

5.22.11

Walking Dusty...

teacher: Dan Crist

“When I first came to Portland, Oregon, I met a student on one of the campuses where I worked. His hair was always messy, and in the entire time I knew him, I never once saw him wear a pair of shoes. Rain, sleet, or snow, Bill was always barefoot. While he was attending college, he had become a Christian. At this time, a well-dressed, middle-class church across the street from the campus wanted to develop more of a ministry to the students. The congregation was not sure how to go about it, but they tried to make the students feel welcome. One day, Bill decided to worship there. He walked into the church, wearing his blue jeans, T-shirt, and, of course, no shoes. People looked a bit uncomfortable, but not one said anything to him. Bill began walking down the aisle looking for a seat. As he got down to the front pew and realized that there were no seats, he just squatted on the carpet – perfectly acceptable behavior at the college fellowship, but perhaps unnerving for a church congregation. The tension in the air became so thick one could slice it. Just then, an elderly man began walking down the aisle toward the boy. Was he going to scold Bill? My friends who saw him approaching thought, “You can’t blame him. He’d never guess Bill is a Christian. And his world is too distant from Bill’s to understand. You can’t blame him for what he’s going to do.” ([Live Like a Jesus Freak](#), p. 86-87)

Isn’t this the picture most of us have about church? It’s a building where a group of similar people meet, and there’s a certain way to act while you’re there. Bill must not have known that. In “My Jesus” Todd Agnew sang about this kind of church: “My Jesus would never be accepted in my church. The blood and dirt on His feet might stain the carpet. But He reaches for the hurting and despises the proud. And, I think He’d prefer Beale St. to the stained glass crowd.”

The first century definition of the “church” is that it cannot be contained. It is an unstoppable, irresistible, passionate, life-changing movement of believers that are united in their belief of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We, its people, are the church. And we represent God every day of the week to a world that doesn’t know Him. At school or work, at home or at the store, we have the opportunity to be light to a dark world. We need to stop worrying about bringing people to church. We need to be concerned about bringing them to Christ.

The story of Bill isn’t finished . . . “As the man kept walking slowly down the aisle, the church became utterly silent. All eyes were focused on him; you could not hear anyone breathe. The man reached Bill, and with some difficulty he lowered himself and sat down next to him on the carpet. He and Bill worshipped together on the floor that Sunday. I was told there was not a dry eye in the house.” ([Live Like a Jesus Freak](#), p. 87-88) I have a feeling this man knew he was the church and he lived it out throughout the rest of the week, too!

Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39) Does this love show beyond Sunday nights?

Do I “stand on the sidelines” when it comes to being the church? Do I share Christ with others? Am I a light in the darkness?

How has my view of church changed? How have past experiences at church affected my view of church?

If a visitor came to the gathering, would they feel welcome? Would they feel loved?

In what ways do I feel qualified to share Jesus? In what ways do I feel disqualified?

What is at the center of chURch?

Additional Verses: Matthew 16:15-18, 1 Peter 2:9, 2 Corinthians 3:2-6

'church' video links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifnJtkAnBq4> – What is church

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arxfLK_sd68&feature=related – Missional Church

This month's memory verse: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” 1 Peter 1:3

REMINDERS:

5.29 – 5TH SUNDAY - FAMILY CELEBRATION! *LIVING: COMMUNITY.* The 1MOSAIC family will enjoy some food, bonfire, swimming, volley ball, worship and many other fun activities...as we gather for a family camp out! Festivities begin at 5pm Sunday evening & will end after breakfast on Monday morning. Come and go as you please and bring your friends & family. Watch the web for more details & spread the word!!!

6.5 – The Gathering at SHU at 6pm! VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION WILL BE SHARED...MAKE SURE YOU ARE THERE WITH US!!!