

Warm –up Question or Activity

Choose one and discuss as a group.

1. Activity 1 – Briefly describe a present or gift that was given to you that you really didn't want or appreciate very much. Or a present/gift that you gave to someone who clearly did not value or appreciate it.
2. Question 1 – You are in a retail establishment as a customer. You thank an employee at checkout after paying for your purchase. The employee replies, "No problem." On a scale of 1-to-10, how does that make you feel? 1 (positive)? Or 10 (negative)? How so?

Can You Relate?

In this week's Scripture, God's prescription for saving the snake-bitten Israelites was merely for them to see and be healed by believing the truth of what God said; and then later Jesus himself used this story to describe God's mission in hoisting up Jesus Christ in offering salvation to a sin-sick world.

- For whom in your life does your heart most ache for the gift of salvation? Share a bit about your relationship with them and their response to the simplicity of the gospel (as far as you are aware).
- The simplicity of the gospel message has for all ages confounded the educated and been foolishness to the wise.¹ What are your best ideas about how to relate to intelligent, well-educated folks who reject the premise of sin or of the need for salvation? Illustrate or explain in detail.
- What insight can you draw about the character of God from the simplicity of the gospel? How should this (the simplicity of the gospel and what it reveals about the character of God) affect how we talk about God to people who don't yet know him?
- We typically tell our friends/family/colleagues about the things that we are excited about (new restaurants, movies, sports activities). What does the frequency of your speaking of Christ tell you about yourself?
- The medical profession's symbol for the Hippocratic Oath and healing became a snake-coiled pole. In similar ways, the world takes the gifts that God pours out through his people – and yet with increasing venom rejects the divine source of those gifts.
 - How do you feel about that?

¹ 1st Corinthians 1:20

- What should my response as a Christian be to a culture that hates my God but loves his gifts?

Live It Out

Remember, for any unbeliever in your world, you may be that person's best hope for uncorking the gospel.

- What's your growing edge regarding being a witness for Christ? What do you want to take away from this discussion? Writing it down would be helpful. Including how you can apply or build upon it in the week or months ahead.
- We see Jesus going to God in prayer consistently throughout his life, most often before the beginning of the day. We know that God is attentive to the prayers of his children² - and that prayer is a divine imperative.³ If one of us would lock arms with you in a pledge to pray every day this week before beginning the day, would you be interested? We can text each other as a means of shared accountability for the week ahead.

Encourage your groups to commit time to praying for each other, encouraging each other, meeting one another's needs, fellowshiping together, interceding for one another. Encourage them to continue to meet and to return together at the next scheduled gathering

² Psalm 34:15

³ E.g., Philippians 4:6