

Life Group Lesson - Week of July 9

"I believe in the Holy Spirit." This is what we declare when we say the Apostle's Creed. The Nicene Creed is more specific and states that the Holy Spirit gives life, was in the beginning with the Father and the Son, and along with the Father and Son is worshiped and glorified. The Holy Spirit enables worship. The apostle Paul says, "no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3b).

As a proclaimer of the Gospel to the Mediterranean world, Paul saw first-hand how some people would believe and some refuse to believe. He saw the Spirit drawing men and women to faith, and giving people ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to accept the gift of forgiveness in Christ. He saw others harden their hearts and refuse the Lord altogether. Regardless, Paul was always ready to share his personal story of faith and the message of Christ to a lost world—from the least to the greatest.

Read Acts 26:12-18

Although fabricated, Paul was vehemently accused of speaking against his own people, the Jews, and against the Temple (see Acts 21:28). When the commander in charge learned that some 40 men were plotting to kill Paul, he arranged for Paul to be sent to Caesarea. As a Roman citizen Paul was due a fair trial. So after waiting two years, Paul is heard by King Agrippa. Paul's own testimony is his defense. Agrippa finds no reason to convict Paul, but tells the governor, Porcius Festus: "He could have been set free if he hadn't appealed to Caesar" (Acts 26:32). So as the Lord had promised (Acts 23:11), Paul was sent to Rome, the center of the Roman Empire, to proclaim his story of faith in Christ.

1. As Paul makes his defense before Agrippa, Paul recalls his encounter with the risen Jesus: "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting..." Read the remaining words in red in Acts 26:16-18. Outline Paul's new assignment as it comes from the mouth of Christ.

What is Christ's assignment for you? Are you ready or are you indifferent? As the plain truth states: "If we want a grace-filled life, we must surrender to a Holy Spirit-filled life." What would your life look like if you fully availed yourself to the assignment the Lord Jesus has for you? What baby steps can you take today to move more in Christ's direction?

We are all *on mission*. The message of Christ is to be preached "in the authority of His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent'" (Luke 24:47). Upon our own confession, we are commissioned to spread the Gospel to those around us—our family, neighborhood, people in the workplace. We can't accomplish anything apart from the Power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift He promised... in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5).

2. Jesus told His disciples that the Father would send another Advocate (Greek *parakletos*, meaning 'called alongside, advocate') who would never leave them. "He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth" (John 14:16-17). In what specific ways do you sense the Holy Spirit's presence in your life?

Read the following passages regarding the Holy Spirit. What do you learn?

John 15:26 Acts 1:8 1 Corinthians 6:19 Ephesians 1:13-14 Hebrews 2:4

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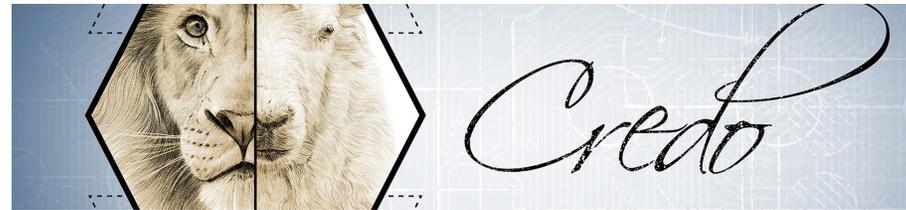
Plain Truth:

If we want a _____ life we must
surrender to a _____ life.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) Transformation

Wesley's Order of Salvation—Ordo Salutis

- 1) _____ Grace
- 2) Convicting and Convincing Grace
- 3) Justifying Grace
- 4) _____ Grace
- 5) Sanctifying Grace
- 6) _____ Grace



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