

GROWTH GROUPS

April 7, 2013

Matthew 16:5-12, Psalm 103:1-5, and I Corinthians 15:12-20

Conversation Starter: Have you ever been a witness to an event that you were pretty sure or knew that God had done something significant and then had others try and explain away what had happened as chance, or as only being something other than what it appeared to be? Imagine that you have seen something incredible and in your excitement you go to your parents or to your pastor and they reject or explain away what you know you saw; what do you think that you would be feeling?

Understanding: The scriptures tell us that the disciples have just seen Jesus feed more than four thousand people with just a few loaves and fish. In their travels to the other side of the Sea of Galilee the disciples are warned by Jesus to be on their guard from false teaching and reinterpretation of God's work by the religious leaders of the day. In the I Corinthians passage, the Apostle Paul deals with those who were trying to say that the resurrection never happened and that people cannot be raised from the dead. He goes on to warn them that if that were true then Jesus would still be dead and that all Christian faith would be in vain and foolish. He goes on and boldly proclaims, that Jesus has indeed been raised from the dead and that God has accomplished the incredible in this triumphant event. In the modern Church there are many theologians, clergy and religious leaders who question the need for the sacrificial atoning death of Jesus. These leaders come from a "faith" perspective but do not believe that the crucifixion or resurrection are necessary for God to save the human race. Their questioning and doubts sow seeds of doubt among many faithful people. Our creeds and beliefs teach us that the crucifixion and resurrection are central truths to what God has been doing in bringing salvation to the human race. Jesus warns against false teachers and preachers and says that Satan goes about seeking to deceive even the elect of God.

Questions

1. When you think of being on guard against false teaching and error in spiritual truth where do you usually think of that coming from; from within the church itself or from the outside by doubters in the world? What impact does the source of the false teaching have on how you deal with it or guard yourself against it?
2. How do you guard yourself from error and false teaching? Why is that important to today's Christian?
3. How does the modern Christian take every thought captive or change the spiritual channel in dealing with competing truth claims? What is your greatest challenge personally in this area of Christian life?

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