

Application (“Missional Tips”) Guide

“...I pray for the kind of faith that will bring heaven to earth.” – Charles Haddon Spurgeon

July 4, 2004: “The Gospel According to Jesus” by Shane Fuller, Pastor of Singles Ministries of College Park Church. Pastor Shane presented a challenging and thought-provoking message on Matthew 4 with the intent of offering a more biblical, Christ-centered understanding of the Gospel.

Note to Leader: Knowing that many CPC’ers may have been out of town over the holiday weekend, encourage your group members by sending out this guide as a means of preparing people for your Flock Group meeting. Challenge them to study this passage before coming to the meeting, or tell them to listen to the tape!

1. **Read Matthew 4-7.** How does Jesus define the Gospel? What is “the kingdom of the heavens?” Does the Gospel we often teach in our churches today resemble what Jesus taught? How or how not?
2. As Shane said, Jesus’ definition of repentance = “Your way of life doesn’t work. Choose mine instead,” and “Give up your agendas. Trust me! Give up your understanding of me!” In what ways do we need to change our understanding of the Way of Jesus and the life he has called us to live, in order to come more in line with the example of Christ? What distorted pictures of the Christian life, as a result of “Americanized Christianity,” are many holding on to? Where does our ultimate allegiance lie? To what do you hold onto?
3. **Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8.** Jesus’ way of restoring Israel was not through a revolution against Roman rule. Rather, he presented a renovation of the heart. The “kingdom of the heavens” is Jesus’ presentation of what it means to live under his rule, as his disciple. What about your understanding of Jesus’ Gospel needs to change? Are you truly his *disciple*?
4. Shane said, “Jesus gives his disciples a way of life to follow, not an intellectual seminary class.” As Greg Ogden states, “As important as Jesus’ teaching was, it was his person that became the vehicle for the transmission of his life to his disciples” (*Transforming Discipleship*, 76). In what ways have you seen the American church deviate from this? Do you come to church to participate in Christ’s body, or merely as a member of the audience to be entertained? Do you hear God’s Word preached merely to puff your head up with knowledge, or to see personal life-change? What do you do to move toward life change vs. just head knowledge?
5. Compare your present way of life to the way of life Jesus sets forward in his Kingdom (read the Sermon on the Mount). What in your life needs to change to imitate Christ? If someone were to videotape your life, how would they be able to tell that you are a Christian – or is your life no different than the non-Christians around you? Are you properly representing Christ and His Kingdom amongst your spheres of influence? Your home, neighborhood, job, relatives, friends? How can you use your life at the present moment right where you are to glorify God and advance His Kingdom?

6. Consider also the people that Jesus spent time with – the tax collectors, prostitutes, “sinners”, the nobodies, etc. Stop! Think about your life. Examine your heart. Cry out like David, “Search me O God and know my heart” (Ps 139:23). Have you, like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day become so focused on “holiness” and doing what is “right” that you have become violently opposed to the very people that Jesus spent his life with? How ought the way of Jesus change your view of people, who are not like you, and how you treat them?
7. The Kingdom of God is meant to radically change your entire life, to turn your understanding of the world upside down. How are you going to change TODAY? As Shane said, the question we ask ourselves should not be so much “Where am I going to spend eternity if I were to die today?” but rather, “Because I am a follower of Jesus Christ, how am I going to live today?”

Suggested Reading:

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy*. (HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart*. (NavPress, 2002).

Ogden, Greg. *Transforming Discipleship*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).