

LOST

LOST PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD: DO THEY MATTER TO YOU?

Luke 19:1-10

- I. Evangelism and Missions is all about people!
 - a. My family and I have served for the last four years in the city of Ekaterinburg, Russia. We will have more opportunities to talk more about our lives and our ministry there. Our main goal and desire, though, can be summarized in the following description: To develop relationships with those who do not have a saving relationship with Christ and to help them along their journey to finding Him and His church.
 - b. Jesus was about interacting with people on their faith journeys, and helping them see that He was the answer they were seeking.
- II. Jesus came to SEEK the LOST
 - a. He saw the need. He understood the spiritual condition of Zaccheus, that he was lost until He put his faith in Christ.
 - b. The feelings at the time of being lost are ones of hopelessness, despair, and the need to be rescued.
 - c. Statistics can help to clarify the need for the gospel's continued spread around the world.
 - i. "One-third of the planet's population, over two billion people, has never heard the gospel. And of that number, over 50,000 die daily, separated from God forever." M. David Sills, *The Missionary Call*, pg. 23
 - ii. If someone in the United States wants to hear the gospel explained to them, they would need to approach 5 people before someone could properly explain it. If someone in Russia wants to have the gospel explained, they would need to approach 500 people!
 - iii. Statistics say that 1 tenth of 1% of the Russian population has a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, compared with approximately 25% of the U.S. population.
 - iv. Every day over 2,000 people end their lives in suicide. The suicide rate in Russia is almost three times that of the United States. (32.2 per 100,000 in Russia compared to 11.0 per 100,000 in the United States)
 - d. He was motivated, His heart was filled with compassion. Jesus' ministry is one that was marked by compassion (Matt. 9:35-38; 15:32)
 - i. Jesus knew that Zaccheus was one of God's children, that His Father desired a relationship with him, and was lovingly waiting for Zaccheus' response. The compassion of Jesus allowed him to stop and identify one individual in a tree.
 - ii. Lost people in this world are also children that are created by God, and ones He desires a relationship with.
 - iii. We have a heart for the people of Russia only because God has given us that heart as we have continually asked for it. Reaching out to those who are lost is a matter of the heart!

IV. Once we grasp the need, and our moved by compassion, we are compelled to action!

- e. Jesus was not concerned with pleasing those around Him, but was focused on fulfilling His calling.
 - i. The religious leaders were quite upset with Jesus and His decision was not approved by everybody. However, His motivation was not in pleasing men, but His Father who sent Him.
 - ii. Sometimes the church gets distracted from doing what it exists to do. (illus. The Russian Post Office)

III.

Jesus came to SAVE the LOST

- a. The ONLY solution to the human spiritual condition of lostness is Jesus Christ. There are two implications to this reality.
 - i. It is not our responsibility to save others, but it is our responsibility to be faithful in seeking after others and "making the most of every opportunity" to reflect and preach Christ. (Eph. 5:15-16, 1 Peter 3:15)
 - ii. There is no other path to salvation and a relationship with God than through Jesus Christ. (Acts. 4:12, John 14:6) This is a core truth – Salvation, Forgiveness of Sins, Hope, Peace, relationship with God our Creator is ONLY available to us, to those around us, and to those throughout the world through Jesus Christ!
- b. Saving the lost came with a price for Jesus Christ, it involved suffering, pain, and even death.
 - i. The suffering that Jesus experienced was one that He prepared His disciples for as well. (John 20:21; Matt. 5:11-12, 10:16-28)
 - ii. Scripture teaches often about the role of suffering in the life of a believer. (Romans 8:18; II Corinthians 11:23-28; Philippians 3:10-11; II Timothy 1:8)
 - iii. What might it cost you? Are we willing to do all that is necessary to reach those who are lost with the gospel? Or have we bought into the "safety first" mentality of our culture and the domestication of the Christian faith? iv. One can only have this approach to suffering and sacrifice if they are living with an eternal perspective. (II Corinthians 4:16-18)

IV.

Conclusion

- a. Jesus' mission to seek and save the lost is the same mission we as Christ followers have been given. Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." John 20:21
- b. Lost people like Zaccheus, the Woman at the well, the blind and sick, they matter to God. Lost people in our communities, neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools matter to God. Lost people in countries like Russia, Iraq, Chile, Nigeria and around the world matter to God. Do you see the need? Do you have the compassion that motivates you toward action? Are you willing to do whatever is needed, no matter the cost or how you might be viewed?
- c. Lost People Matter to God, they matter to me (which is why we do all that we do in Russia.) Do they matter to you?
- d. My prayer for you: That you would be quick to respond to God as He asks you to Follow Him.