

Life Group Lesson

Essentials • Week of August 14

Introduction

There are six essential core values that keep Christ Church grounded in Scripture, our mission, and focused on the Lord's work. Today we look at 'R' in the acronym of C-H-R-I-S-T – *Reaching*. Reaching millions of unchurched persons because lost people matter to God. Who is called to go and preach the Gospel? We all are! According to Jesus' words in the Great Commission,

“Jesus came and told His disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always even to the end of the age.”
(Matthew 28:18-20)

Someone has said, Jesus' last words (before He ascended) should be our first words, our marching orders. And the imperative, “Go”, can be translated *As you go*— into your world, your neighborhood, your workplace, your sphere of influence – *make disciples*. It is a privilege and honor to be given this glorious command: to share our faith and tell people about Jesus. As we simply share our story about a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, we also share in the blessing of life-change and transformation in people around us. Think about the many people who have come to faith in Christ through Christ Church, perhaps through a personal invitation to attend worship or a Life Group. It is incredible. And worth giving the Lord a shout of praise!

“In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and turns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!” (Luke 15:7)

Jesus is our example as we share God's love with others. For example, with the woman at the well, Jesus was willing to cross cultural boundaries and 'be seen' with a woman of ill repute. He cared enough to meet her where she was, divorced five times and currently living with a man (see John 4:4-26). With the hemorrhaging woman, He was sensitive to the needs of someone considered unclean. Jesus showed compassion for her and commends her faith (Mark 5:24-34). In the account of blind Bartimaeus, Jesus heard Bartimaeus crying out, even while

others are telling him to be quiet. Jesus says, “Tell him to come here” and then asks the blind beggar, “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus restores his sight (see Mark 10:46-52).

Each story tells us that *reaching* out to others begins with *caring* about others. Notice in each story, the person healed and restored immediately begins to tell others about what God has done. Do you care about hurting people around you? If Christ has touched your life, you have a story to tell others. It is *your* story. You do not have to conjure up anything. Sharing our faith, sharing the love of Christ with a friend, coworker, family member, is simply letting another person know that Christ has made (is making) a positive influence in your life – how you live, your goals, attitudes, purpose. You now have a hope that stretches far beyond this life on earth. You now have a home in heaven, with the Lord, waiting for you and *all* who believe.

Background

The apostle Paul was a man who knew of Jesus' compassion first-hand. The Risen Christ personally met Paul (formerly Saul of Tarsus, persecutor of Christians) on the road to Damascus and transformed this violent man into a preacher of God's goodness and grace. Talk about transformation! Paul became a new man in Christ, with a new mission and purpose. Paul became laser-focused on reaching as many people, utilizing any method he could possibly use, in order to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Paul said, “Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings” (1 Corinthians 9:22b-23). Like the shepherd going after the one lost sheep; like the Father looking for his prodigal son to return home – God's heart longs for His children to be found, to come home. If that is the heart of God, should that not be the heart of His church?

Reading the Text

Read I Corinthians 9:19-27

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

Essentials

Text: I Corinthians 9:22-25

Plain Truth:

Reaching millions of _____ persons
because _____ people _____ to God.

In Closing

Christ Church's mission statement is "Reaching millions of unchurched persons by developing thousands of fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ" – Reaching and Developing. We reach and develop together, as a team. Like working in the harvest field—reaching people for Christ and developing them into fully devoted followers of Jesus—is work. But we do not work alone. We work together. There is joy in working and bringing in the harvest together.

"Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest" (Ps. 126:5-6).

Jesus said, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields" (Luke 10:2). Preparing for the harvest consists of many parts, and requires hard work and patience: preparing the soil, working the ground, planting the seed, weeding, watering. When the harvest begins to come in, no farmer wants that hard work to go to waste. And time is of the essence! Bring the harvest in quickly, as it is plentiful and abundant. We need workers. Are you willing to roll up your sleeves and work? Working to bring others to Christ is what we are *all* called to do.

"Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'there is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' You are witnesses of all these things." (Jesus' words in Luke 24:46-48)

Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

One Year Bible Readings

August 14: Nehemiah 7:73-9:21, 1 Corinthians 9:1-18, Psalm 33:12-22, Prov. 21:11-12
August 15: Nehemiah 9:22-10:39, 1 Corinthians 9:19-10:13, Psalm 34:1-10, Prov. 21:13
August 16: Nehemiah 11:1-12:26, 1 Corinthians 10:14-33, Ps. 34:11-22, Prov. 21:14-16
August 17: Nehemiah 12:27-13:31, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, Ps. 35:1-16, Prov. 21:17-18
August 18: Esther 1:1-3:15, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Psalm 35:17-28, Proverbs 21:19-20
August 19: Esther 4:1-7:10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-26, Psalm 36:1-12, Proverbs 21:21-22
August 20: Esther 8:1-10:3, 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13, Psalm 37:1-11, Prov. 21:23-24

Names of people I will pray for and invite to church:

August 14, 2022