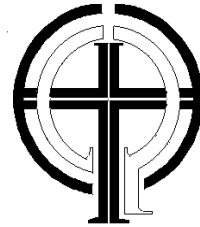


# ***Proclaiming Christ in Every Way***

## **Week 1 Discussion Questions: Release from a Counterfeit Gospel**



*"Christianity is not, in the long run, concerned either with individuals or communities...but a new creature." ~ C.S. Lewis*

1. Read Acts 4:8-12. Peter makes the appeal at the end of this verse that salvation comes through Christ alone. Do you think that most Christians today believe this?

2. Do you believe that all people want salvation? Consider and discuss the following by Philosopher Dr. Peter Kreeft:

"The big, blazing, terrible truth about man is that he has a heaven-sized hole in his heart, and nothing else can fill it. We pass our lives trying to fill the Grand Canyon with marbles. As Augustine said: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee." That's the greatest sentence ever written outside Scripture because it tells us the secret of our destiny, our happiness—and our unhappiness...." (Kreeft, "Heaven")

3. Pastor Aaron spoke about the Corona commercials where people relax on a tropical island. Do you see how it is a type of salvation?

4. Do we sometimes buy things thinking that somehow those things will make a difference in our lives? Do they ever make a significant difference? Are we just "filling the Grand Canyon with marbles" when we buy things thinking they will make us happy? What about you? Were you in search of salvation before you met Christ? Were you seeking a "salvation" apart from Christ? Do you think all who call themselves followers of Christ can relate to holding onto something counterfeit prior to their conversion?

5. Pollsters commonly report that over 85% of Americans claim a belief in God; yet on further examination, only about 10% of those give evidence of saving faith. No doubt you know some people that fall into this gap. If you can, think of them by name. How do you think they would respond to the assertion that they are in need of or looking for salvation? How do you think they would define "salvation?"

6. Would you agree that the issue of "true salvation" holds a high priority in the affairs of man? If so, why is it that our conversations with others seldom seem to move into a discussion of these matters of the heart? Is the observation "never discuss religion and politics" true in our culture? Are we Christians guilty of retreating into a "Christianity bubble" where we only relate to other Christians? What steps could you take to become more conversationally relevant to those around you holding onto or in search of counterfeit salvation?

7. We are a very practical people, and the definition of pragmatism is “a practical approach to problems and affairs.” Pastor Aaron suggested that we don’t seem to be very good at figuring out what is true one piece at a time. Do you agree that people, generally, don’t make good choices?

8. Suppose your conversations with a friend reveal that her worldview can be summarized as follows: God cares about my intentions. He weighs the good in my life (I love my husband and kids, I give to charity, I don’t cheat on my taxes...) against the bad (I occasionally lose my temper, maybe I watch too much television, I don’t recycle...) and as long as the good outscore the bad I’ll go to heaven when I die. Is this a pragmatic worldview? What’s wrong with it? How do you challenge your friend’s worldview without alienating her, or worse, losing her friendship?

9. Should we exercise pragmatism when reading the Bible? Should we be able to practice “Cafeteria Christianity” and pick and choose which parts of the Bible to accept or reject? What’s wrong with this approach to faith? Why shouldn’t we reject those things we don’t like in the Bible?

10. Read the account of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10. Would Jesus have been happy if Zacchaeus had merely given to the poor as a nice gesture? Jesus’ stirring words in verses 9-10 suggests Zacchaeus had changed in some way. His change is a reflection of the newness of his life that comes through Jesus. Discuss this verse in light of the following by C.S. Lewis:

We must not suppose that even if we succeeded in making everyone nice we should have saved their souls. A world of nice people, content in their own niceness, looking no further, turned away from God, would be just as desperately in need of salvation as a miserable world—and might be more difficult to save. For mere improvement is no redemption, though redemption always improves people even here and now and will, in the end, improve them to a degree we cannot imagine. God became man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man. (Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 182)

11. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (John 14:6) All other approaches to God are counterfeit. Read Matthew 4:18-20. What does it mean to be fishers of men? Are you a fisher of men? How have you responded to this call?

**Last Thing:** Leaders, Take a minute to write down some of your group’s unanswered questions from your discussion or comments about sharing faith in general. Email them to this address ([hccpcomments@ymail.com](mailto:hccpcomments@ymail.com)) or drop them by the Information Desk on Sunday. We will incorporate them into our *Proclaiming Christ in Every Way* series.

Thanks! The Adult Discipleship Team