

May 6, 2020

Dear Sunday School Class,

Great news in Sunday's class! The title of the lesson was "You Are Chosen" and the Scripture was from Ephesians 1:4 "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before Him." Having studied the last two lessons the first of which helped us see where we are from, and the second one reminded us that the world is broken because of sin, and so are we. None of us can escape our tendency to want our own way all the time, and thus we lead a life tainted with sin. But the great news in this last lesson is that in spite of knowing how sinful we will always be, God chose us to be His children before He even made us. Why would He do that? Great question. It is all about love.

The first section was titled "The Gospel Changes Your Identity and Gives You A Purpose." We talked about what changes we might see in our lives because of our relationship with Jesus. We need to not only realize that we are new creatures, but we need to count on the Holy Spirit to change our focus day in and day out.

Section two was titled "The Gospel Changes Your Community" and that was an interesting concept for most of us. We are all part of different communities i.e. our family, our occupation, and of course the Body of Christ. The authors said it best, "When Christ died He didn't just give us salvation, though that was more than enough. He gave us the church. The gospel changes who we are, and who we are connected with. The gospel gives us a community of faith that supports us in Christ, encourages our growth in Christlikeness, and holds us accountable to Christ's call in our lives. People who are united by the gospel need one another." We discussed how the Christian community helps us stay close to the Lord, and what happens when we isolate ourselves. It is a painful truth, but it is true, that it is not always easy to stay in close fellowship with our Christian family, and once we pull away it becomes easier and easier to stay away. Part of our walk with the Lord needs to be staying close to our Christian family, and participating in worship and prayer with one another. Encouragement for our lives needs to be based on God's Word, and love for Him and His children, so we really do need one another.

Section three was "The Gospel Changes Your Outlook." How interesting! It is God's responsibility to indwell us, and make His power available to us, but it is our responsibility to receive it, and act on it. The book took us to the idea that we all give gifts to those we love, and Christmas is one time when we can be very extravagant in our gift giving. But the caveat is that no earthly gift lasts, and its impact diminishes over time. However, the gift Jesus offers us in His death for our sins will never diminish or fade. It is just as strong today as it was the day He died for us. It is a gift we gladly receive and use throughout eternity. How comforting to know God never takes back His gift, and though we may forsake Him, He never forsakes us. His kind of love is completely different than any love we know in the world, and that should change our outlook. We are safe in Him no matter what the world throws at us.

The book assigned us the task of praying daily this week, specifically asking God to change our perspective, and make right the sinful areas in our lives where we neglect Him. Changing our perspective and how we act can be difficult, but not impossible. With God all things are possible. Take courage and watch Him work in your life!

We will have two more Sunday School classes, and then close until fall. Hopefully, during the summer the restrictions will be lifted and we can gather together for worship again. How wonderful that will be!

Blessings,

Judy and Stephen