

November 15/16, 2008

“Loving Like Jesus...”

Pastor Mark Burch

As we move toward Christmas, our eyes are turned toward Jesus. The Christmas story centers on His birth and introduces us to God’s plan to win us back to Himself.

We speak of the “incarnation” of Jesus – the act of His “taking on flesh” so that He might walk among us, love us, and ultimately give His life for us.

“*Incarnational*” has become a very popular word in evangelical writings in the past 5-10 years – and more than being just the current “buzz-word” I believe it relates very well to the series of messages we’ve just completed, as well as putting feet to our mission of “loving people, following Jesus, and serving the world.”

In Christ, God took on flesh, so that He might relate to us. We in turn are called to step into the lives of others – to literally be “Jesus with skin on” to a world that needs to see and know the love of God. In the next 3 weeks we are going to talk about “putting flesh” to the skeleton of our mission!

– *Pastor Mark*

Quest Group Discussion Questions

Again – in this 3-week series we’re turning your discussion time around; instead of responding to the message you heard on the weekend, you are going to discuss in advance, the topic for the coming weekend. As we head toward Advent, we’re seeking to flesh out (incarnate) our mission statement. How can we actually live out the values of Jesus in our world today?!

History (Making it Personal)

1. WPC exists to Love People, Follow Jesus and Serve the World. As you think about the “following Jesus” part of that equation, talk for a few moments about people who have influenced you toward Jesus because of their faithful walk with Christ. What was it about their life??
2. Share an experience you’ve had where you had to place your trust completely in the hands of another person. How did you feel in “releasing” the control of your life to another?
3. Talk for a few moments about the devastating effect that lack of trust has in any relationship. How much is trust “earned” and how much is “given?” How can trust be maintained? How can it be re-built? Who is one person you know you can trust with absolute confidence?

Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)

4. Perhaps the greatest expression of Jesus’ trust in the Father came in the garden of Gethsamene; let’s begin there. Read Matthew 26:36-39. What confidence was Jesus expressing in the plans of God? What do we imply about His relationship to the Father through His willingness?
5. Speculate for a few moments about the conversation in heaven before the incarnation. What do you think the Father & Son talked about as they planned this rescue and faced the reality of the cost? Compare this conversation to the father & son in Genesis 22:2-12. Who trusted?
6. Talk about the implications of “fleshing out” our trust in God through our obedience to Him. Read Hebrews 11:6 and the context of great obedience – faith – sacrifice - trust. Why is it hard to obey the clear teachings of the Word? How much centers in our inability to fully trust?
7. Read Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9 & Luke 5:1-5. Look especially at Luke 5:5 and the “phrase” *because you said so...* Are we willing to obey Christ just because He said so? Now get really practical and personal. List the areas of life that most people struggle to surrender to the control of God...why are these strongholds so difficult to let go of....?
8. If you didn’t list them – talk about money and sex – and the challenge many believers have to “steward” these gifts of God.
9. The original attack on God was an attack on His integrity, or His trust-worthiness. In Genesis 3:1 Satan asks, “did God REALLY say?” In other words – “He couldn’t have really meant that”! How are God’s words being twisted these days to justify our own desires?

Taking It Home (Application)

10. Talk for a few moments about what it would look like to be known as a person or a church that “trusts” deeply. Pray for each other, that we could “flesh out” a 24/7 life of following in step with Christ!