

Sermon Notes, May 2, 2010

All Things New

Acts 11:1-18

“I Make All Things New.”

(Rev 21:5 RSV) *And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."*

A New Challenge: The Book of Acts

- Greek-speaking Jewish Christians (6:1-7)
- S _____ (8:4-25)
- An Ethiopian (8:26-40)
- A Gentile God- _____ (10:1-48)
- Gentiles of Antioch (11:19-20)

A New Approach: Peter and Cornelius

- Scene One: Cornelius' Vision (10:1-8). _____

- Scene Two: Peter's Vision (10:9-23a). _____

- Scene Three: Peter at Cornelius' House (10:23b-48). _____

- Scene Four: Peter's Explanation (11:1-18). _____

A NEW CHALLENGE, A NEW APPROACH: AMERICA, 2010*

1. Challenge #1: Your friends see church as _____ to life. . .

- a. Most Americans believe the media—not schools or churches—are the second most influential factor on American values.
- b. Among 11 religious leaders evaluated, only Billy Graham made a positive impression on a majority of Americans. Rick Warren is unknown to 83% of the American population.

. . . but your friends would be willing to come to a worship service if you _____ them. (The most common reason people give for visiting a church for the first time is through a relationship).

2. Challenge #2: Your friends are indifferent to what the _____ says about their values and morals. . .

- a. Only _____% of Americans believe people should live by God's principles.
- b. _____% of Americans do not believe deep religious belief is essential for a good and moral life.

. . . but when they come to church, your friends seek spiritual help. (46% of people who consider returning to a church hope “to get closer to God.”)

3. Challenge #3: Your friends don't see “getting saved” as a better _____ than what they've got now. . .

- a. _____% of Americans believe they will go to heaven
- . . . but they do have a very positive view of Jesus. (Jesus has been on the cover of Time Magazine _____ times)

4. Challenge #4: Your friends don't see faith in Jesus as the _____ path to God. . .

- a. _____% of Americans think that Jews, Christians and Muslims all worship the same God
- . . . but they've already accepted a worldview that is spiritual (92% of Americans believe in God).

Ideas for a New Approach:

1. Be a Good _____.
2. Ask Good _____ (Look Beneath the Surface).
3. Develop Your _____.
4. Do Prayer _____ in Strategic Neighborhoods
5. Be Open About Your _____.
6. Show Love Through Acts of _____.
7. Trust that Jesus is With You Always (Matthew 28:18-20).

Sermon-based Small Group Discussion Guide

Week of May 2, 2010

Acts 11:1-18

Icebreaker: Describe a door-to-door salesman experience at your home. Include emotion.

1. What hurdles did Peter have to overcome in order to go to Cornelius, the Gentile's house (vs. 1-3)? Why would anyone be upset?
2. What was the significance of the vision given to Peter (vs. 5-10)? Why Peter?
3. Peter convinced his Jewish-Christian brothers that the gospel makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile (see verse 18 and Acts 15:9). What convinced them?
4. The gospel is for everyone, but after hearing the sermon, why do you think some people you know are not interested in becoming Christians?
5. What difficulties do you think Christians face today when talking about the gospel? Is it really more difficult today than at other times?
6. Pastor Mark said that people today are seeking transcendence, significance and community. What does it mean and why is it helpful to know this?
7. Do you think we really need to evaluate how we are witnessing to people in our world today? Why?
8. What are some signs that God is doing something new to impact people today with the gospel?
9. It was reported last week that Evangelicals discovered the world's most significant find, Noah's Ark on Mt. Ararat (99.9% certainty). What fresh impact, if any, do you think this might have on spreading the gospel message?
10. Page 1 of *St. Paul's In Action* lists five fears that Christians face when it comes to talking about the gospel. With which fear do you most closely identify, and why?
11. Do you agree with the solution offered for your fear (p.1, *In Action*)? Why? Do you have a better solution?
12. What thoughts do you have regarding fresh new approaches to communicating the gospel to folk we come in contact with?
13. Pastor Mark mentioned ways that the German Evangelical Free Church is reaching out to people when planting churches. Which of those ways might work in St. Louis?
14. What is your favorite way to share the good news of the gospel?

Prayer:

St. Louis has a lot of people who have not put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior. Pray for them.

Pray for one another.

Don't forget National Day of Prayer.