

Calvary Connection

September 2017

Friday Mornings

Over fifteen years ago, Stan Sawler started a Friday morning men's Bible study, one which met early enough for the men to attend on their way to work.

Today the meeting is led by John Gramlich, although it has "changed hands" more than once over the years. It is held at the church from 6:45 – 8 a.m., except for the first Friday of each month – that meeting place takes place at the Webster Panera Bread.

John explains the study enthusiastically (is there any other way for John to be?) as one which emphasizes godly character in men. Soon the men will finish their study in the books of Samuel, covering the lives of Samuel, Saul and David. Next, they'll be looking at the gospel of Mark.

John is quick to mention that the men have developed an openness in their relationships with one another. They pray for their needs, as well as other needs brought to their attention.



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The Gospel is Offensive, Those That Share It Should Not Be

As it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." Rom. 9:33

One of the tactics of our enemy is to get the lost offended by something religious to turn them off completely to the gospel. The gospel is offensive to those that would understand, yet still reject it. The message of God states that life without Christ is reprehensible to Him, and anything we might do that is good is worthless and has no chance of bringing us salvation.

The gospel tells us that without Christ, our father is the devil (John 8:44), that it is not in our nature to do good (Rom. 3:9-20), and that we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3). The gospel also states that we deserve eternity away from God in the depths of hell because we have offended Him.

The good news of the gospel centers around Jesus Christ and His redemptive work of dying on the cross in our place and rising again victoriously. Anyone who will come to Him in faith will have their sins forgiven and be adopted into the family of God. Therein is the gospel, and it is an offensive and divisive message. It is a message that tells others that their work is as filthy rags in God's sight. They reject the idea that a Jewish carpenter is who they must entrust their soul.

The church's goal should be that if someone is asked why they are not a Christian, the answer would be 'because the gospel offends me', not because Christians offend me.

With that being said, Christians should not be what offends people about Christianity. I'm not saying that Christians should be over-accommodating so as not to offend people. To the contrary, I believe that Christians should keep to a biblical, ethical and moral standard as outlined in God's Word. As Christians we should live out, speak out, and stand up for the Truth. However, we should do it in such a way that our love is unmistakable, and our actions are unquestionably kind and respectful to others.

I have known people who claim that they want nothing to do with Christ because they had a terrible experience with the church or church members. I cannot recall anyone, however, who has told me they rejected Christ simply based on the offensive nature of the gospel. Many of the people who have rejected Christ are just using a bad experience as a convenient excuse to not expose an unforgiving and sinful heart. However, the sad fact remains that there are many who have been hurt, offended, or angered by those that identify themselves as Christians.

When Jesus spoke about the topics of the day, people marveled (Matt. 7:28-29; Mark 12:17). We too should be known for our calm, patient intelligence in talking about issues of politics, science, and religion, not for our over-zealous nature in winning a debate. What if people saw Christians with things to say that really made them think about their lives? What if the only reason someone had to saying 'no' to Jesus was that 'the gospel offends me?' by Pastor Daniel Gregory (edited)

Ministries We Support

WZXV 99.7 FM has been broadcasting 24 hours a day since 1993. What started as one commercial frequency has led to over 9 frequencies in Upstate NY.

When Pastor Ray delivers his morning message, what process takes place before you hear it on WZXV? That depends on which ‘era’ you are referring to. Years ago, the Farmington radio station handled all production of its radio programs ‘in-house’. Volunteers would listen to each audio file in ‘real time’ – quite time consuming! They would then edit the recording to a length of 21 minutes, then add 3½ - 4 minutes of introduction and music.

Today, churches like ours use a production company (Bridgeport Productions) that acts as a middle man. The process begins with our sound booth guys, who create a master audio file, upload it to the production company, which then creates a pro-audio file for the radio broadcast.

The next time you are listening to *Sound Words* (4 p.m. weekdays), notice that there are no background sounds. The humming of lights, a squeak of the microphone, the sound of the air conditioning starting up – these are all filtered out during the audio editing. As Jeff Gallatin, the station’s broadcaster, puts it, ‘We don’t want anything to detract from the Word as it goes out on the airwaves.’

The history of WZXV is quite interesting, and God’s hand is clearly seen in its inception. Pastor Ray recalls that, while still on staff at CC Finger Lakes, the pastors were made aware of the availability of the 99.7 frequency on FM radio. The \$50,000 price tag was not in the church’s budget, but as an act of faith (and a loan), they purchased the Palmyra frequency. As Ray describes it, that radio ‘real estate’ (a number hovering around the 100 frequency on the dial) was - and is - worth millions. The Federal Communications Commission decides who is able to use which frequencies for which purposes, and it issues licenses to stations for specific frequencies. And the big rock stations vie for the numbers hovering around that magic number - 100.

The radio ministry has touched countless lives, and the staff at WZXV could give many, many examples of emails and letters they’ve received over the years with testimonies of its life-changing effects. Testimonies of healing in marriages, addictions, and depression are just a few. One woman’s recent email stated ‘I just wanted to thank you for your radio station. I just found the channel six months ago. I now listen to it daily and it has renewed my faith in God.’



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They enjoy worship together and discuss the Scriptures as the study unfolds.

Typically, the group consists of ten to fifteen men – at least those who are ‘physically’ present! There are two men who actually *call in* to the meeting in order to participate, their schedules conflicting with the meeting time.

Imagine, for example, that you are a long-distance truck driver, as is Bob Hamman. He calls in to the meeting while “on the job!” Why miss out on the blessing that the men enjoy together?

Give John Gramlich a call for more information: 585-216-7695.



Enriching Your Bible Vocabulary

Ebenezer - The prophet Samuel set up a stone after the Lord routed the Philistines and Israel won a great victory. This was not without repentance and seeking the Lord on Israel's part. They had to put away their false gods and pray. *Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.”* 1 Sam. 7:12

edify - to construct, build up or establish. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.* Rom. 14:19

effectual - effective service; active work. *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.* James 5:16

enmity - deep-rooted hatred. *Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Jam. 4:4. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.* Rom. 8:7

entreaties - pleadings; humble requests. *The poor use entreaties; but the rich answer roughly.* Prov. 18:23

eschew - to shun, avoid, abstain from. *Let him eschew evil and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.* 1 Pet. 3:11

exegesis - critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially of Scripture.