

WordOne Bible Study

Jesus Comes to Outcasts

by Jon Coyne

Text: Matthew 4:12-25 for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, Lectionary Series A

Objective

Participants will:

- Learn that Jesus first called and witnessed to the poor, uneducated and humble people of the world.
- Learn that Jesus began His ministry with a message of repentance.
- See that Jesus loves all people regardless of wealth, education or social status.

Materials Needed

Bible

Luther's small Catechism

50 pennies for each group

Group Guidelines

Divide into groups of 4-6 people. Have each participant share with the group how much money they are carrying with them. The leader is the person who has the least money that day. The leader's role will be to encourage sharing and keeping the discussion moving

Building Community

1. Ask participants if they know the meaning of the word repentance. Ask them to discuss their ideas about the meaning of the word. Share with them that repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God.
2. Give various numbers of pennies to each participant. Make sure that one person has a very large number of pennies and one person has a very small number of pennies. Ask the participants to share:
 - How they each feel about the number of pennies they have.
 - How they feel about the person with the most and the least pennies.

Looking at God's Word

1. Read Matthew 4:12-25.
2. Jesus calls His first disciples to come and follow Him as He begins His public ministry. We are told that Andrew and Peter were fishermen. Do you think they were well educated? Were they wealthy? What was the social status of a fisherman at the time of Jesus?
3. Read Luke 4:14-21.
4. Whom is Jesus called to serve in this passage?
5. In Luther's Small Catechism, read the question, "What is confession?"
6. Luther states that confession has two parts, "confessing our sins" and "receiving absolution." How is this similar to the concept that repentance is "turning away from sin" and "turning toward God"?
7. Are there any conditions to the forgiveness of sins which Jesus offers to all of us. In other words, is Jesus concerned about your wealth, education or social status when He forgives your sins?

Reinforcing What Has Been Learned

Share with your group answers to these questions:

1. What have you learned from the Bible study?
2. Do you ever feel sick, poor or uneducated? If so, how does Jesus love you during times when you feel this way?

3. Use one word to describe how you feel knowing God's unconditional love?

Closing

Put all of the pennies in a pile and pray together as a group: "Lord, we turn our lives away from sin and toward you. Help us to know that you love us for who we are in you, not because of our wealth, our education, or our social standing. Amen."

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