



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “A Scandalous Inclusion”

Ps. Kore Bendix – November 29, 2015

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

1. Did you have a nickname when you were going to school? How did that name make you feel?
2. If you had to describe yourself with one word, what would that word be?
3. When was a time your car had a dead battery? What did you do? Who helped you?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

*But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints...” But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry **my name** before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel” So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 9:1-19*

This world lacks an understanding of who God really is and therefore is going in the wrong direction. Some have an idea of God as that of a contest judge that looks at our performance to choose or discard us. For others, God is like a wedding registry; where we can create a list for God to give us. When we treat God like this, we think God will give up on us, because we are unable to perform good enough; or we will give up on God because he “fails” to give us all we signed up for him to do. For this reason we need to be reminded of how God really is. We need to be reminded of God’s scandalous inclusion.

1. God pursues us at our worst.

God chose Saul when he was breathing threats and murder against the church. God pursued Saul when he was heading in the wrong direction.

Jesus knows what kind of person he is choosing, yet he chooses us despite the fact we can't bring anything to the table. He knows our family line, our weaknesses and our sins; yet, he pursues us. God is a father who speaks, even when we resist to hear. Who pursues us, even when we resist his embrace..

2. God pursues us through people.

God puts people in our lives to function as jumper cables; people who are connected to God and are willing to connect with those who are dead. Ananias functioned as a jumper cable between God and Saul. He was willing to risk his life to go and reach out to Saul. Ananias' life in the Bible is covered in only a few verses; yet, his life is not defined but how much he did. He is known for being connected to God strongly enough to be able to pass what he had to another person.

Many times as Christians, we try to live our lives as a cruise ship - where everything is about ourselves; our enjoyment and our leisure - when God is actually calling us to be a battleship – to be willing to take risks in order to save others from death. God wants to take us places to accomplish a mission, to be in a risky situation for the sake of bringing life to those who are dead.

3. God's Pursuit brings a new identity.

God chose Saul to carry His name to the gentiles. God turned Saul upside down and signed His Name on him. Psalm 138:2 says "for you have exalted your word, above all, your name." God gave his most precious value, his name. God will do everything to bring glory to his name through the life of the one who carries his name.

The names that have been tattooed into this generation; like failure, fear, perversion, homosexual, divorced lead our young people to desperation and hopelessness. Our risen Savior comes in to rename us, to give us a new identity. The power of the NAME we now carry overwrites the power of the old name, the old nature, the old identity. By His name, we are made a new creation!

God's SCANDALOUS INCLUSION keeps us from seeing any person or situation as hopeless. When we see that God pursue us not because of our works, but despite of them, we will be willing to pursue others. When we realize that God has given us His Name, we will disregard our old identity and live a life to glorify the Name of the one who has scandalously included us and called us his own.

### **APPLICATION QUESTION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose a question below to answer, or ask another.**

1. How have you responded to God's pursuit of you?
2. Are you connected to God? How can you be a "jumper cable" so others can connect to him?
3. What risks do you need to take in order to become an Ananias to young people?

### **PRAYER:**

1. Pray for an increased connection with God so you can connect lost people with Him.
2. Pray for the salvation of a student you know.
3. Pray for the youth ministry of our church. Pray that not one young person that grows in our church will get lost, but they will grow up to follow and serve Jesus.