

Rethink

Part 7: Why are Christians either jerks or wimps?

Acts 3 and 4

There is a big difference between 1st century Xianity and 21st Century Xianity.

Last few episodes... Hitting pretty hard on the aggressive form of Xianity we've been seeing lately, and focusing on it for good reason.

But when many of us see that type of "Xianity" we are so repulsed by it (rightfully so) that we in no way want to be grouped in with those "types."

So we swing the pendulum to the other side... silent.

It often seems that a Jesus Follower's choices are to be either aggressively loud or passively silent.

(See it in media too... the two stereotypes- crazy hate filled screamer [angry lovejoy] and sweet little doormat [Flanders])

B/c we don't want to be labeled as crazy/angry/intolerant...

- Turn Following Jesus into being nice, maybe reading bible , praying, going to (watching) church. Even though go to church... (whatever that is) still a very individualistic experience.
- Something you do on your own, in the privacy of your home
- Not something that gets talked about with those around you... don't want to get the crazy xian label.
- Do nice things for people but just kind of leave it at that... result- "Oh aren't they nice." Jesus never mentioned or kindness explained

And many agree with idea that following Jesus is something others would benefit from but talking about it and explaining it is for the pro's and those that are *really* into it.

Truth is following Jesus is neither aggressively loud nor passively silent.

There is a third option... graciously confident.

We have a role to play. Invited to be part of the mission to bring heaven to earth now... so much more than being nice.

Rethink what it means to follow Jesus in 21st century.

Jesus Followers graciously and confidently act like, talk like, and love like Jesus.

Show you what I mean.

GOD:

Acts- Part 2 of Luke. What Jesus did through followers after ascending to heaven.

Read 3:1

Peter- Walking on water/get behind me satan/denied Jesus

John- Lets burn up these Samaritans!/Mommy go ask Jesus if I can rule.

Read 3:2-4

“Looked at him intently”

- How often do you make eye-contact with the human beings holding signs?

Didn't say, “Get a job... he who doesn't work doesn't eat, you know.”

Don't ignore.

Graciously gave him attention, time... they LOOKED at him.

Saw a man, created in the image of God, in need, begging to just stay alive... They SAW him, took the time to acknowledge him.

Intently- My guess... “Jesus, what do you want us to do here?”

A Jesus Follower's graciousness comes from seeing others as Jesus sees them.

Read 3:5-11

Paraphrase sermon- This wasn't us. It was Jesus. He was savior sent by God. You killed him. God raised him. You didn't know what you were doing. This was God's plan all along. Say you're sorry and believe.

Arrested.

Fellowship grew to 5000... added about 2000.

Read 4:5-6

Annas (Godfather- arrange for sons and son in law to high priest after him) Caiaphas- killed Jesus

High priest servant recognizing Peter

Sadducees didn't believe in resurrection. (Not that different from now) “That doesn't/can't happen”... Kind of the point.

Read 4:7-12

Guts/Courage... “the man you crucified.”

They could do the same thing to Peter and John.

Where did this courage/confidence come from? Not from them... who were they? Just nobody fishermen.

Confidence came from Holy Spirit

Weird concept... God the HS indwelling/controlling/guiding/leading... Hand in Glove.

Promise to every person who trusts their life now and forever to Jesus.

A Jesus Follower's confidence is rooted in the Holy Spirit.

V. 13 "Boldness" not an aggressive/combativeness. Openness/Confidence. Freedom to speak openly

What are they bold/open/confident about?

- Politics/economy/lack of morality in society? No... Jesus and his death and resurrection.

"Ordinary men"- not formally trained in Torah

Not confident in what they believed, learned, read... In what they saw and experienced

"This is what happened."

Ever feel like you don't know enough about bible/Jesus/etc to share?

- Do you ever feel like you don't know enough to share the story of your favorite vacation?
- **Your experience with Jesus is a story that has been given to you to share.**

If you've experienced it you can share it... you are an expert of your own story. When sharing your story, what is there to argue about or defend? It's your experience. It is what it is. Nothing to debate.

Your story is just sharing what happened...

As small as, to quote my favorite show... "I was one way and now I'm completely different. And the thing that happened in between was him."

Or "I once went through a hard time and what got me through it was Jesus... was the love of Jesus through my Connect Group, this passage, etc."

Recognized- "These guys are just as graciously and confidently annoying / aggravating / impossible to answer back as Jesus."

Remember... **JF's act like, talk like, and love like Jesus**

Kids resemble their parents.

Paraphrase rest of trial

Can't argue with the "good deed" done... Commanded to not speak or teach in name of Jesus.

"Should we obey God or you?" **"We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."**

They were just telling the true story that they experienced.

Side: It's not going against God/persecution until they tell you to stop talking about Jesus.

"That's cool Jon... but see it was these two special equipped full time guys doing this..."

Not so fast Bob.

Before Jesus had left made promise to group... **Acts 1:8**.

Took that seriously... Peter and John go back to group and they all pray...

4:29-31

Prayer not just for Peter and John... for all of them.

"Boldness" same word as before... openness

- Boldness not from them not based on them
- Boldness b/c Jesus' promise to be with when making disciples.
- Boldness b/c HS is with them

Every JF has a story to share and a role to play.

YOU:

As wrap up this series... remind us that we need to rethink what it means to follow Jesus in 21st century

Following Jesus is not just knowing about Jesus it's being willing to KNOW Jesus

Following Jesus is not a pious lifestyle to endure but a full life to enjoy

Following Jesus is not about trying to have more faith but choosing to trust Jesus everyday

Not about pushing our agendas but living for Jesus' purpose

Not about defining ourselves by what we are against... but who we are for

Not about being better than others but serving others better.

Following Jesus doesn't require us to be aggressively loud or passively silent... JF's g

See- **Jf's are the picture of Jesus to the rest of the world.** We are Jesus' representatives on earth

We all have a story to tell and a role to play... What is your story? What is your role?

Not all of us are going to speak to rulers and nations... But we can speak to neighbors, co-workers, friends, family

Might not change the world but can change someone's world.

Might not heal paralyzed legs... but can be used to heal paralyzed hearts, relationships...

Ready to play role...

Read Acts 1-8 and/or Colossians 4:5-6... Literal phrase... "Seasoned with salt" Being wise when and how you say it.

Gracious and attractive. What love looks like.

Pray: Please fill me with your Spirit... make me loving, patient, wise, kind, gracious and bold today. Let me see who you want me to see today.

Share life/story/episodes/gatherings

Someone going through hard time... Instead of internally—"man I'm so glad i have hope." Take the step and share the hope you have experienced.

Tell someone you're praying for them and then do it.

Be present.

You might have gold and silver to give- Actually, you're an american you do have silver and gold- Choose to share it

Might have time/attention to give (Peter and John)- Actually you have the same 24 hrs they/everyone else did- Choose to share it

Definitely have life and love to give. Share it

WE:

Jesus offers everyone a life of true meaning, purpose, love, joy, peace, acceptance...

And he has chosen his followers to invite everyone into that life... together.

We need to rethink what it means to follow Jesus in the 21st century

Following Jesus isn't aggressively and loudly trying to convert the world to our version of Xianity

Following Jesus isn't passively and silently watching those around us struggle through life alone when we can help them

Following Jesus is graciously and confidently inviting our neighbors to discover, enjoy, and share the life Jesus offers... together.

Questions

1. What have you seen God doing in your life and world this past week?
2. Look back further. Can you tell of a time God showed up in your life?
3. Read Col 4:5-6. What might this look like in an individual and/or community's life? What might it NOT look like?
4. Who might you be willing to share your story with this week or who should you be "seeing"? How can your group pray for you during this week?