided to bridge this gap between us and bring us back into this harmonious relationship with God.

Our shorthand term for that is Law and Gospel. We need Law in our life and we need the good news of Jesus Christ. So, John and Paul aren't

wrong or talking about different God's. They are talking about the fullness of this relationship we have with God and each other. Though, from my personal point of view I really think the world could use a little more Good Cop in it. Amen.