

CROSS POINT COMMUNITY CHURCH

5 LIES WE BELIEVE

“I CAN’T MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

APRIL 7, 2013



MAIN POINT

Whether you know it or not, you have been lied to. Over the course of our lives, we start to believe seemingly innocent lies—things that are not true but are believable. As long as we believe these lies, we won’t realize the joy, love, and satisfaction God has planned for us. Today, as we begin the “5 Lies We Believe” series, we expose the lie that we can’t make a difference.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

Have you ever been lied to? What does it feel like to be lied to?

Do you agree with Pete that we have bought into subtle lies that impact our lives? Why or why not?

Why do you think the Evil One attacks the way we think? How does the way we think impact the way we behave?

The Evil One isn’t just a liar; he is the “father of lies” (John 8:44). From the very beginning, he has been lying to the children of God, trying to distract them from their God-given purpose and identity. One of the lies that has been spread and believed among Christ-followers today is the lie of insignificance. We believe that we can’t make a difference in the world. It’s time for that lie to be exposed.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Do you think people genuinely want to make a difference in the world? If they do, then what might be reasons why few people actually work to change the world?

Which of these are legitimate reasons and which are excuses?

What do those reasons reveal about our faith in God? What do they reveal about the way that we see ourselves?

How do you think Jesus would respond to those excuses?

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 9:35-38.

What elements of Jesus' character do you see emphasized in these verses?

How are those characteristics of Jesus meant to motivate us to make a difference?

Do you believe the harvest is truly plentiful? What implications should that reality have on your life?

Why do you think workers in the Lord's harvest are so few?

Jesus' love for the people created a sense of urgency. He wanted to meet their needs as soon as possible. Jesus saw the opportunity for a harvest, and He knew that He should waste no time in gathering it. The same opportunity exists today.

Why is it important if we are seeking to make a difference to see Jesus as the "Lord who is in charge of the harvest"?

Seeing the needs of people, Jesus called on His disciples to pray that God would send out workers into His harvest. God is the One in charge of the harvest, and as we pray, we must also listen to His call to action. In a sense, we become the answer to our own prayers. Let's look at the story of the feeding of the five thousand in the gospels. In this story, the disciples saw a need, but failed to see that they could be the difference.

> HAVE ONE VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:5-15. ASK ANOTHER TO READ LUKE 9:10-17.

In these parallel accounts of the same story, how would you describe the attitudes of the disciples when they saw the crowds?

What lie were the disciples believing?

What is different about the attitude of the little boy in the John passage?

How does this passage combat the lie that you can't make a difference?

The disciples saw the size of the problem. They saw the limits of their resources. They believed the lie that they could not make a difference. But this little boy separated himself from the others by his simple willingness to give what he had and trust Jesus to do the rest. When we focus on the power of Jesus rather than the size of the problem, we realize that one person really can change the world.

NEXT STEPS

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How specifically this week are you going to change your thinking to believe that you can make a difference in the world?

One way we can do that together is through joining the END IT Movement. Were you shocked to hear the statistics of modern day slavery? Why or why not?

To start making a difference this week:

1. On Tuesday, write a red X on your hand to support the END IT Movement.
2. Use social media outlets to draw attention to the issue of modern day slavery (resources are available at enditmovement.com).
3. Continue to pray, give, and support our mission here at Cross Point as we help end slavery right here in Middle Tennessee.

PRAY

Pray and thank God that He is in charge of the harvest, and ask Him to send workers into it. Ask specifically that the people in your group would feel the motivation to be sent into the fields. Ask for faith to believe the truth that one person can make a difference in the world.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

- Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - **Have you shown your support this week for ending modern day slavery?**
 - **What have you done to combat the lie of insignificance? To remind yourself that you can make a difference?**
- A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
- The challenge to memorize Matthew 9:37-38.

MATTHEW 9:35-38

Jesus' extensive ministry took Him throughout Galilee where He went to synagogues and taught God's Word, but He didn't stop there. He also served needs by preaching and healing. By preaching the good news of the kingdom, Jesus met the most pressing spiritual needs among the people who listened to Him. By healing every disease and every sickness, He also attended to their most pressing physical needs.

As a result of Jesus' teaching, preaching, and healing ministry, crowds gathered around Him. As Jesus saw them, His heart broke. He was stirred deep down in His heart. The Greek word for **compassion** refers to emotions that are felt in the deepest sense. The word refers to the inner parts of a person, or the bowels where emotions were thought to originate. It conjures images of extreme pity and mercy. Having compassion for the sea of humanity meant aching for them, feeling in His "gut" the depth of their spiritual and physical needs.

Because of Jesus' loving heart for the people, He looked on them as sheep abandoned by their shepherd. God had directed the leaders of Israel to care for the people. But instead of caring for them, the religious leaders neglected and abused them. They imposed heavy religious obligations on the people who already carried heavy spiritual and physical burdens. Israel's shepherds neglected God's people (see Ezek. 34); nobody seemed to care for them. But Jesus, the Shepherd of the sheep, had come. He cared and even gave His life on the cross for the sheep. Today He sends out Christians to join in and to continue His work. As the crowds made their way to Jesus, He could see they were weary because of the oppression they endured. Also, He saw how their needs had worn them out, leaving them pillaged and plundered but not helped. No wonder Jesus' heart broke for the people of Galilee.

Jesus' love for the needy Galileans fostered a sense of urgency. He wanted to meet their needs as soon as possible. In addition to seeing the people as sheep, He spoke of them in terms of a great harvest. A farmer knows when grain needs harvesting, and he wastes no time gathering it. He realizes the window of opportunity soon will be gone, and the grain not gathered in time will be lost in the field. Jesus saw the opportunity for a rich spiritual harvest and that He should waste no time in gathering it. Otherwise, the window of opportunity would pass.

Seeing the needs of people, Jesus called on His disciples to pray that God would send out workers into His harvest. The harvest is great; opportunity is there for us. Believers today should pray for God to call workers to missions, for we know God works through the prayers of His people.

Jesus instructed His disciples to direct their prayers to the Lord of the harvest. A reference to God, the phrase implies His sovereignty to direct people into fields to reap the abundant harvest. What a comfort and an encouragement this is for believers. God is the Lord of the harvest, not us. We are not responsible for the kingdom's growth; God is. Yet God calls us to cooperate with Him both in praying and in going. As we pray, we ask Him to send out workers. In other words, we ask the Father to give His people a push.