

Mark's Musings May 12, 2008

Years ago I was involved in youth ministry at the FCC in Versailles, Ky. and they had a huge VBS every year. We would typically have 100+ kids at the vacation bible school week. As a promotional tool to get the kids to bring their friends and bring their offerings we provided some incentives. Such as if our attendance reached 200 people then one person would get a pie in the face. And if our offerings reached a certain amount then another person would get a pie in the face.

I don't think any of you have to guess where I'm going with this. Being new to the staff it was initiation time and I was pretty much the director for the week. So as you can see I was target **number 1**. Those of you know me know a couple of things about me. I like pie, but I really don't like messes. The big day was Friday, the kids met all of their goals so I wanted to be the first to receive my sentence. I thought that pie to the face would take probably 3 seconds. Pie up and then gone. What happened to me however probably took about 20 seconds. And to this day I maintain that I was not hit with one pie but several, Anyway my face went into the pie then it was smushed around my head. It was in my hair, it was all over my shirt, it was up my nose, it was packed in my eardrum. I was pulling whipped cream and graham cracker out of my ears for about a year.

Now that may be funny to you. But let me tell you that it was not humorous to me, Oh sure I went a long with it and I laughed at myself for volunteering, but I believe that God meant for pies to go in the mouth and not in the ear. I also learned that if you ever take a job as youth minister **never** go to the church the week before VBS. Now I was not the only one who got a little messy that day. There were several people who were forced to receive their "Just Dessert". But we all allowed that to happen to us because we realized one thing, and it may have been founded in a spirit of goofing off or just having fun. The thing that those people realized is that "Bringing people to Jesus never comes without one big mess." We had number of people become a part of the church because VBS has always been a big thing. And when people see that others can have fun, and are willing to get messy... the message of Jesus becomes just a little more real.

We are looking at how God has been changing some things in order to help us be more effective as a church. The Bible reminds us that God wants **everyone** to come in and be a part of eternal life and the message from God is...." no price is too high, no mess to big."

The facts about what God thinks are not debatable, and the stories are there to act as evidence and reminders that "No cost is to high, No mess to big." Need examples? Paul's life was messed up because he followed God. He was mistreated and eventually killed for his belief. You know what some people didn't like about Paul? He messed things up and let those Gentiles, those sinners, into the church. Zacchaeus' life was messed up because he followed Jesus. Read through your Bible, almost everyone who gets serious about their faith has their lives messed up because their compassion costs them their temporary stability.

The stories of Jesus are full of messy situations. **Here's my problem....** I don't like messes. I would rather just let it go than rock the boat. I would rather just do what's popular than receive complaints and criticism. But then I come back to the heart of it all and remember "no cost is too high when I can help someone to Jesus" When my home church in Burlington, I started building their new addition there were people who didn't even attend the church calling the minister and the elders asking them why they were "destroying the look of the building". The Burlington church knows that "no mess is too big" if it's God's will.

The truth is we have to look for ways to be more effective. We can not isolate ourselves from those who need Jesus. So..... How much are you willing to pay or how big of a mess are you willing to create so that others can experience Life in Jesus?

Come see us at **First**...We talk about things like that!