



Life Group Study Notes

“The Multiethnic Headache”

Ps. Steve Murrell - July 31, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

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

- What was your exposure to multi-ethnicity or an international context when you were growing up?
- Who is a good friend of yours who is from a different ethnic or national background than yourself? How has their friendship enriched your life?
- What other nation or ethnic group (besides your own) interests you, and why?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Luke 24:45-49 ESV

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

For over three years the disciples, who were Jewish, were discipled by Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, and were ministering almost exclusively to Jewish people. It was an ethnically, religiously, culturally, and nationally homogeneous context of ministry.

But after his resurrection Jesus commanded his Jewish disciples to take the Gospel to all nations. The term "nations" in the original text (Greek) did not mean countries defined by political boundaries. It meant distinct ethnic-cultural people groups. Jesus was commanding the first disciples and is still commanding his disciples today to take the Gospel to every people group on earth.

In our world that doesn't require us to leave the country or even our city. At most it might require us to go to another neighborhood. Many people tend to gravitate in their personal relationships toward people who are similar to themselves. But Jesus deliberately did not allow his disciples to do this. His mission is to bring his salvation to all people groups, and to accomplish this through his followers crossing ethnic-cultural boundaries.

Yet Jesus did not command his disciples to do this immediately even though it was of utmost priority. Instead, he told them to wait until they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit's help it would be too difficult and ineffective to do cross-ethnic/cross-cultural ministry. But with the Spirit's help, Jesus knew that the Gospel would effectively spread across the entire world and bear fruit wherever it went.

Jesus used the phrase "clothed with power" to describe the help the disciples needed from the Holy Spirit. This phrase corresponds to other New Testament texts that teach us to be filled or empowered with the Holy Spirit again and again. It is not a one time need or experience. Just as we put on clothes on a daily basis, so also we need to be refreshed and strengthened by God's Spirit on a daily basis.

Luke 11:9-13 ESV

And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Each of us should be challenged by Jesus' words to do two things:

1. To seek God on a daily basis to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be an effective witness to the Gospel.
2. To deliberately cross ethnic-cultural lines for the purpose of learning to know and understand others, to love and serve them, to communicate and demonstrate the Gospel to them, and to build community with them, doing and sharing life together in Christ.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

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

- How multiethnic is your workplace? Your church? Your neighborhood? Your circle of friends that you spend the most time with?
- What are some of the challenges that you have experienced in seeking to reach out to people from different ethnicities or cultural backgrounds? What have been some of the blessings?
- Who could you reach out to over the next month and have over to your home who is ethnically and/or culturally different than you? If you regularly or recently have done this, who is someone from yet a different ethnicity or cultural background that you could have over this month?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

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

- Ask God to fill you with wisdom, grace, and love to proactively reach out to people of different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, and to build relationships with them.
- Ask God to empower you to communicate and demonstrate the Gospel effectively to people who are different than yourself.
- Ask God to deepen your relationships in Christ with people of different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.