

Alignment (Week 10)

Small Group Lesson

Last week we covered Romans chapter 9 and the Apostle Paul's burden for his fellow Israelites who were not saved. When we think of our friends who are away from Christ our hearts also cry, "If they only knew".

Coming into alignment with God's plan for our lives means fulfilling what He wants us to do with this life. Jesus' commission to the church is to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15). There is an expectation that we will not be silent about our faith but that we will proactively seek to be a witness for Christ. If we are to fulfill His desire for us, we are to be vocal about our faith. This week we will look at three vital facts about reaching those we know with the gospel. Get ready to be challenged!

Fact 1: "God has a great plan for every life"

No one is an "accident." God knows you and your purpose before you are conceived (Jer. 1: 5). We call this "election." Your will (decision to obey or not to obey God) determines your destiny. Does man have a free will or does God determine everything about our fate? Understand this truth; God gives each of us a freedom to choose.

This freedom is the very thing that gives value to our worship and service to God. Jeremiah had a choice; he could have chosen not to prophecy. God has a will also. His will is that no one should perish. He wants everyone to choose salvation.

Israel's history is full of illustrations of how God knew in advance what a person's character would be like (like Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Pharaoh, (v. 11-14). God can use everyone.

Alignment Question: Do you feel confident that God can use you? What are some of the arguments that people use to keep from being a witness? In the light of our first fact, are they valid?

Fact 2: "Being religious does not save them" (Rom. 10: 1-3)

Paul's burden was also that the Jewish nation was so religiously fervent and yet misguided. You can be sincere and be sincerely wrong. Misguided zeal has destructive power. Like a powerful race car that is out of control. The Jewish people were trying to work for salvation by obeying the letter of the law, when salvation was right there in front of them if they would just receive it by faith. How many people think that they are on their way to heaven because of what they do? Churches are full of people who do not want to be there but are just fulfilling a religious duty. If they only knew how simple it is to be saved.

Salvation is simple. (v. 6-7) Satan wants us to think that it is a tremendous effort to get right with God. It's not what you do, it's what's been "done." All you have to do is "confess with your mouth" ("Jesus is Lord") and "believe in your heart ("that God raised Him from the dead") and you are saved! (v. 8-13) If they only knew how easy it is to be saved.

Alignment Question: "It's not what you do but it's what's been done". In your own words, what has been done to make a way for us to be forgiven of our sins and be saved? How easy would it be for you to communicate this simple message to someone who needs forgiveness and hope?

Fact Three: "Your message to them is critical" (v. 14-15)

The lost are not saved by ignorance. They are saved by the "foolishness of preaching" (1 Cor. 1: 21). Paul's logic is simple: "If we don't preach, they can't hear, believe, and call on the Lord." You may be thinking to yourself "Wait a minute! I'm not a preacher!" Well, the truth is everyone is a preacher! The question is "what are they preaching?" The drug dealer is preaching freedom from your problems through drugs. The liquor salesman is preaching inner peace through alcohol. So what is your life preaching? Your feet are beautiful if you are "bringing good news." The simple good news is what we bring. We are not responsible for the results. We must realize the vital role we are playing in turning the eternal destiny of people from hell to heaven. The news we publish is good. You have it, we all have it.

Romans 10:17 - "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." When I say His name, He is there. When I say Jesus is the healer, He is there, When I say Jesus is the deliverer, He is there. Your mouth contains the power of Jesus. When we open our mouth and declare who Jesus is...then you have brought Jesus on the scene.

Alignment Question: Challenged yet? What is the most challenging part of this lesson to you personally?

Leader: time to pray for the men in your group in the areas they feel challenged and encourage them to step out in boldness and be a witness. Remember to pray for one to two men from each member for an opportunity to sow some seed this week. Follow up next week at the beginning of the meeting to see how it went.