



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“A.D. Series: Needed. Wanted!”

Ps. James Lowe - June 7, 2015

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

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

- What is something you are especially afraid of?
- Have you ever planted a garden for food? How was your experience?
- Who was one of your best friends growing up? Why were they such a good friend?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

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

Biblical Text - Acts 9:19b-31

God wants us to be like Saul, who communicated the Gospel regularly everywhere and to everybody.

1. FEAR

Like Saul (Paul) we must conquer our fears, which seek to stifle and silence our witness to Jesus. Fear will paralyze us and keep us from doing what Jesus commanded, which is preach the good news to all people. As Saul wrote years after his encounter with Jesus, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

We are not to be afraid of what other people might say or do to us. Because of our hope of life after death and the eternal rewards that come from obedience to God, we should put aside all of our fears of what people will say or do. We should be far more concerned with what God will say or do when we see him after death.

If people criticize and excoriate your past as you speak up for Jesus, it's okay. Your past does not invalidate the truth concerning Jesus and what he has done for us. Even as we continue to struggle with our own fallenness, the truth and hope of the Gospel promises that the Spirit of God will succeed in transforming us so that we will be like Jesus in his sinless beauty.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

2. FRUIT

God has promised that each us will bear fruit as we continue to believe in and follow Jesus. We will impact and influence lives, so that others too will come to know, love, and follow Jesus. As we continue to turn our hearts to Jesus, pray to him, worship him, and study his life and teaching in the Bible, our lives will be filled with Christ's blessing, presence, and power. This will inevitably make a difference in other people's lives as we interact with them and love them.

The things which could hinder our ability to bear fruit are such things as Jesus mentioned in the Parable of the Sower. If we do not understand God's word, that will prevent fruit. If we do not grow in our faith and our devotion to Christ, that will prevent fruit from coming forth. If we get distracted by the desires for other things and the cares of this life, we won't bring fruit to its fullness. We must put God and his kingdom first in our lives. Then we will bear much fruit, and our fruit will remain.

3. FRIENDS & FELLOWSHIP

Like Saul we all need friends like Barnabas and the apostles. We need people who will help us grow and develop as healthy followers of Jesus. We all need help to become better fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters. We need encouragement and guidance to become better people who reflect the life and character of Jesus. God wants to help us grow spiritually, to grow as humans. And God uses people to express his love, his wisdom, his encouragement, and his correction to us.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What do you need to overcome in order to share the Gospel more consistently?
- Who is in your life who spurs you on to be a faithful witness for Jesus Christ?
- Whose lives would you especially like to impact for Jesus? Why?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God for a greater revelation of the Gospel, and for the eager desire to share it because of how great God's salvation is.
- Ask God for new Christian friends and for the deepening of existing Christian friendships, so that you and your friends will spur one another on to serve Jesus well and be his eager and faithful witnesses.
- Ask God to give you more fruit!