

Lake Highlands Church

Sunday Assembly Reflection – 11/1/14

RECAP: In his reflection on reaching those outside the church, Jim issued a call to the church this week to re-evangelize America. For many people today, he said, the Good News is heard as neither good nor news, and people live in delusion about sin. Yet the church has too often compounded the problem by misrepresenting who Jesus is. To be effective in communicating the gospel, Jim said the church must be “continually converted” so that we might reconnect. This involves listening to others, rather than using parrot-like Christian clichés, and then asking questions to discern where the gospel might speak hope and connection in someone’s life.

It was a jolt on Sunday to be reminded of how “shockingly different” the gospel is. I have been so immersed in Christian culture that I take the scandalous grace of Jesus for granted. Sometimes it seems people are quite comfortable without a church community, and that I have nothing to offer. But there was a time in my life when I, too, was quite cynical about the church, and went my own way to find a more enlightened and “kind” approach to spiritual life. So it can be intimidating now to be on the other side and hear how people have found Christianity sorely lacking or even foolish. Instead of shying away out of not wanting to appear foolish or naive, however, I need to agree with them about how the church has failed. I need to put on spiritual glasses and see the lie of spiritual delusion that masks how “comfortable” people seem in rejecting the need for a connection with God. And I need to ask God for creative ways to reconnect and provide hope.

REFLECTION: (Pick one of the questions below to answer in your small groups, or more if you have time. Be sure to pray for each other at the end).

- Many people need to be healed of their attitude toward church, because of how Jesus has been misrepresented. Who do you know who has been turned off by church? How might you begin to pursue authentic friendship with them?
- With whom do you need to have a conversation on their turf, like Philip did with the Ethiopian eunuch, or like Donjalea did with Michelle? What would that look like?
- What are some ways the church has misrepresented Jesus? How can you respond to help reconnect those outside of the church?

Remember, Jesus wants to use us to bring the Good News and bless the world. He equips us for whatever task He gives us. It’s not about our cleverness, but our faithfulness and willingness to be used.