

One of the things I like about camping and being outdoors is that when you are away from all the city lights, (light pollution) you see just how bright and shiny the stars are. I love the stars and I can relate when the Word of God talks about you and I shining like the stars of the heavens.

Referring the end of the age, **Daniel 12:1-3** talks about ... **There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book —will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.** (And I believe this part applies to the future and present) **3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.**

Philippians 2:14-16 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain

Just like the darkness of the wilderness makes the stars appear to shine brighter, so this **“warped and crooked generation,”** the culture of darkness that we live in today, makes us as bearers of the light of Christ Jesus, shine ever so brightly, like the stars in heaven.

Last week I told you that I believe we have one the greatest opportunities today to “Be The Light”, as we share the light of Jesus with others. People are more open to listen and receive Jesus due to the great disruption caused by the pandemic. Every 60 years or so there is a Cultural Disruption. (Cultural Convulsion) It takes about 4-5 years to settle out.

Prior to the Pandemic, I heard Rick Warren say that *“70% of the people we are trying to reach for Jesus will not respond to the gospel because they are not in pain therefore they don’t want to hear about Jesus. But the 30 percent in pain want to hear about Jesus.”*

The pandemic has put everybody in some degree of pain. We have experienced a collective trauma and we are all experiencing the effects of that trauma.

What we are experiencing today is very much what our country experienced in 1968. There was a pandemic called The Hong Kong Flu, sever racial divide, political unrest, street riots, and protest. We had the assassination of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and the Vietnam War. There was an underlying attack on the nuclear family and a subculture emerged during that time, known as the Flower Children or Hippies all seeking relief from their collective trauma with drug experimentation, Free Love, with a “Do your own thing” philosophy.

Of course, none of this brought the peace and soul restoration that people were looking for, so out of that pain the Jesus Revolution began. The Jesus Movement was one of the greatest revivals so far in our lifetime with 30 million people born again.

This is our perfect opportunity! Now is the time, right now, to “BE THE LIGHT.”

Bring in the harvest and reaching people for Jesus is one of our Core Values at Believers Church that we express in Choose Statements. It’s not really a core value if you aren’t choosing to act on it.

WE CHOOSE TO BE INWARD AND OUTWARD FOCUSED.

- **We Don’t Just Want to Reach People for Jesus... We MUST Reach People for Jesus.**

Mark 2:1-2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Jesus had finished a tour throughout Galilee teaching with authority and demonstrating God’s healing power, and now **He was the “Buzz” about town.** Everyone wanted to see Him. The people probably got up early, rushed to the house, and crowded in to hear Jesus.

Mark 2:3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them.

They had a friend who was paralyzed and desperately needed Jesus. Jesus was the only hope for him.

- These four weren't on a mission to get Jesus' autograph or to join "The Bless Me Club".
- Get a front row seat or to purchase a "Jesus is My Homeboy" t-shirt.

No, they were on a mission to get their friend to Jesus!

For the crowd, the meeting was about them. "What can I get out of this? What can Jesus do for me?"

- Now if asked, "Do you **WANT** your friends to meet Jesus?" I'm sure they would have said "Yes".
- But if you asked the four men, "Do you want your friend to meet Jesus?" They would have said, "We **MUST** bring our friend to Jesus".

Church, this is the mental shift that we all need to make. Our attitudes and actions need to shift from "We **Want** to Reach People for Jesus" to "We **MUST** Reach People for Jesus!"

The Apostle Paul had a "I MUST bring people to Jesus mentality."

1 Corinthians 9:16 For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach...

(I'm compelled, I must! Persecute me, imprison me, beat me, reject me, but I will preach Jesus anyway!
... Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!! WOE to me if I don't!

Jesus commands us to go!

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

We have a Great Commission, not a Great Suggestion!

Matthew 28:19 ...Go and make disciples of all nations... A command. We MUST fulfill it!

NEXT STEP: This week I will pray and ask God to increase my sense of urgency to reach people for Jesus because we MUST reach people for Jesus!

- **We Choose to Do Anything Short of Sin to Reach People Who Don't Know Jesus.**

Mark 2:3-5 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them.

4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

These four guys were willing to burst through any barrier to get their friend to Jesus! No excuses.

We have no excuses for not reaching Statesboro, Bulloch County, and Surrounding Areas for Jesus.

- Crowd blocking the path? Like the Four Men we will go over, under, around, or through it.
- Roof in the way? Nothing stood in their way, and nothing will stand in our way.
- LOVE OVERCOMES OBSTACLES. Love makes you do radical and fanatical things.

The Four Men Had to Break Some Rules!

- John Wycliffe broke some rules: Wycliffe believed the Bible should be read by every person and produced dozens of English language manuscript copies of the scriptures. The Pope was so infuriated by his teachings and his translation of the Bible into English, that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug up, crushed, and scattered in the river!
- John Hus broke some rules: He believed that people should be permitted to read the Bible in their own language, and they should oppose the tyranny of the Roman church that threatened anyone possessing a non-Latin Bible with execution. John Hus was burned at the stake in 1415, with Wycliffe's manuscript Bibles used as kindling for the fire.
- Martin Luther broke some rules: Luther came to reject several teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. He strongly disputed his understanding of the Catholic view on

indulgences, that freedom from God's punishment for sin could be purchased with money. He wrote his "Ninety-Five Theses" because he believed that salvation and, subsequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. This began the Protestant Reformation.

- John Wesley broke some rules: After his "Aldersgate" conversion (after Georgia mission) he preached salvation by faith. He was barred from preaching in the church he was raised in and where his father had been the Pastor, St. Andrew's Anglican Church. Later that evening he stood on his father's tombstone, no more than six feet from the church's front door and preached to thousands. This was the beginning of "Field Preachers" who would continue to spread the gospel of Christ Jesus. John Wesley said, "The World is my Parish."

The list could go on and on of rule breakers that changed the course of history and the church.

We Don't Just Want to Reach People for Jesus... We MUST Reach People for Jesus, therefore, WE WILL DO ANYTHING SHORT OF SIN TO REACH PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW CHRIST.

- **We Choose to Reach People No One is Reaching, So We'll Do Things No One is Doing.**
Mark 2:3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them.

The four men bringing their friend to Jesus on a cot wasn't a brilliant idea that no one else thought about, **but no one else was doing it.** (We don't just invite our friends; WE BRING our friends.) Everyone else was rushing and crowding in and around the house to see Jesus.

We are very good at making excuses as to why we can't do something.

The Four could have said:

- Our friend can't walk, doesn't get out of the house much, so he probably won't go.
- The crowds are too large. Even a healthy man would have to fight his way to Jesus.
- Our friend is heavy! Carrying him on a mat is going to be too hard.
- If I waste my time trying to get my friend to Jesus, I might miss Jesus myself.

We could make excuses too: Too young, too old, not educated, limited resources, I can't, I can't, I can't.

Not only do we need to do something... We need to do what no one else is doing.

A lot of churches are doing the same thing, and not all people are being reached for Jesus. Therefore, we need to do something that no one else is doing.

NEXT STEP: This week I will pray, asking God to give me and Believers Church creative ideas to do what no one is doing, so we can reach people no one is reaching.

"We have never seen anything like this!"

Mark 2:5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Mark 2:11-12 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.

This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

I want Statesboro, Bulloch County, and surrounding areas to look at what God is doing in and through Believers Church of Statesboro, and say, **"We have never seen anything like this!"**

WE CHOOSE TO BE INWARD AND OUTWARD FOCUSED.

- We Don't Just Want to Reach People for Jesus... We MUST Reach People for Jesus.
- We Choose to Do Anything Short of Sin to Reach People Who Don't Know Jesus.
- We Choose to Reach People No One is Reaching, So We'll Do Things No One is Doing.