

Sermon Notes and Study Questions

A Distinctive Community

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Notes:

Introduction: What if

The State of Faith in America (Barna Research Group, 2016-2018)

By Population, America is the 3rd Largest Mission Field in the World.

73% of Americans Identify as Christians...

But...

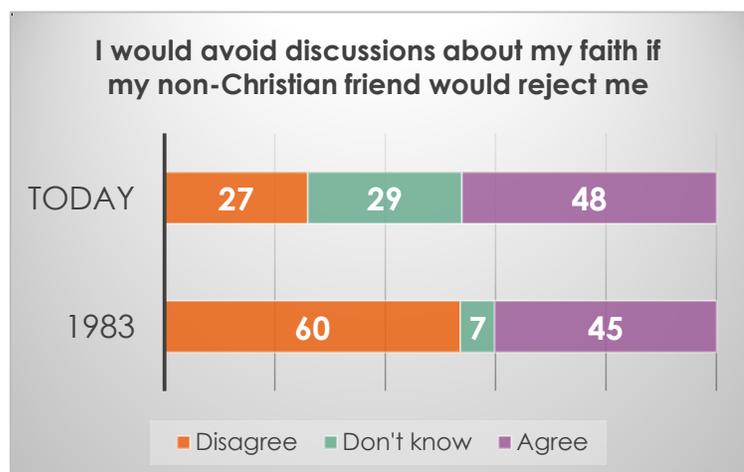
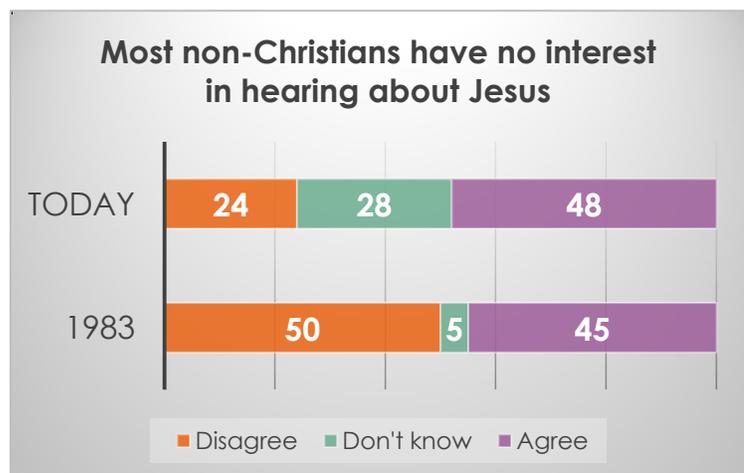
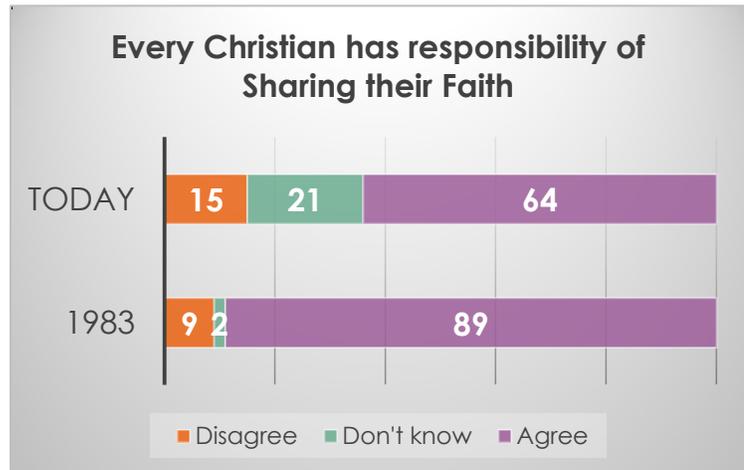
Of the 78% of Americans

who Identify as Christians

31% attend a worship service once a month and say that their faith is very important to them.

41% are non-practicing Christians

48% are post-Christian



The Challenge of Post-Christian America

Lessons from Paul

- Keeping the Challenge in proper Perspective
- It is a Spiritual Battle
- His glory is revealed best in our common, humble life.

A Vision for West Side: A People on Mission Together

What it means: Winning the Right

Conclusion

Connecting Questions

1. If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be and why?
2. Share a time you felt the blessing of being part of church family.

Discussion Questions:

1. How could our church help our community experience a little of the life of heaven break-out in the Tri-Cities?
2. When you consider the state of faith in America, what stands out to you?
3. Do you think it is harder to share faith with people today verses 35 years ago? Why or why not?
4. How does Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:1-12 speak into our present call of being on mission for Jesus Christ?
5. Do you find it credible to think that more people in America have rejected a weak facsimile of the Christian life vs. a robust expression of the Christian faith? Why or why or why not?
6. What is your response that central to the vision of West Side is for us to be a Community on Mission for Jesus Christ?
7. Do you think people coming to faith is central to our mission? Why or why not?
8. Winning the Right is about proving to people that we truly love them. Why do you think this is important in a post-Christian America?
9. How did God speak to you through the Scripture and message?
10. How can we encourage one another to shine the light of Christ to our community, corporately and individually?