

Bible Study Notes

Power to Change Series:

How Can Love Change My Community?

6/23/20

Passages: (noted below, all NRSV)

Hi Folks,

The theme this week is about the mix of the Holy Spirit and Love, and how that powerful combination can help us make a difference in our community and the world!

Love is a powerful force for change in our lives. However, when we apply that idea to strangers, as in “love our neighbors”, we tend to draw back. Maybe we feel more comfortable with changing that to “caring for our neighbors”. Yet when we do that we do lose some of the intent that we get from the model of Jesus’ love for us.

Some of the ways that we can be a force for positive change in our community (and nation):

- Demonstrate our love
- Build relationships
- Stand against injustice

Considering the current turmoil in our country with the demonstrations, violence, and rhetoric; injustice will be a focal point this week.

Please consider the following as prime motivators for injustice. You may gain insights that go further:

- Selfishness
- Hate
- “Always been that way”

We live in a rural community. We tend to think that “bad stuff” doesn’t exist here. Yet statistics indicate that rural areas are often more apt to suffer since these ills tend to be hidden from view.

Some forms of injustice that particularly touch our hearts:

- Violence against women and children
- Human trafficking (primarily girls, 13-16, for sex)

It is painful to consider those who are vulnerable, for whatever reason, to be preyed upon by those stronger!

Our Bible passages this week reveal God’s will for us around love and justice.

Bible Study Notes

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6/23/20

Old Testament Readings

We tend to think of the Old Testament to focus on “The Law” as documented by Moses. There are many passages that talk about the treatment of foreigners, being honest, and fair.

- Exodus 22:21-27
- Exodus 23:1-9

Some other readings that you may enjoy if you have the time:

- Leviticus 19:9-18
Leviticus is also “The Law” of Moses. The rules in Lev. Set up the following passage from Ruth.
- Ruth 2 (all)
I find this chapter to be extremely interesting! The story of “one of those people-Ruth” being shown love and care, who turns out to be the great-great... grandmother of Jesus! Ruth was a foreigner who was show love by her mother-in-law. This is in contrast to the common stereotype for conflict. Ruth was also shown love and concern by the Jewish landowner, Boaz. Ruth would have been considered an immigrant, likely an undesirable immigrant. Yet Boaz showed her great kindness! The lineage is: Ruth/Boaz > Obed > Jesse > David > > Jesus.
- Micah 6:8
- Proverbs 11:1-3

New Testament Readings

The New Testament reflects the emphasis that Jesus placed on loving others. Jesus spent His life on earth caring for others and training His Disciples to do the same.

John 3:16-17 is quoted frequently, but it is still the most definitive statement about God’s love for us and how that love is a powerful force for change in the world:

16“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

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How Can Love Change My Community?

6/23/20

Matthew gives us a dramatic story about caring for others. If you read carefully, the types of people that Matthew is describing are “those people” that we probably do not want to associate with.

- Matthew 25:34-46

Likewise, in the Gospel of John we hear the story of Jesus reaching out to the lowliest member of a despised group of people, the Samaritans to offer them the awesome gift of Salvation. Luke gives us the story of the “Good Samaritan” who is demonstrating love for another, even though that person would have hated him!

- John 4:4-42
- Luke 10:25-37

Paul, in 1 Corinthians, gives us the most dramatic witness as to the awesome power that love gives us for change in what is called “the love chapter”. We hear this most often at weddings. But it is a strong statement about the power of love in our everyday relationships with all people!

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Here are some other readings from the New Testament that you may find interesting if you have the time. We don't read from James very much, but I have found some of his passages to be especially meaningful:

- Acts 10:34-35
- Romans 8:38-39
- Hebrews 13:1-9
- James 2:1-5
- 1 Peter 2:9-12
- 1 Peter 3:8

Summary

There are a lot of readings this week. The goal is to provide a broad array of Scripture pointing to God's will for our lives. No one passage says it all. Reflect on how these passages point to our lives here in Kalamo.

Note that the passages tend to draw black/white contrasts between good and bad. Yet, life is a series of shades of gray. Most of what we see and do ourselves will be in the

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shades of gray. Behavior which is not in line with God's will for our lives. So we need to read carefully then apply honestly and earnestly to our own lives

More on Sunday – Enjoy!

Pastor Jerry