

A Free Gift and A Cost-Everything Lifestyle

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. **Slide2** Calvary Kids Sun Service - elem age. today 2pm. reserve your spot.
- B. **Slide3** Please pray for *Cameron & Melissa Seely* our HS leaders child **Augie**.
Fell into a *fever induced seizure*. [off respirator & tubes now. no longer running a fever. still haven't figured out what it is/was]
- C. **Slide4a/b** Wed Night - 3rd part, *Confidence in Crisis*. Ps.23 *The Host & His Guest*.
- D. **Slide5** I keep finding out there is a lot I don't know about *racism*, but I'm trying to **learn**. I'm trying to model humility. Learning to move from just being *not-racist* to **being anti-racist**. Here's what I know about **God, Humans and Race**.
1. **Slide6** I know in God's image we are all made [*Imago-dei* greatest compliment of God]
 2. I know God's heart for the oppressed. Ps.103:6 *The Lord gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly.*
 3. I know God's command to love our neighbor. [*Who is?* Sam./diff race]
 4. I know God's multiracial, multiethnic end game. Rev.7:9 *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations* (ethnic groupings), *tribes* (social divisions of people), *peoples* (people grouped by culture, physical, geographical ties), *and tongues* (languages), *standing before the throne and before the Lamb*.
 - a) You've heard the illustration: *not melting pot but salad bowl* in which different cultures mix, but remain distinct in some aspects. [think ingredients in a salad]
 5. I came up with this 2 years ago...It's as if Jesus said in *Eternity past*...
Slide7 *I have a Dream. That one day My Father will receive worship from people from every ethno-linguistic people group. Where there is no longer ethnocentric pride but the ability to glory in God given diversity. Where there is racial diversity and ethnic harmony, gender equality and social equity. Where there is a fervor for unity, a passion for justice, and the supremacy of God in all things.* [BB 8-22-2018]

- a) We don't believe these words/concepts as Christians because they are politically correct, or trendy, or in vogue. *We believe them because this is God's heart for humans!*

E. **What will we do?** The best thing we know *what & how* to do. Pray/Fast.

1. Is.58:6 *Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?*
2. **Slide8** I'm calling for a **Church-Wide Fast**:
3. **Over the next 3 days.** Pick 1,2,or 3 days. Or 1,2,or 3 meals.
4. **Ask God what can I do when it comes to racism?** how to listen/learn/do
 - a) Search our own hearts. Ask God to show you our prejudices.
5. **Ask God for the justice** of those who have been *unjustly killed because of color, and that those responsible would be held accountable?*
6. **Ask God what for protection** of all the *men & women who Protect & Serve our communities.* [MPD, Sheriff, CHP, Marshalls, FBI rep here @ CM]
7. **Ask God for the healing** of Covid & further **opening** of the church?

F. **Prayer:** Rom.15:13 *I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.* [community/state/nation/world]

II. **Slide9 Intro:** A Free Gift and A Cost-Everything Lifestyle

- A. **Salvation** is a free gift **AND** a cost-everything lifestyle. So is **Sanctification**.
1. When we turn to **faith in Jesus** with **repentance and faith** we are **instantly justified and sanctified**. This is our new **position or standing** in Christ.
 2. In Heb.10 We see our **standing/position** in (vs.10) (*we have been sanctified/ set apart*) and our **state/condition** in (vs.14) (*we are being sanctified*).
 3. We see God has **done** something in our life and **is doing** something.
 4. We watched Saul's **salvation** (wolf to sheep) **now** starts his **sanctification**, or his being made **holy, growing, being built up, maturing** process.

a) We should *never* be satisfied with the person's **conversion**. That is only the **beginning**. The same **grace** which brings a person to **new birth** is able to *transform him or her* into Christ's image. John Stott

B. **Slide10a** You and I can learn from our text, *How to prepare for serving*:
Are you prepared?

1. **Illus**: Sometimes I like the *convenience* of a **Keurig pod**, it's a **time** issue.
2. **It takes time to brew good coffee**. If you like Cold Brew Coffee w/Slow Drip Technology (up to 24 hours). [Philz Coffee, Jacob's Wonderbar. A dark blend. AROMAS: Dark Chocolate, Smoke, Nuts. ACIDITY: Low BODY: Full]
3. **Slide10b** It takes **time to brew good coffee...and** it also takes time to brew **good christians to maturity**. The Lord is never in a hurry!
 - a) He is **building** us for eternity. Sometimes, He even has to *bench* us. It could be lonely or painful, full of suffering but even that can lead us to **greater service**.

C. **Slide10c** We are prepared for service by: *Spending time Alone with God. Realizing Ministry is Hard. Accepting One Another.*

III. **Slide11a SPENDING TIME ALONE WITH GOD (20-22)**

- A. (20) Immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues - News too good to keep.
- B. (21) **Amazed** - ecstatic, "to such a degree as to nearly lose one's mental composure"¹
 1. Come hear Dr. Saul of Tarsus - the great Gamaliel's protégé. Converted Pharisee tells all! *Kent Hughes*
- C. It was at **this time** where Saul goes and spends **3 years in Arabia** alone with God.
 1. **Slide11b** Gal.1:15-19 *But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him 16 to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles. When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being. 17 Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who*

¹ Faithlife Study Bible, Bible Sense Lexicon. Logos.

were apostles before I was. Instead, I went away into **Arabia**, and later I returned to the city of Damascus. 18 Then **three years later** I went to Jerusalem to get to know Peter, and I stayed with him for 15 days. 19 The only other apostle I met at that time was James, the Lord's brother.

2. This is where Saul earned his **BSD degree** (backside of the desert) *Moses/David*
 - a) Some think that the **3 yrs** were a deliberate compensation for the **3 yrs w/Jesus** the other apostles had, **but** he had not.
 - b) **Slide12 Map**: he didn't have to travel far because at that time the north-west tip of Arabia reached nearly to Damascus.
 3. **Today** when **someone famous** (athlete, singer, actor) is converted, the 1st thing that we want for them is **promotion**. **God's plan is often seclusion**.
 4. When Saul was laying on the Damascus Road, he asked **2 questions**: **Who are you lord? What should I do Lord?** (Acts 22:8,10)
 - a) Though **w/o too many details**, it seems that that's what **the next 3 yrs** are all about. He will learn in a deeper way *who Jesus is, thus who he is & what God wanted him to do*. [Saul a *Recovering Pharisee*. **But how many of us are also?**]
 - b) **3 years!**...*it takes time to brew good coffee*.
- D. **Also remember**, that God will do everything possible to do away with the energy of our *human flesh in order to* teach us that *without Him we can do nothing*.
- E. **Questions**: Has God ever benched you? Is it possible He wasn't punishing you **but** trying to mature you? Do you feel benched now? why? Are you burning/mad, **or** are you learning? Will you find some time this week to get alone with Him?
[We are prepared for service by: *Spending Time Alone With God*]

IV. Slide13a REALIZING MINISTRY IS HARD (23-25) ministerial reality

- A. **They plotted to kill him** - a dose of reality.
 1. Remember Ananias' prophetic statement from his vision, *for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name*. (16)

a) **Slide13b** So the persecutor has become so the persecuted. Luke will tell us more of the sufferings later. Like being stoned and left for dead in Lystra. Beaten and imprisoned in Philippi. He was the center of a public riot in Ephesus. He was arrested and imprisoned in Jerusalem. Shipwrecked in the Mediterranean. And finally held in custody in Rome.

b) **Slide13c** Bonhoeffer, *Suffering, then, is the badge of true discipleship.*

B. Questions: Have you found out ministry is hard but that working with some christians is harder? Did Jesus ever say ministry would be easy? [When he said *my yoke is easy, my burden light* (context was salvation *not* ministry, *come to Me*)] Have you had to **suffer** for His name? Was it physical, spiritual, or emotional? [We are prepared for service by: *Realizing Ministry is Hard*]

V. Slide14a ACCEPTING ONE ANOTHER (26-31)

A. [esv/welcome one another, nkjv/receive one another, nlt/accept each other]

1. **Slide14b** Rom.15:7 *Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.*

2. It is not only that **converts** must join the **Christian community**, but that the **Christian community** must welcome **converts**, especially those from a different *religious, ethnic or social* background. *John Stott*

a) There is an *urgent need* for **modern Ananias** and **Barnabases** who overcome their **reservations and hesitations and prejudice** & take the initiative to **befriend newcomers**.

B. (26) **And they were all afraid** of him, **for they did not believe that he was a disciple.**

1. Perfectly understandable, *but* a crushing rejection still.

C. (27) **But Barnabas** - When we need a Barnabas. *We all need a Barney in our lives.*

1. This is the calling of a reconciler.

D. (27) **But Barnabas took him** and brought him to the apostles - **Took him**, taking someone *by the hand* to lead or assist.

1. This reminds us of the calling that we all have to be **reconcilers**.

- a) Where there is **hostility** and **misunderstanding** is where **we** get to step in and become an enabler of **peace**. [we all need someone in our court]
- b) It may be going with **a listening ear** to both parties **or** to the group, **to help them talk out the difficulty**.
- c) It may be getting the people together for **forgiveness** and **healing**.
- d) **Slide14c** **But** at 1 time or another *it's every Christian's ministry to be a Barnabas*

E. **Slide14d** So recap, Saul found **a new family** (17-19). **A new faith** (20-22). **A new fight** (23-25). **A new fellowship** (26-29). **A new future** (30-31).

F. Here (30) Saul drops out of the OT for 10 years. (see 11:25)

G. **Questions:** Is there a christian you are afraid of? One that you don't trust because you're not sure they're saved? Who was your Barnabas? Whose Barnabas are you? Who have you gotten to **lead by the hand** in their walk with Jesus?
 [We are prepared for service by: *Accepting One Another*]

H. **Church-Wide Fast:** **Over the next 3 days**. Pick 1,2 or 3 days. **Or** 1,2 or 3 meals

1. Ask God what can **I** do when it comes to **racism**? how to listen/learn/respond
2. Ask God what for the **protection** of all the men & women who **protect & serve** **and** for the **justice** of those who have abused their office?
3. Ask God for the further **opening** of the church?