

Sermon

06.29.14

Theme: “What is the Lord Jesus Christ’s intension for us at Bethany Lutheran?”

Text: Acts 15:1-12

Ref(s): Gal 2:1-10; Matthew 16:13-19

Well, after carefully reading the text and deep prayers, the Holy Spirit brought to my mind three important points:

1. To leave our comfort zone
2. To remind us that relationship with Christ is not about selfishness (you and me)
3. To know Christ personally

1. To leave our comfort zone

How many of us were at the prayer retreat on June 7? Something very important happened before the beginning of the prayer. You noticed that everyone was moved to another table. Amazing! I looked around and said to myself, Lord, we thank You. This was a clear manifestation that you cannot be revived or renewed until you leave your comfort zone. God told Abraham in Genesis 12, I am about to do something through you that will absolutely blow your mind and will change your whole life. But you have to leave your comfort zone, that is, your country and your parents and go wherever I will show you. Peter, Paul and the other Apostles left their comfort zones too according to our first and second reading. Let’s take a quick look at our mission statement in your service bulletin. “Growing in faith and serving others.” We cannot grow in faith and serve others when

we keep sitting in one place over time. We need to move a step of faith. (**“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” II Peter 1:5-8**)

Do we have these qualities or want to have them?

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2 To remind us that relationship with Christ is not about selfishness (you and me)

Relationship with Christ depends on faith plus nothing else. Galatians chapter 2 tells us that the Apostle Paul has been preaching the Good News that salvation comes through faith in Jesus alone. He goes on to say that this message was validated by the Apostles by given him a right hand of fellowship. Here in Acts 15, we see Peter and Paul, two distinct personalities used by God to bring together different cultures, nationalities, race and families in Christ Jesus. This is the mission of the church, go and spread the Good News about Jesus to all people, Black, white, old and young. Being saved or being a true Christian is not about self-interest; it is not about what you eat or drink or not about how you speak or look, neither about laws or traditions. Salvation or being a true Christian is all about who you really are in Christ Jesus.

Are you really serving other because of Christ's sake or because you fell like it? Do you know that you are not your own but for Christ and anything you do should be done in love?

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3 To know Christ personally

Many people profess Christ Jesus as Lord, but really don't know Him as Lord over their lives. You could be a church member for many years, pay your tithe and take part in small group activities and yet you may not know Christ as your savior. Some of us come to church because of our mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, friends or children and don't have anything to do with Jesus. “Who do people say the son of man is?” Jesus asked His disciples. (Matt. 16) He also said, “Not everyone that says Lord, Lord will enter in heaven.” (Matt. 7). My friends, who do you think Jesus is? Knowing Christ is to have a personal relationship with Him. Believing and trusting in Him that He is God, believing and trusting in His atonement and His resurrection power. Christ is the way, the truth and the life, no bypass to God except through Him (Jn. 14:6). All you have to do right now is just say sincerely in your heart, Lord Jesus I want to know you better. Come into my heart and be my savior and Lord. Amen.