

Growth Group Questions

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, January 28, 2024

Introduction

Once again in our Gospel lesson we see Jesus call disciples to follow him and share his gospel with others. They were called “fishers of men.” We are called his “ambassadors” in our readings today. Share an experience (happy or sad) you had in sharing Jesus with another soul.

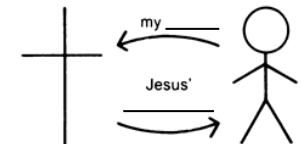
Into the Word – Jonah 3:1-5,10

1. One of the reasons I focus these studies on all the readings instead of just the sermon is that there is SO MUCH MORE I wish I had time to talk about in services. Most of the action we remember about Jonah’s life happens before our reading from chapter three. See what you can remember as a group.
2. Thinking of Jonah’s past, why is verse one a message of love to Jonah? How might his second chance inspire us as we think of our role as witnesses and ambassadors for Christ?
3. Jonah surely said more in his preaching than just the short message we have here. What Old Testament texts or stories might you have shared if you were calling the Ninevites to repentance?
4. Imagine the God of all creation “relenting,” or turning aside from his intended just wrath. How are the Ninevites a powerful example for us to use when preaching to the lost?

Into the Word – 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

5. Why did some people consider Paul and his fellow apostles to be “out of their minds”?
6. What moved Paul away from concern about the world’s point of view?

7. Come up with some examples of how Christians regard no one from a worldly point of view. Marvel at how better our world and nation would be if people more consistently followed this higher purpose.
8. Explain what Paul means in verse 19 when he says God is not counting people’s sins against them. What does Christ have to do with that statement?
9. Explain the exchange we see in verse 21. What did God take from us and put on Jesus, and what did he take from Jesus and give to us as credit in exchange? (This picture is my favorite way to explain Christ to unbelievers.)



Into the Word – Mark 1:14-30

10. It seems that Jesus didn’t call his disciples into “full-time” following right away, but might have called them for different short stints at a time. (See how different Luke 5 is from Mark 1 and Matthew 4.) Even if these men were familiar with Jesus though, why would their sudden response here be so surprising?
11. What do we learn about our own higher purpose in life from the way these brothers responded to Jesus?
12. Consider how you might restore your focus to your higher purpose in life this week. What ONE change might you make to reflect your renewed understanding?

Closing Prayer: Holy Spirit, work in my heart once again through your gospel and renew my recognition of your grace and a greater awareness of my higher purpose in life. Bless me with confidence in Christ and lead me to commit myself to your glory and praise. In Jesus, Amen.