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**Title:** Lessons from Lasso: Be a Goldfish

**Preaching:** Danny Gulden, Lead Pastor Promise Road Campus

**Text:** [Luke 3:15-17, 21-22](#)

**E-mail:** [Danny Gulden](#)

[Watch the service.](#)



We are beginning a new worship series today called Lessons from Lasso. Ted Lasso is a television show that has captured the attention of many. The title character is played by Jason Sudeikis, who plays an American Division II football coach, who is hired to coach an English Premier League soccer club., AFC Richmond. He does

not know English football; in fact, he has never been to England. He is hired by a new owner who is looking to sabotage the club, which was previously owned by her ex-husband. The series is currently three seasons into its story and what we learn as the series goes along is that Ted Lasso has a way of winning you over with his optimism, vulnerability, and general goodness. He has a way of reminding us of what it means to be human and what it means to live in community. It is a classic fish out of water story, which somehow works. It turns out that Ted Lasso is not the coach AFC Richmond, or her fans wanted but was the coach that AFC Richmond needed.

Along with the show, we will be looking at some scenes and stories from Luke's Gospel that center on the early parts of Jesus' ministry. If Ted is the coach that was not wanted but needed, Jesus is the Messiah that we need, but not the one people wanted. As a reminder, when people thought about what a Messiah would be, they pictured a warrior king. They pictured someone who would take down the Roman Empire through force. They pictured someone who would come from great financial means, someone born in an important place and to an important family.

What they did not picture was someone from Nazareth, someone born in Bethlehem in a manger, born to two people like Mary and Joseph. They didn't think that the Messiah would grow up to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey and to be executed by the Empire on a cross. Jesus was not the Messiah most wanted but was exactly the Messiah we all need.

The first lesson comes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> episode of the 1<sup>st</sup> season of Ted Lasso, as the team is still getting to know Ted and his faithful assistant Coach

Beard. The team is scrimmaging, and young player Sam Obasanyi has the ball and gets, well, schooled, by star player Jamie Tart.

Ted's strategy is not tactical, rather he talks about the short memory of a goldfish. He teaches a lesson that a goldfish has a 10-second memory and that Sam should be a goldfish. In other words, what just happened to any person, doesn't define a person. Our life is not defined by our past. If we let our past define us, then we will never be able to move forward.

In Jesus' day, interest was building in a Messiah, in a new way of life. Life was very difficult for most people. Some were pointing to a Jewish Rabbi that we know as John the Baptist as the Messiah. He had been baptizing people, as was the custom for a Jewish Rabbi to do. Here is John's response to the idea that he is the Messiah,

*"The people were filled with expectation, and everyone wondered whether John might be the Christ. <sup>16</sup> John replied to them all, "I baptize you with water, but the one who is more powerful than me is coming. I'm not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Luke 3:15-16 CEB*

The one who is more powerful than me is coming. John would then baptize Jesus.

*"When everyone was being baptized, Jesus also was baptized. While he was praying, heaven was opened <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit came down on him in bodily form like a dove. And there was a voice from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.'" Luke 3:21-22 CEB*

We have been baptizing our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Geist. After the baptism service the weekend before Christmas, one of our students who had just been baptized asked me in the back of the worship space, "what's next?" I loved the question before it is a future-facing question. It's a question that reminds us in baptism, we aren't focused on *what was*, rather we are focused on *what will come*.

The anchor, the root of this future, rests with the voice from heaven that comes down upon Jesus, which is the same voice that I believe comes down at each of our baptisms, "you are my child, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness."

This is a simple, yet important reminder. It's core to living the life that God has called us to live. You are my child, whom I dearly love. In each person,

God rejoices, God finds happiness. You are more than you might think you are at any given moment.

As Sam lies on the turf, we can imagine how he is feeling and what he is thinking. He's just been beaten on a play, a goal scored because of his mistake, and Jamie insulting him in front of the whole team. Sam is a good player and has the potential to be a great player, but he doesn't feel that way at this moment. He's just experienced a moment that can stick with a person, and if we let it, a moment that we can believe defines us. We carry with us the mistakes we think we have made. I think it is why we love the New Year timeframe because it allows us to turn the page. But the truth is, it's just a date on a calendar. We need something more to leave the past behind and to move into God's future.

This week I was reminded of this powerful phrase, "*The mountains you are carrying, you were only meant to climb.*" Najwa Zebian

There is no way that Sam Obasayni can move forward if he believes this one play defines him. If he believes this is all he is and this is all that will ever be, then it becomes true.

It's why Ted Lasso's advice to him is so powerful. Be a Goldfish.

Don't dwell on the mistakes you have made

The past, good and bad, doesn't define you.

And no matter what you have experienced or where you have been, there is always more to your story.

As John the Baptist is speaking about Jesus, he has his own be a goldfish moment in terms of what Jesus will do in the world and people's lives. From The Message paraphrase

*"John intervened: 'I'm baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned.'"* Luke 3:16-17 MSG

Ted has a better way with words, but the promise is there. If you allow, if you open yourself up to the possibility, then faith will change you from the inside out. Faith will clean house, in fact, faith in the way of Jesus will make a clean sweep of our lives.

I don't know if you remember your baptism. Maybe you do or maybe you don't. Perhaps you have not yet experienced baptism, maybe you are

considering it or maybe you have never considered it. This is I do know, that at our baptism, the same words Jesus hears are meant for you as well, "this is my child, whom I dearly love."

It's why we say together when someone comes out of the water, "raised to walk in the newness of life." Or as Ted Lasso might say, "Be a Goldfish." The ultimate fresh start.

Let Us Pray