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**Title:** Ted Lasso: Be Curious, Not Judgmental

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**Text:** [Luke 4:21-30](#)

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[Watch the service.](#)



Today we are on week 4 of our Ted Lasso series where we explore the truths reflected through moments of the Lasso story and the Gospel story. First, we learned to be a Goldfish, we are not defined by our pasts. Then we were touched by Ted's great believe in believe speech, God's hope surrounds

us if only we let ourselves see and experience it. Last week, we were inspired by Ted's words to one of his players, Sam, "do the right-est thing", and challenged us to take our faith past what is easy and convenient to what is true and right.

Today, our text from the Ted Lasso canon comes from Season 1, Episode 8. Here we find Ted in the middle of a game of darts with Rupert. Rupert is the ex-owner of AFC Richmond and the ex-husband of the current owner, Rebecca. She and Ted go to the pub to meet with minority owners of the club, the Milk sisters, only to be met by Rupert and his new fiance, Bex. It turns out Bex has bought the Milk sister's share and once they are married, Rupert will again be a part-owner of the club. So Ted wagers on Rupert's ability to be in the owners' box and torment Rebecca on this dart's game. Let's see what happens...

[Play Clip]

Be curious, not judgmental.

When I found out that Rev. Danny was planning this sermon series, I asked him if I could preach one Sunday as soon as I could. I love movies and TV shows. I am a big movie watcher and I come from a family that loves

movies and tv shows. Since the pandemic started, my sisters and I have started having zoom movie nights to stay connected across the country, they both live in different parts of Texas. My sisters and I love to quiz each other on movie and TV quotes, putting each other to shame if we cannot figure out where a particular line originated from. Ted Lasso is one of the shows that I watched weekly with my sister, Heather, this last year even though we live over a thousand miles away from each other. It was one show that we did not watch with our sister Adrienne because she did not catch up in time... or her side of the story might be that we didn't wait long enough for her...

Movies and TV shows have been a point of connection for me from the time I was young. A place of escape, a place to explore, a place to be curious... Stories do this for us, they open up a world that we are halfway in, halfway out of enough that maybe we can ask questions here we wouldn't have otherwise, and then maybe those questions can affect how we live our lives.

I am so happy to be able to connect with y'all today through the words, creativity, and art that is Ted Lasso.

Our gospel story comes from Luke 4: 21-30. Picking up from where we left off last week, we find Jesus in his hometown of Nazareth. He has just read to everyone in the synagogue words from Isaiah about preaching the good news, healing people, and bringing restoration and liberation. He concludes his reading of the scroll by saying that the scripture is fulfilled, that these things will be true, and here is where we pick up:

*"He began to explain to them, 'Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it.' Everyone was raving about Jesus, so impressed were they by the gracious words flowing from his lips. They said, 'This is Joseph's son, isn't it?' Then Jesus said to them, 'Undoubtedly, you will quote this saying to me: 'Doctor, heal yourself. Do here in your hometown what we've heard you did in Capernaum.'" He said, "I assure you that no prophet is welcome in the prophet's hometown. And I can assure you that there were many widows in Israel during Elijah's time when it didn't rain for three and a half years and there was a great food shortage in the land. Yet Elijah was sent to none of them but only to a widow in the city of Zarephath in the region of Sidon. There were also many persons with skin diseases in Israel during the*

*time of the prophet Elisha, but none of them were cleansed. Instead, Naaman the Syrian was cleansed." When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was filled with anger. They rose up and ran him out of town. They led him to the crest of the hill on which their town had been built so that they could throw him off the cliff. But he passed through the crowd and went on his way." (Luke 4: 21-30 CEB)*

So here Jesus is in his hometown, going back to the people who raised him proclaiming to them the great things that he is doing and about to do.... But it's not for you. I won't be staying here. I am going to other places to do these things there. Now I can understand why the people of Nazareth are mad. What a normal and fully human reaction to having all of these wonderful things presented before you and then be told but none for you! I don't want to condemn their anger, our emotions are great touchpoints for us, but how they dealt with that anger is what I want to focus on. As soon as they hear what it is they don't want to hear, they act on judgment, running Jesus out of town and almost off of a cliff.

Now before I go into a whole sermon about how we should step back from judgment, I want to give it some credit. Making judgments is a completely natural and necessary human process. They are how we assess our survival, it is wired within our DNA. They come up in decision-making and how we approach our lives. Trusting our gut, our intuition is so important. We are creatures that survive on judgment. We need it sometimes. But curiosity is also necessary for survival.

There is a phrase, "curiosity killed the cat". I did some research on this phrase. It originated in the play "Every Man in His Humour" by Ben Jonson in 1598 and was written, "care killed the cat". The word care in this phrase was a synonym for worrying. Somewhere along the way, the phrase was changed to warn people about meddling in other people's business.<sup>1</sup> It is not a phrase to warn us away from being curious but to warn us away from prying into other people's lives.

But I think Curiosity is quite life-giving. Judgments are going to come up for us, about how the world works, about how other people are or should be, about ourselves. Because, of course, we are looking for answers. We are looking for how to live and be and act. Answers make us feel safe.

Judgments can give us a clear right and wrong, a definition of what is acceptable. If we know exactly what is acceptable then we know how to be accepted and we can hold others to those same standards.

Curiosity is an invitation to go in deeper than a judgment, to ask questions, to explore, to imagine. As we search for answers, curiosity helps us to find a home in the questions and the undefined spaces. It can be scary. Going into the unknown means there are unknown outcomes. To be curious you must be faithful that maybe what is out there beyond your judgment, beyond your understanding, is much more beautiful and deep than what you already know. Maybe outside of your judgment, is God.

Curiosity is the nutrient soil for connection to each other, to ourselves, and God.

Think of all the friends that would have been changed by knowing Ted. He is such an inspiring character that we are doing a whole sermon series based on him and yet there were people from his childhood that never get to know that because they weren't curious enough to find out. Who are you not curious to get to know, to be changed by, to ask about?

In our gospel story from Luke, judgment keeps the people of Nazareth from experiencing the work of Jesus. They are so concerned with the fact that these works Jesus speaks of aren't for them that they rush right into action. What might have happened if they sat with their shock, their anger, their hurt. What if they had been a little curious and asked some questions? Here are a few questions I can think of that I might ask, having the privilege of reading this story after the fact and reflecting.

Potential Points of Curiosity:

- Jesus, am I not worthy of your healing and teachings?
- Why would you share this good news with me, only to take it away?
- How did you slip away from that angry mob so easily?
- Can I go with you?
- How can witnessing others' healing and liberation change my life?

So held up in the judgment of Jesus' actions, the people of Nazareth rob themselves of the potential opportunity to be moved, changed, liberated. We

see it over and over again in the biblical text when Jesus is healing, the power of those healings lies not only in the act itself but in the witness. Hope multiplies and thrives among all the people gathered and all those who hear of the work but yet it is only a few who receive the healing. How close were those in Nazareth from being a part of that but they were hung up on it not happening to them, directly for them?

Judgment will not only keep you from others, it will keep you from yourself.

In her book, *Untamed*, Glennon Doyle says that envy is a guiding point for her<sup>2</sup>. When she finds herself being envious of someone she realizes if she sits with that emotion long enough she finds underneath it that she is longing for the thing or feeling she believes that person to have. This is her guiding point to work towards something for herself. I think it is similar to judgment. Here's the deal, here is my judgmental confession. I often judge how people dance. If they sway their arms too weirdly or are offbeat. I think it has its roots in my dancing background. But I realized a couple of years ago that all of this judgment I was placing on others was coming back onto me. When I would dance in public I had all of these thoughts in the back of my mind on how others must be thinking of me and judging my dancing. I was also so strict and judgmental of my dancing. At the root of it all, I just wanted to dance and be free. My judgments of others had more to do with the fact that I was jealous that they were so carefree and it was doing me more harm than anyone else.

God's creation is made and purposed to move together, in different directions but when our paths cross, they are changed and affected by one another. We have an invitation to be present for this by staying curious about ourselves and those around us. When we open ourselves up to others, we also give ourselves freedom.

Judgment will not only keep you from yourself but from what God is doing in the world.

I fear that if we lean too much into judgment we risk more than losing a game of darts, we risk losing the fullness of our God. How many times does Jesus try to show us something bigger than, something different than the view we hold of the world, of creation, of God and we try to throw him off a

cliff? Maybe if we take a step back, take away the judgment and add in some curiosity we can find God at work in places we never expected.

You know those questions I asked and put on the screen, I don't think Jesus would have answered them. The gospels are full of people asking Jesus questions, and Jesus answering with stories, or parables, that often enlist more questions instead of answers. Jesus sparks curiosity out of all those he is teaching. Our faith is rooted in being curious. It often leaves us with more questions than answers and that can be scary. But he calls us to be curious, not judgmental, to hold the world with open hands not closed fists. Open your eyes, open your ears, open your hearts, and open your minds to curiosity and a whole world of connection. Have faith. Be curious.

Let's pray together...

Creator God,

Stir within us curiosity and wonder. May we be inspired to move, create, be, and commune in your Spirit. Lord, give us open hands when we want to hold things with closed fists. Be patient with us as we stay faithful and grant us patience so that we might give ourselves a little grace in the process. Make in us hearts that are curious. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/curiosity-killed-the-cat.html> and <https://interestingliterature.com/2019/12/meaning-and-history-phrase-curiosity-killed-the-cat/>

<sup>2</sup> Glennon Doyle, *Untamed* (The Dial Press: New York, 2020).