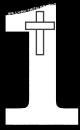


EVERY THE GOSPEL CHANGES THING



Youth Ministry

March 30, 2014

Lesson:

This week, we started a new series leading up to Easter called “The Gospel Changes Everything”.

We began by talking about what the Gospel is. The Greek word euangelion, translated Gospel, means “Good News”. We learned that the Gospel is the Good News of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection to save us from our sins.

In this series, we are going to look at the Gospel and some details of Jesus and his mission from the viewpoint of what it was like to be one of the disciples during the time leading up to the resurrection and beyond.

We read **Matthew 4:18-22** and talked about Jesus calling Peter, Andrew, James & John to follow him. We discussed what it might have been like to be a fisherman and have Jesus call us to follow him. We said that in Jewish culture, only the best of the best students of the Torah were asked to follow and study with a Rabbi. These guys were certainly not worthy to follow Jesus according to their Jewish culture and they probably even felt that they were not worthy of such an honor either.

We said that we would probably not have felt qualified if we were them and talked about how sometimes people don’t even feel that they are qualified now. We said that the reason Jesus may have chosen such men to follow him is because they were humble (teachable) and not prideful on their knowledge of the religious rules or laws.

We then asked what were the qualifications to follow Jesus and said that from our discussion about Jesus calling Peter, Andrew, James & John it would seem that there are no special qualifications at all. Jesus’ invitation did not depend on how the world saw these guys or even how they saw themselves and Jesus offers each of us the same thing today.

However, there actually is one requirement, so we studied **Matthew 9:9-13** to see if we could find the one requirement. The first thing we read about was Jesus telling Matthew to follow him. We read that Matthew was a tax collector and then discussed why Matthew’s job is significant. We learned that in Jesus’ time, tax collectors were not just disliked but they were actually despised by the Jews as traitors against their people and even against God. Matthew was the lowest of the low because he even collected more taxes than was required to keep the rest for himself. Some versions of the Bible even called him “scum”.

We said that Jesus asking him was significant because there would be nobody that could have believed that God could ever use a person so sinful and Jesus asking him shows that EVERYONE can follow him no matter who they were or what they did.

So, we learned about five people who became followers of Jesus and the first thing they did was not to memorize the Bible, or go to Church or even get their life together. They simply followed him. Jesus even went to Matthew’s house for dinner and ate with his tax collector friends. The Pharisees saw this and asked why Jesus would be around such people, surely he could not be from God. Jesus’ response to the Pharisees in **verses 12 & 13** is crucial to understanding Jesus and the purpose of the Gospel. When Jesus says “...for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”, knowing from Romans 3:10 that “there is no one righteous, not even one”, what he is really saying is that he came for everyone because we are all sinners. These verses also give us a hint as to what the one requirement is to follow Jesus. To follow Jesus you must only accept that you are a sinner in need of a Savior.

We said that today, we have an advantage that the Disciples did not have. The Disciples could not possibly have known exactly what Jesus had to offer them when they chose to follow him. We have the Gospel to know that what Jesus offers us is Life. Based on our original definition of the Gospel we agreed that it is indeed very “Good News”.

Finally, we said that Jesus and the Gospel is a Life-Giving relationship that transforms us from whom we used to be and gives us a new life in Christ. As the Apostle Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:17**, “if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”. This is the life-changing power of the Gospel and our new life begins when we choose to follow Jesus.

Next week, we continue our journey following Jesus with the Disciples when we learn what it is to be a Disciple of Jesus.