

Sermon Notes

A Closer Look – Your Favorite Verses Explored

July 27-28, 2019

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- **A Closer Look: Favorite Verses Explored**
- We are looking at the most quoted verses in the Bible. Are they taken out of context, do they present only part of the truth, or do they really mean what we think they mean?? That is the question!
- *****Remember this phrase: Don't try to prove yourself, just join the team!!*****
- **Ephesians 2:8-9**
 - o Another great verse!! Powerful stuff here and very true.
 - o The misunderstanding of this verse is sort of a mix of out of context and not the full story.
 - o So we will compare and contrast this with **James 2:24**.
- Grace or Works???
- o Weird thing I noticed early in my Christian life: people want to be followers of Christ without having to bother with actually following Christ. (Does this work for hockey? Etc...)
- o Why is that? Because they aren't trying to follow Jesus, they just want to avoid Hell.
- **Ephesians 2:1-10**
 - o Two main Points: A changed life and the goodness of God.
 - o How I see it: Jesus did his part first on the cross. We access the saving grace of God through faith, NOT by proving ourselves to God by our works. We trust solely in Christ.
 - Salvation is not just afterlife, but new life/abundant life here and now!! A life upgrade!
 - We respond to the gift of God by faith, taking hold of new life and everlasting life!!
- Problem: some people try to turn this into a "how to get into Heaven without turning to God" loophole.
 - o God is smarter than that. **Galatians 6:7-8, Hebrews 10:26-27**.
 - o You don't need to prove yourself, just join the team! But if you don't join the team...
 - o (If necessary: the gift of God is salvation, not faith. Compare to **Romans 6:23**.)
- This apparently an issue in the early church, so James deals with it. **James 2:14-26**
 - o Faith is the broken thing. (**James 2:14,17,26**)
 - What if Abraham said he believed but refused to obey God? (**James 2:21-23**)
 - Deeds are initial physical evidence of faith. ☺ **James 2:22**
 - What if we claim to believe but refuse to obey God? It makes no sense.
 - Fix your faith, then the right deeds will follow. Ask God for help!
 - o You don't need to prove yourself, but you do need to join the team.
- Let's get free from wondering if you are good enough. It's not about you, it's about what Jesus has done.
 - o AND join the team. Jesus has made a roster spot for you, will you take it?
- Closing verse: **Ephesians 2:8-10** (focus v10)
 - o The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Will your section of field go unharvested?
- Pray for each other before you finish up!