

Ordinary People – Week 3 - 08/16/2020

At the beginning of your group spend some time allowing people to reflect on how they've been able to connect with God. What kinds of practices or tools are they finding helpful or useful in this season? These may be helpful to share with one another.

Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you consider this week's sermon.

Nick shared 3 stories from the lives of ordinary people whom God has used mightily in their lives. What is striking is that in the first 2 stories, the people had nothing really special to offer, and in fact barely knew anything about Christ and his mission, but they have both been used powerfully simply by pursuing Christ and offering their lives to him. The 3rd story illustrated how a person with seemingly unlimited opportunities to better their own life chose instead to use their gifts to better the lives of the least in society. The key to being a blessing in all these stories was humbly submitting whatever we have to Christ, and letting him use us how he chooses to bless and restore others.

Based on Acts 6:1-7 we can conclude that, "The word of God spread and the number of disciples increased rapidly" because Stephen and several others took responsibility for waiting on tables to feed the widows. Consider also James 1:27 where the brother of Jesus states, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..."

- Have you considered that the very act of caring for the least (e.g. widows) might be the impetus behind spreading the good news, in part, because it showed how the Christians were different than others in society by how they cared for the least?
- What role can you play in caring for orphans, widows, and similarly distressed groups of people? How does this honor God?

Regardless of how broken we are when we come to Christ, we all get to participate in the ministry of reconciliation, as Paul described in 2 Corinthians 5:13-21. Re-read this passage and consider:

- What does it mean for you to "no longer live for yourself, but for him who died for you"? (vs 15)
- What does it mean for you to no longer "regard others from a worldly point of view"? (vs 16)
- What does it mean for you to take on the "ministry of reconciliation"? (vs 18-19)
- What does it mean for you to be "Christ's ambassadors"? (vs 20)

We are all ordinary people, but we have opportunities to do something "extraordinary" for God's kingdom, by loving people and restoring them to their rightful relationship with God.

- Stephen was likely a new follower at the time he began waiting on tables for widows. How can you begin (or continue) your journey to care for and help restore people to God through Christ?