

The Ingredients: Witness - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

There is something about good food, when we love what we eat we really can't keep that news to ourselves. If you have a great cookie, you tell someone about it. This past week we went to a restaurant in Washington with Michael and Traci Byrd. It was fabulous, every person's meal was amazing, and we left satisfied customers. I saw Michael this week and he was still talking about this restaurant, going as far as saying he had told several people that they needed to take a road trip from the city to go eat there again. When we taste and see that something is good we just can't keep that to ourselves. So when the Psalmist invites us to "Taste and see that the LORD is good," it is his invitation to experience the glory, grace, kindness of Jesus, because He knows that someone who experiences the Gospel will find it deeply satisfying and beautiful. And satisfied customers cannot keep good news to themselves.

It is very interesting that in Jesus' call to His first disciples (Mark 1:16-20) He makes their agenda clear. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." They knew what He meant, these guys were fishermen, but after being disciples by Jesus they would begin casting nets and throwing out lines to catch men and women with the Gospel, the good news of Jesus. Jesus could have said, "Follow me, and I will make you really smart, a teacher of religious studies." Or, "Follow Me, and I will make you super holy people with impeccable morals." Or, "Follow Me, and I will make you super spiritual people who are great husbands and fathers." Don't mishear me, these things are actually aspects of discipleship.. Yet, in the call of Jesus He connects following with fishing, the task of proclaiming and advancing the Gospel to others. In other words, however we define discipleship, if the agenda does not lead to fishing, then we probably misunderstand what it means to follow Jesus.

In our text this week Paul uses another metaphor that communicates the same idea. He begins by reminding the Corinthians that if they are in Christ they are a new creation, the old way of life gone and a new glorious life has invaded their hearts. The Gospel has changed them and is remaking them into the image of Jesus. Furthermore, Paul reminds them, that the Gospel message he proclaimed is the announcement of reconciliation to God. This is a huge implication of the Gospel. Our relationship with God was irrevocably broken because of sin, but the message of the cross is the pronouncement that Christ was reconciling the world to Himself, because Jesus' death means that God will no longer count the believer's sin against him or her. Oh, God is so good, taste and see.

But it does not end here, those who have been reconciled have been given the ministry of reconciliation, and therefore they are ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador is a human embassy sent by a king or nation as a formal representative of the sending kingdom. For example, the U. S. Ambassador to say France may live in France, eat French food, and speak French. Yet, she goes as a representative of our country, fully American, and her primary purpose is to give that country and her government official messages on behalf of her President and nation. When Christ saves us He gives us His message and makes us ambassadors, the church being an embassy of the Kingdom of Christ. So He gives us His message, the Gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation, and we are sent to tell. Like Paul we are to make God's appeal pleading with people to repent and be reconciled to God.

The task of evangelism can be intimidating, especially in our culture. The idea of

telling people how they can know God and have sin forgiven feels overwhelming when the culture tells us that pointing out sin and calling people to repentance and faith is actually intolerant. Yet, this is the essence of discipleship because lostness remains the biggest problem in the world. Without Jesus people are not reconciled to God, their sins are not forgiven, and they are destined to the judgment of God in eternity. Jesus agenda for disciples is that we go as ambassadors, in other words, we learn to fish. As a church one of our key jobs is to encourage all of us to be bold while giving tools and resources for sharing the Gospel and giving answers when people have questions about Jesus. Because the truth is, if we aren't fishing we aren't really following.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Psalm 119	Psalm 120	Zephania h 1	Zephania h 2	Zephania h 3	Haggai 1	Haggai 2

Reading from this past week: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Matthew 28:18-20

Family Worship

Song - *All Creatures of our God and King*

https://youtu.be/hhycl4h64_s?si=tns1ZYqvWIBsU45J

Gospel Project

Unit: The Church Grows

Story: Peter was rescued from prison.

Big Picture Question: What is the church?

Answer: The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

Scripture: Acts 12

New City Catechism

Question 18: Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?

Answer: No, God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them both in this life, and in the life to come.

Verse: Ephesians 5:5-6

Scripture

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

- What are the ways Paul points us to the truth and goodness of the Gospel in this passage? Why does everyone need to hear this good news?
- What exactly is the ministry and message of reconciliation?
- What is an ambassador? What are the implications of being ambassadors for Christ?
- How can Genesis do a better job of equipping us to share the Gospel and invite people to church? What steps can we take to be more intentionally evangelistic with our lives?

Prayer

*Pray that we would grow to be bold in sharing the Gospel and telling our stories.

*Pray for the Encompass Team and our efforts to get involved in foster care and adoption.