

1/14/19

Sermon Passage: Mark 8

Main idea: We want members to be able to identify false ways and false idols in their lives and turn to Jesus as Lord. We want them to realize there is no half in, half out whenever it comes to following Jesus. Whenever we make the proclamation that Jesus is the Christ, we either deny ourselves or we deny Christ; we either deny idols or we deny Christ. We want to challenge members to stop thinking that they are going to think their way into a new type of living, so they can live their way into a new type of thinking.

Group time / Structure

- Catch up / get to know you (limit to 10 minutes)
- Open in prayer, designate someone to end the prayer – inform your group that after that person prays, you are going to sit in silence and wait for God for a minute or so.
- Break the silence with scripture
 - Leader 1 – 1 Kings 18:20-40
 - Leader 2 – Acts 17:22-32
 - Leader 1 – John 14:6
- Questions for the group:
 1. **What is the significance of saying that Jesus is the way?** Observations to consider: if Jesus is *the way*, then Jesus is the only option – though there may be multiple ways that you see, there is in truth only one way. Implies that the way of living is knowing a person. The path forward is knowing a person better, and that person is Jesus.
 2. If Jesus is the only way, this means that any other way is an idol, a false god – **what are the other “ways” we are following?** What other “truths” are people believing?
 - Performance/success
 - Fame
 - Pursuit of knowledge
 - Comfort
- Breakouts: Split into smaller groups of 2-3, and talk about what are ways you’ve been following, truths you’ve been chasing, that you need to repent of? What step of obedience can you take this week?
- Come back together – if people want to share with the larger group in order to receive prayer, they can – as people offer up things, get a person to pray for them.

What we’re praying for your group this week:

That the members of our groups would leave former ways and idols behind and follow the one true Way of Jesus Christ, and would begin actively seeking to live the disciplined life.

1/21/19

Sermon Passage: Acts 2:42-47

Main Idea: This sermon seeks to demonstrate to students that the disciple life isn't supposed to be carried out in isolation, nor can it be. We are united in Christ, as his people, called to follow him *together*. Our brothers and sisters are resources for the disciple life. God uses his children to stir up good works in one another. For as long as disciples view each other as competition, then they will struggle to grow together.

Ideas for Group Time:

- Supplemental Passages:
 - Hebrews 10:24-25
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:14
- Possible Questions:
 - **What has been your experience of community within the church?** Many people have been hurt by their experiences, and it has colored the way they approach community today. Try not to let people merely vent about their past here, but speak words of grace and take note of the ways your group might require healing.
 - **How can we, as a community of Jesus followers, better support one another as we continue to chase after Jesus?** This is a great time to talk about d-groups! To be a part of community is to be *fully known*. By allowing ourselves to be vulnerable within our communities, we are refusing to be *unknown*, which is what the enemy would love for each of us.
- Practices:
 - Spend more time here – split into smaller groups or stay as a whole, but ask the group to share what *in their spiritual walk* they would like prayer for. This would not be the time to pray for relatives or busy weeks (please still pray for those!) but rather a time to be a little more vulnerable with one another.

Ideas for Leaders:

- Write down the prayer needs of the people in your group and check in with each person throughout the week. (i.e., if someone expresses a desire to spend more time in the Word, ask them this week what they plan on reading).
- If your group is easily divisible into various friend groups, try instituting a “lunch buddy” system this week, and challenge everyone in the group to find someone they do not know as well and grab lunch (or coffee, or breakfast, or ice cream) with them sometime before the next meeting.

1/29/19 – HEAR AND OBEY

Sermon Passage: James 1:22-25

Main Idea: This sermon teaches that one of the primary marks of being a disciple is hearing the Word and being obedient to the Word. Therefore, disciples are people that feast upon Scripture and hunger to hear from the Spirit. Every week we want to be able to sit down and talk about what God is calling us to, and how we can be obedient.

Ideas for Group Time:

- Supplemental Passages:
 - 1 Samuel 15:10-23
 - Galatians 5:13-26
 - Romans 6:1-14
- Possible Questions:
 - The two primary ways God will prompt us to obedience is through Scripture and through the Holy Spirit. Too often, though, we fill our heads with knowledge but never get around to practicing what we know to be good and true. **What keeps you from obeying God’s commands in the Bible or the promptings of the Holy Spirit?**
 - As a community, we are called to not only study God’s word together, but also to be formed by it. **What steps can we take as a community to be shaped by God’s word?** We can tend to view obedience as a “personal step” in our spiritual lives, but when we share what God is calling us to with our communities, we can encourage one another and hold each other accountable to take these steps.
- Practices:
 - Split into smaller groups, and discuss: **When was the last time you felt that God was calling you to take a certain step of obedience? How did that go?** This is a time for honesty, which is why we’re in smaller groups – celebrate with one another if someone shares of their obedience, and speak grace over one another if someone shares an instance of failure and discouragement.
 - Invite your group to consider what steps of obedience God may be calling them to right now, and stay silent for a few moments to reflect.

Ideas for Leaders:

- Invite someone in your group to coffee or lunch, and ask specifically about what God has been calling them to do in obedience. Pray with them and follow up the next time you see them.
- For your personal devotion: if you have been struggling to desire God’s presence in your life recently, try a one-meal fast this week. As much as we hunger for food, we should hunger for God’s words even more. Share about your experience with your d-group.

2/5/19 – REPENT AND BELIEVE

Sermon Passage: John 8:31-47, Genesis 3, James 4:7

Main Idea: Often whenever people repent, they simply acknowledge they did wrong and commit to doing better. In this sermon, we want to show students that they need to pull out the root of the lie that caused them to stumble. The devil loves to work with lies. Once you've repented of the lie that you believe in, then you need to state what truth of Jesus you believe instead.

Ideas for Group Time:

- Supplemental Passages:
 - Romans 3:9-20
 - Hebrews 3:7-13
 - Richard Foster's chapter on Confession in *Celebration of Discipline*:
 - "Confession is a difficult discipline for us because we all too often view the believing community as a fellowship of saints before we see it as a fellowship of sinners. We feel that everyone else has advanced so far into holiness that we are isolated and alone in our sin. We cannot bear to reveal our failures and shortcomings to others. We imagine that we are the only ones who have not stepped onto the high road to heaven. Therefore, we hide ourselves from one another and live in veiled lies and hypocrisy. But if we know that the people of God are first a fellowship of sinners, we are freed to hear the unconditional call of God's love and to confess our needs openly before our brothers and sisters. **We know we are not alone in our sin.** The fear and pride that cling to us like barnacles cling to others also. We are sinners together. In acts of mutual confession we release the power that heals. Our humanity is no longer denied, but transformed."
- Practices:
 - Practicing repentance in your group will be more formative than talking about what it *could* mean for our lives, so don't be afraid to spend most of your time in prayer and smaller groups tonight. Confession and repentance is often neglected in the church today, because of our tendency to see our faith as individualistic. We convince ourselves that our secret sins can stay secret, and that confession is a private matter between an individual and God. In reality, confessing to a trusted friend is incredibly healing. **Take several minutes to sit in silence and reflect on what in your life you need to repent of, and what the deeper root of that sin might be.** Give the opportunity for people to share (you can split into smaller groups, if this is necessary) and as people share, offer up prayers of healing for them.

Ideas for Leaders:

- Before you go to CG, pray that God would send a spirit of repentance to your group tonight. Pray that he would soften hearts and that people would be open to be vulnerable with one another, even though it may be intimidating. Pray that the freedom that Christ brings would break through in your group in a new and beautiful way tonight, and believe that it can happen!
- For your personal walk: If there is something in your life that you have not repented of, please go to a trusted friend, a fellow leader, or to one of the staff members, and ask for a time of repentance and confession. Allow them to speak grace over you and pray for your healing.

2/12/19 – PRAY AND WITNESS

Sermon Passage: Luke 5:1-11

Main Idea: We are called to be people who are committed to making disciples to the ends of the earth, to be “fishers of men.” Therefore, we will discuss how the way our heart feels toward the lost is supposed to be a mirror image of the Father’s. We long for, pray for, and bear witness to those who don’t know Jesus. So often, our fears overpower our desire for people to know Jesus and follow him. We’ll be talking about how to go from giving *excuses* to giving *witness*, and from letting fear control us to allowing God to work through us.

Ideas for Group Time:

- Supplemental Passages:
 - Matthew 28:16-20
 - Acts 1:8
 - 2 Timothy 1:5-11
- Possible Questions:
 - Sharing the gospel with others often looks like an invitation for them to join us on the journey we’re on. The disciples weren’t experts on Jesus or the Bible when they started to follow Jesus. **What does this passage (Luke 5) teach us about inviting people to follow Jesus alongside us?** We don’t need to have all the answers or be perfect followers, we just need to be willing to walk toward Jesus together.
 - When it comes to sharing the gospel, when we conquer one fear or excuse, another one often takes its place. **What are the reasons you don’t talk to people about Jesus?** How can a right understanding of the gospel combat those reasons and give us boldness to share the good news with others?
 - When God calls someone in a community to a specific person, the community is called to join them in that pursuit. **What are ways we can help each other witness to the people in our lives who do not know Christ?** Be specific.
- Practices:
 - Everyone knows people who are not following Jesus. Set time aside for your group to speak aloud the names of the people they want to pray for and witness to. Pray over these names as a group. Pray that God would soften their hearts to hear the gospel, and they would come to know Jesus. Pray against a spirit of fear and that God would give your community eyes to see everyone around them as either brothers or sisters in Christ, or people who *could someday soon* be brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ideas for Leaders:

- Write down the names that people say during the prayer practice. With everyone’s permission, send the list out in your GroupMe, and encourage your group to pray for these people weekly. When you meet with someone from your group this week, ask about their friendship with the person whose name they shared. Ask about how they know them, what (if any) spiritual conversations they have had with that person, and pray for them together.