

FOR CLARKSVILLE

FOR CLARKSVILLE 2019: WHO ARE YOU FOR?

Christianity has an image problem. If you've lived in America for very long, I doubt this surprises you. Over the past few decades, Christians have lost their influence in culture because they've handled it so poorly. They had power. They had dollars. But instead of using power and the dollars to reach out and love people well...

Christians used power to make a point and dollars to demand their way.

We created an us-versus-them mentality. The church communicated to unchurched people that we didn't like them because of what they did. How they looked. How they behaved. How they voted. What they believed. And now people feel minimized—or worse, demonized—by those who love Jesus.

What's interesting is Jesus never did this. Not once. He had all power and He had every legitimate reason to demand His way, but this is not the example He set. Instead, He leveraged His power to love and serve others, and then He told us to follow His example.

BIG IDEA: Since God is FOR us, we GET to be FOR Clarksville.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When your average co-worker or neighbor hears the word “Christian,” what top 3 words do you think come to their mind?
2. What top 3 words do you wish would come to their mind when they hear the word “Christian?”
3. Of all of the major outsider perceptions, which one do you feel will be the most difficult for Christians and the church to overcome?
4. In the message, Carlo said, “Many people are more familiar with what the church is AGAINST rather than what the church is FOR.” What is Christianity FOR? What are you FOR? WHO are you FOR?
5. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Romans 5:1-8.*

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace[a] with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. 2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. 3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. 6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. 7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

- Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-10

6. What do you think it means to, “have peace with God” and “rejoice” in trials? What example did Jesus give us?
7. In the message, Carlo said, “*God’s love is always tied to giving.*” Do you agree or disagree? Why? How does Ephesians 5:2, John 3:16, and Romans 8:31-32 support your answer?

MOVING FORWARD

For Clarksville:

Changing the way people ***not in church*** view ***church***.

How?

By ***doing good*** in our community and practicing no-strings attached ***generosity***.

We believe that for far too long the church has been known for what we’re *against*. We want to be known for what we are *for*. We are for Clarksville families, couples, singles, students, and children. We are for our city officials and parks. We are for Sango, Ft. Campbell, Hopkinsville, Oak Grove, and all of the great cities in our county. We are for Clarksville. The reason we are for the people in our county is because God is for them. The most famous verse in the Bible clearly states this: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but will have eternal life.”

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Can you imagine what your workplace and community would be like if you loved the way Jesus calls us to love?
Can you imagine what would happen in our nation—in our world—if Christians everywhere began following Jesus’ example? What if you committed to love the people around you?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

Romans 8:31