

FEBRUARY 13, 2022
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
THE MIGHTY MESSAGE
1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5
WINTER QUARTER WEEK 5 OF 13

Getting to Know Each Other Better

- 1. If you watched the Superbowl, what was your favorite commercial? Why? If you did not watch, what did you do instead? Why?**

Well...I won't know the answer until Sunday afternoon!

Renewed by Grace/Equipped as Disciples

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- 2. What do you think about this idea that you are a preacher? And how does that reality change the way you engage with this text?**

It makes sense that we are all “preachers”, right, otherwise this passage of Scripture has little application for us. I mean, how do non-preachers apply a passage about preaching? And, why would Paul take up precious space writing about what he was doing if he didn't expect the Corinthians to learn from and follow him? (Remember the principle suggested in 1 Corinthians 11:1 - “Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ.”) Admittedly, we don't have a pulpit like Ryan, but we have people we've been sent to that we might tell the message of Christ (that will come up more in the next question). So we are preachers, too, but in different but equally important ways.

Here is a lengthy quote from Ryan's teaching notes -

There is much discussion about whether or not this is what happens on a Sunday AM or in the context of our everyday lives. It's a valid and important question. Is Paul talking only about me, or is he talking about us? Interestingly, none of the church fathers referred to ministry of the word to the local congregation as kerysso. And yet, congregations need a herald just as much as the next person. We need to be jarred out of one world and launched into another. The BIG implication is that not only am I preaching, but that YOU preach too. You preach on Mondays at the office. You preach on the sidewalk when you see a neighbor walking a dog. You preach when you hang out with other moms at the park. You are a preacher!

Indeed, both of the words Paul used would not be limited only to men who climb into a pulpit on a Sunday morning. The word *proclaim* in verse 1 has a range of meanings - “I declare openly, proclaim, preach, laud, celebrate.” The word *message* in verse 4 also has a range of meanings - “proclamation, the preaching (heralding) of the Gospel – especially its fundamentals (like Jesus' life, death and resurrection, etc.)” Anyone can do these things, and they can happen anywhere and at any time. So, we are all preachers! Some just happen to get paid for it.

So, what does your group think about the fact that they are all preachers? And how does that change the way they look at what Paul is writing to the Corinthians?

- 3. Since we are preachers, what are some practical implications of the fact that the mighty message is carried through relational pursuit? (Consider - Who are you pursuing, and how are you pursuing them?)**

First, there is the “Who are you pursuing?” question. Who are the people you’d love to see come to Christ? Who are the people you’re carving out time to be with? Who are the people you are regularly bringing before God and asking Him to save them? I have my people. If you’d like to know about that, email me or call me.

Second, there is the, “How are you pursuing them?” question. When we set aside time to be with people who are far from God, what do we do to be around those folks? EFCC has traditionally adopted the Prayer-Care-Share strategy, and that is what I am using with the people I’m seeking to reach. There is a whole lot of Prayer and Care before there is a chance to Share, at least that has been my experience.

Here are some additional discussion questions. Optional, but perhaps helpful.

1. It has been said that the hardest people to reach are those closest to you. Would you agree or disagree with that statement? Why? If it is true, what are key strategies and tactics for reaching those closest to you?
 2. The church in America generally feels like this - “Hey if anyone wants to know God, they can come join us any time they want. We are here in this building every Sunday.” And so we don’t tend to go to them. Paul went to them. What do you think Paul would say to those believers who think that “they” should come to us? And are they coming to us?
 3. How do you relationally pursue someone without making them feel like a project?
 4. How do you relationally pursue someone and yet not put pressure on yourself to convert them? (Conversion is 100% God’s work. We don’t need to put pressure on ourselves to make something happen. God is asking us to preach, to share, to declare openly. The born again part is entirely up to Him. Yet we feel pressure to “make something happen.” Why is that? And how do you live well in that tension?)
- 4. How does Paul’s clear preaching focus on who Jesus was and what Jesus did help you as you think about sharing your faith with others?**

Here are some thoughts from Ryan’s Teaching Notes -

- Eloquence is not the enemy – eloquence that eclipses the event of crucifixion and resurrection as the main point is the enemy. That’s what Paul was combating in Corinth.
- If I were to summarize Paul’s strategy, it might simply be, “keep the main thing the main thing” and the main thing is Jesus. Instead of trying to be about everything, start with one thing. Jesus of Nazareth lived and died on a Roman cross and was buried. Then, three days later he walked out of the grave (1 Cor 15:3). To the early church, that was the gospel!
- Think of how many things Christians are known for debating and arguing about. When people think of Christianity, they often think of a voting block... or some social issue... or something or someone we’re against. The early followers of Jesus started with the cross and continually came back to that as their central declaration. They believed that if people grasped the cross, it would change everything for them. What if that was our clear focus? What if the church once again became known for being about Jesus?

Some additional discussion questions, if helpful.

1. Does it seem too simple to keep it simple? Why?
 2. What do you think about the fact that Paul kind of bombed out in Athens, and that it was in Athens where he maybe tried to get too cute? How sophisticated do we need to try and be with a simple message? And why do you think we try to complicate it? Is it for those with whom we are sharing, or is that for us?
- 5. Why is honest humility so important when it comes to preaching the message of Christ? How might you see God using your story to highlight His grace in Christ?**

Some thoughts from Ryan's Teaching Notes -

- Do you have anything in your story that makes you shrink back? Anything embarrassing? Any regrets you wish you could erase and forget? Friends, those things have been redeemed. They are scars that are a part of your story, but those scars become illustrations of God's grace; the cracks through which his grace shines out. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
- Here's how I'd summarize Paul's statement... Our weakness is weaponized! And it's not used against us, it's used for us. This is the subversive beauty of the gospel on display. Jesus uses the very things we wish we could forget as power for his message of grace and ammunition for his glory. Come on!
- IN each case we're taught that the nature of the messenger must match the nature of the message. You can't have a message about grace carried by a messenger who doesn't think they need any. You can't have a message about death to self, carried by a person who's self-obsessed. You can't have a message of mercy carried by someone who's perpetually angry. What Paul's claiming is that the messenger must live aligned with the message for it to have power.

Sent in Love

5. **What is one thing you can do to apply this week's message?**