

Make Open Arms Great Again - The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand

Psalm 27:1-14; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-25

A chair in our home has a sign that says, "Reserved for the _____ of the _____. " Why? Every king has his rules.

But kings and leaders _____. When they do, lots of other things change with them.

Consider the story of Curt Cignetti and the Indiana Hoosiers. A lot of things didn't change. Yet, enough changed so _____ one of the worst ever football programs had one of the best seasons ever.

Today's Gospel reading tells us about the moment Jesus _____ the arrival of his reign as King: "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

God planned a victory over sin, death and the devil and appointed his _____ to lead the effort. The key mechanism for achieving this victory is repentance, an "about face", a change in direction and thinking.

When Jesus called his first followers he said, "*Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" He didn't say, "*I won't change anything about you or your life.*"

He said, "*I will birth something new in you that doesn't exist yet.*" In fact, his Kingdom is such a radical new way of life he said, "*You are invited into a 3 year intensive training program where you _____ everything behind.*" How did they _____? "*Immediately, they left their nets...the boat...their father...and followed him.*"

What are we supposed to learn from this?

- There is something incredibly _____ about Jesus and his Word...
- ...for those _____ enough to receive it!
- He demands nothing less than what he himself is willing to give... _____.
- There is really no "_____ " or "lukewarm" with Jesus.
- This is not a _____ that can be developed in 1 hr/wk or 20 min/day.
- There are no "lone rangers." Discipleship happens in _____.

CS Lewis realized that when his friend Charles died, his friend Ronald would never _____ the same way again.

If we want to MOAGA we must "_____ the Lamb"

If we want to more fully and _____ "Behold the Lamb" we must do so daily at home. (Faith5) Jesus also calls us into discipleship with other Christians outside our _____. (Life Groups!)

Who is helping you more faithfully follow Jesus? Who sees you at your best AND worst? Who can challenge you? Who have you given the authority to speak into your life and ask tough questions?

****If the answer is "no one" you need a Life Group!****

Will you commit to a Life Group of some kind to deepen your spiritual growth for your sake and others?

Will you consider helping START a Life Group? Or perhaps LEAD one?

Will you consider being a “champion” for Life Groups to brainstorm ways to strengthen this part of our ministry?

Will you pray for God to move mightily in strengthening and growing our Life Groups?