

EVERYTHING

THE GOSPEL CHANGES

1 Youth Ministry

April 27, 2014

Lesson:

This week, we finished our series called “The Gospel Changes Everything” as we looked at sharing the Gospel with others.

We began by reviewing what we’ve been learning about the Gospel and how it changes our lives once we choose to follow Jesus. We said that the Gospel is for everyone, compels us to love others as Jesus loved us, calls for action in serving those less fortunate and tells us to always expect the unexpected with God.

We talked about the difference between what we may believe about God and what we may communicate to others about God. We said that, according to the census, 80% of Americans claim to be Christians yet not nearly that many have lives that “look” like Jesus’ life or do what Jesus calls them to do. We recalled that in **Luke 6:46**, Jesus asked his Disciples, “Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?” We asked why do so many people call themselves Christians but do not follow what Jesus teaches?

We said that when the writers of the New Testament needed to describe the message of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection they chose the word Gospel, meaning “Good News” because it is such good news. We said that when we have good news we naturally want to tell everyone about it. As Christians, we are called to be messengers of the Gospel to spread the “Good News” to others through our words and through our actions.

We looked at the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard that Jesus told in **Matthew 20:1-15**. We put ourselves in the shoes of the workers who worked all day as they saw the workers who worked only an hour get paid the same amount. We said they were mad because it was not fair that they didn’t get paid what they “deserved”. We also said that the workers who worked only an hour were very thankful because they didn’t expect to be paid a full day’s wage for working only an hour. We talked about how Jesus used this story to describe how things work in the Kingdom of Heaven. We said whether you have been following Jesus your whole life or you have just been saved today, all of the Kingdom of Heaven, along with all of God’s mercy and Grace is given equally to all. We said that most people believe that God just gives people what they “deserve” and sometimes even punishes them because they “deserve” to be punished. We agreed that most people would probably be happy to hear that God gives his Grace equally to all no matter who they are or what they have done yet many Christians are afraid to share the Good News because they have the perception that people would react negatively toward hearing about Jesus or being invited to Church.

We discussed a story about Penn Jillette, 1/2 of the famous comedy/magician team “Penn & Teller”, in which he describes a time when somebody came up to him after a show and gave him a small ‘Pocket Gospel’ book as a gift. He had even written a personal message on the inside cover. It is known that Penn is a devout atheist and he believed that the gentleman knew that as well.

We all guessed that Penn would have definitely reacted negatively, been insulted, and maybe even refused the gift from the man.

We found out that Penn not only accepted the gift he also said what great respect he had for the man, or any Christian, who would want to share their belief with him. He basically said that even though he does not believe in God, if you do believe that there is a Heaven and everlasting life and the only way to obtain it is to accept and follow Jesus, how can you not want to share that with everyone? He said what kind of friend would you be if you believe that you have the answer to a more abundant life and to an everlasting life in Heaven but you don’t want to share that answer with others?

We also looked at the story of Jesus restoring a demon-possessed man in **Mark 5:1-20**. We saw that while the man wanted to go with Jesus after being cured, Jesus instead told him to go back to his people and tell them what the Lord had done for him out of his Mercy. We talked about how the only qualifications that the man had to share the “Good News” of God’s Grace & Mercy was simply his story about how Jesus changed his life. We said that many people are afraid to share the “Good News” because they don’t feel they are qualified or know enough but we said all you need to do is share what Jesus has done for you. As a matter of fact, people are generally more open to a personal story rather than being preached to or being read scriptures from the Bible.

We discussed some different ways we could look for opportunities in our daily lives to share our story and the “Good News” of the Gospel. We also received worksheets to help us develop our stories as well as a couple of different books we could also use to help us share the Gospel with others.