

Life Group Lesson - Week of July 16

In Acts 26, Paul stands before Agrippa and declares how he was appointed by Christ for a special assignment that centered on proclaiming the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles: “to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.” All along God’s plan was to include Gentiles in salvation’s story. “Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God’s people, who are set apart by faith in me” (see Acts 26:15-18). For all people, faith in Christ is the key that unlocks the door for salvation.

In time, Paul would further elaborate this message to the early church in Rome. “The Good News is about his (God’s) Son... He is Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey Him, bringing glory to His name” (Romans 1:3-4). The Law of Moses was entrusted to the Jews, but for both Jews and Gentiles, sin interrupts perfect obedience to the Law. We want to please God, but fall short (Romans 3:23). So God in His kindness sent His Son on a ‘house call’—to come to this earth and do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Read Romans 3:20-26

God’s kindness is meant to turn us away from sin (see Romans 2:4). We often think our job is to bring people into the doors of the church, but quite the opposite. True followers of Christ are appointed to make house calls, to go where the need is like Jesus did, and share the kindness of our Savior.

1. Kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Being genuinely kind to another person can actually open the door for you to share your personal faith story. Share a time this has happened for you (either on the giving end, or the receiving end).

The ‘holy catholic church’ that we refer to in the Apostles’ Creed should not be confused with the Roman Catholic Church. When we say, “I believe in the holy catholic church” we are stating this fact: that no matter where we may go (across the street or around the world) a kindred spirit is shared among believers in Christ.

2. How does Galatians 3:28-29 speak to the subject of Christ’s universal church?

Read Matthew 16:13-20

When Jesus was with His disciples at Caesarea Philippi, He asked: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” The disciples told Him. Then Jesus asked them, “But who do you say I am?” Peter declares: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” The Lord confirms Peter’s confession as foundational to countless more to follow in years and generations to come. On the day of Pentecost, Peter would stand and preach in Holy Spirit-power! Peter writes the early church and says that when we come to Christ we become living stones, a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. “As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).

3. Close by reading **Revelation 3:14-22**. Think about the ways many churches are lukewarm today. What stands in the way of you unlocking the door for the Holy Spirit to move in you and restore intimate fellowship with Christ?

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