Week 6 ~ Everyone Needs Jesus

Dear Church Family,

I am so stoked! We have reached the conclusion of the 6 Week Pursuit! I am excited to put a lovely capstone on these discussions of God’s purpose for your life. Our theme, our mantra, is taking action. We are called to step into a greater reality right where we stand. God has more for His people! We each have value, we each have a call, and greater things are just ahead!

Our conclusive talk revolves about the wonderful story of the disciple Peter and the salvation of Cornelius and his family. These Scriptures are amazing to me! Why? Because this is the modern church’s true origin! It is this day that everyone realizes an amazing truth: Jesus is for everyone!

Your Heritage

When the church began, the first Christians believed God’s work was reserved for the Jews; God’s chosen people. However, these preconceptions began to shatter as more and more people groups found salvation and were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Even Peter had his share of misconceptions. Yet, by the work of Jesus and the leading of the Holy Spirit, Peter found himself witnessing the outpouring of God’s blessing on Gentiles. Turns out, the Good News belonged to more than just Jews. In fact, Jesus’ salvation and His Holy Spirit were for all people.

Upon the day Cornelius and his family were filled with God’s presence, it became clear that Jesus’ church would be different from the nation of Israel. The church is made up of all kinds of people from all manner of backgrounds and heritages. This was and is God’s plan.

The Same is True Today

We have been spoiled. All we have ever known is the accessibility of Jesus. But there was a different time; an era where not just anyone could approach God. We should remember the past, because it heightens the excitement of the future! The old border is gone! Thanks to the power of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and Holy Spirit, we all can enter God’s presence; no exceptions!

*“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”* -Galatians 3:27-28 NLT

Our identity becomes Jesus. We are no longer identified by our history, ancestry, social status, and so on. We are Jesus people. Our identity is immersed in all that Jesus is and all that Jesus has done. Everything else becomes secondary.

But if this is the case, then we must face a difficult question. Why do we still count people out?

A Limited Perspective

Through Jesus, anyone can be saved. There are no exceptions. So then why do we exclude individuals or people groups? Think about it. Some of us, if we are to be honest, are disgusted at the idea of certain people being forgiven by Jesus. We are like Jonah in the Old Testament and believe God should do things our way. We want to see lightning fall on our enemies!

We do not understand God’s grace. Jonah did not understand God’s grace. Grace, oh how amazing it is. None of us deserve it, yet God graciously offers forgiveness to all. You, my friends, do not deserve this grace at all. None of us do. Which is why excluding people is wrong.

Jesus’ perspective is far grander than ours and His mercy extends to lengths we cannot possibly imagine. He is Lord of all. Everything is through Him, for Him, and Jesus holds everything together. So where do we get off thinking we have the right to determine who receives forgiveness and who doesn’t? As we have said before, it’s time for a change of perspective

God’s Big Picture

Maybe you don’t outright hate or wish wrath on someone. But have you ever avoided someone? Are you still avoiding certain people? How about specific groups of people? This is the same problem Peter had. Jesus corrects Peter stating: “What God has made clean, do not call common.” In other words, through Jesus, there is not one person who cannot be made whole.

Jesus is for everyone and loves everyone. Even the political party you disagree with. Even that wretched bully that antagonizes your kids. Even murderous radicals like Paul. God sees a far grander picture than us church.

Church family, do not allow your hearts to grow cold and bitter as Jonah did. You must rejoice in the amazing grace of Jesus again and again! You must learn His mercy! We must grab ahold of God’s purpose for our lives: Jesus’ call to go and make disciples of every nation. God loves you, He loves people, and Jesus has saved you. It is time to step into God’s purpose and take action! It is time to love God, love people, and make Jesus known!

We love you brothers and sisters! Catch the dream! Greater things are just ahead! And you have a part to play! You have a purpose! I believe that if Jesus could revolutionize the world once, He is more than capable of doing it again!

With Love,

Pastor Vern Pastor Ty

Group Discussion

*Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions with your group.*

1. What person or people do you struggle counting in? Who frustrates you, makes you uncomfortable, and/or disgusts you? If you are unable to share this with your group, then write your answer down.
2. Why does this person or people group upset you?
3. Do you believe God forgives such people? Why or why not?
4. Grace is accessible to all. It requires no action on our part other than coming to Jesus and accepting His sacrifice and identity as God’s Son and Messiah. Do you believe this?
5. How can you overcome your bias, hatred, or avoidance? Do you want to? Jesus reaches out to all people. We must seek to do the same.

Closing Prayer

*Close your time together in prayer. Here are a few ideas of what you could pray about based on the topic of today’s discussion:*

* Pray for strength to overcome hatred, bias, and your personal walls.
* Pray for the power to forgive those who have wronged you.
* Ask forgiveness for your prejudices and for the people you have counted out.
* Pray for God to rescue and save the people you struggle with.
* Ask for God’s blessing to pour out on their lives by His rich mercy and grace.

Weekly Challenge

This is not an easy task church. Loving the unlovable or those who have wronged us is nothing short of impossible. However, all things are possible through Christ who empowers and strengthens us. Church, if you believe in Jesus’ resurrection and power, you have His Spirit. This means you can do the impossible. Church, this week, take an hour and pray solely for strength to overcome hatred, avoidance, bias, and for that person or people group you struggle with. Pray earnestly for their salvation and for God’s grace! He has a purpose for their lives too! Church, as we overcome this difficult battle, we will be changed. God’s purpose will fill your lives and you will be amazed at the transformation He brings! Greater things lay ahead church! Amen!