

- Bill is chatting to George after church, and shares with him how encouraged he was by a particular verse in the Bible that day.
- Allison is worried about her friend Debbie who struggles with anxiety has been missing church a lot. Allison writes her a one-page letter, offering encouragement, quoting a few Bible verses, and offering to get together to pray.
- Irene is quite elderly and finds it hard to get out, but she phones her friend Jean every second day, talks to her about the Bible passage she read that morning and prays with her over the phone. (pgs.54-55)

❖ What are some ways that we can speak the truth in love?

Consider the example of the apostle Paul:

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³ We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷ by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹ as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

What in the World is God Doing? Getting on Board with God’s Plan for His Church

Sunday School Class

February 7, 2010



Class Outline

Class #1:

Introduction: The Cry of the Prophets

(Psalm 80; Hosea 10:1-2; 14:4-7)

Class #2:

All the Promises of God find their Yes in Jesus

(2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Peter 1:10-12)

Class #3:

What God is Doing Now?

(John 15:1-11)

Class #4:

Three Implications

(Luke 9:60; 2 Corinthians 6:1-10)

THREE IMPLICATIONS

Review:

The Vine of Israel (Hosea 10:1-2; 14:4-7)

1. Suffering Judgment for Sin
2. Restoration to Glory

All the Promises of God find their Yes in Jesus (1 Peter 1:10-12)

What God is Doing Now? (John 15:1-11)

This is what God is now doing in the world: Spirit-backed gospel preaching leading to the salvation of souls. It's his program, his agenda, his priority, his focus, his project, or whatever business-related metaphor you'd like to use. And by it, he is gathering a new Christ-centered people as his very own; a quiet, steadily growing profusion of leaves on the great vine of his kingdom. (p. 35)

Implication #1

...if this is really what God is doing in our world than it is time to say goodbye to our small and self-oriented ambitions and to abandon ourselves to the cause of Christ and his gospel. (p. 38)

Luke 9:57-62

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹ To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

God has a plan that will determine the destiny of every person and nation in the world, and it is unfolding here and now as the gospel of Christ is preached and the Holy Spirit is poured out. Is there anything more vital to be doing in our world?

Implication #2

The second implication is that the growth God is looking for in our world is growth in *people*. (p. 38)

The New Testament envisages that all Christian disciples will be prayerful speakers of God's word, in a multitude of different ways and contexts. ... The vine grows, both in the number of leaves and in their quality and maturity, through the word and Spirit—through God's truth being heard, and the Spirit making it effective in people's hearts. (pgs. 53-54)

Implication #3

The third momentous implication is that this people-growth happens only through the power of God's Spirit as he applies his word to people's hearts. That's the way people are converted, and that's the way people grow in maturity in Christ. (p. 39)

Some everyday examples:

- Geoff is asked by his workmate Peter what he did on the weekend, and he replies that he heard an excellent sermon in church that helped him understand for the first time what was really wrong with the world. When Peter asked him to elaborate, Geoff explains why sin and God's judgment explained the problems in our world. Geoff continues to pray for Peter that these sorts of opportunities continue and that Peter's heart would be softened to respond to the message.