



INCONCEIVABLE



The amazing growth in our local faith communities that you've made possible by your investment over the past 23 years is remarkable, but then, the Church as a whole has always been remarkable. To truly appreciate how privileged we are as 21st century followers of Christ, it helps to look back on the improbable history of our faith, to see how an obscure rabbi from Galilee (and his earliest followers) changed the world against all odds.

Discussion

Start Talking

In hindsight, what's the most unlikely thing you've experienced? What event from your life might seem most implausible if it were to occur in a movie?

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, "starting small?"

Have you ever made a successful prediction? (Sporting event, political race, weather, catastrophe, etc) What led you to the successful conclusion? How did you know?

Looking Back

What progress did you make over the past week when it comes to pursuing Jesus' definition of greatness (pouring yourself out in service for other people), which we discussed last week?

What changes could you still implement?

If you could do last week over again, what would you change? What would you keep the same?

What About You?

1. What do you find most surprising about the history of Christianity?
2. Have you ever taken anything for granted until after it disappeared? If so, what?
3. In your mind, what does it mean to be "stewards" of something? How do you understand this concept in relationship to the Christian faith?
4. When it comes to engaging with a local church, how do you think the mindset of being a "steward" differs from the mindset of being a "consumer"?
5. Realistically, what do you think happens if the church fails to shape the conscience of our nation and our world for a generation or two?
6. Where do you see the need for the influence of a thriving church in our country? In the larger world?

Looking It Up

– Read the following passages Matthew 5:13-14, 16

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world... Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

1. If Rome was considered the “light” of the ancient world due to its far-reaching imperial dominance, who or what do you think holds that position in modern culture? (a particular country or culture? technology? the innovation of global connectivity?)
2. What does it look like for believers to “lose their flavor?”
3. How do you think followers of Jesus can “let good deeds shine before others” without projecting an air of superiority or inauthenticity?

– Review the scripture from the sermon.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1. To what do you think the “the work of the Lord” refers?
2. Do you ever wonder whether you are doing the right thing? How does this factor into the command to “stand firm?”
3. In what situations do you find it easiest to “stand firm?” When do you find it to be most uncomfortable?

Putting It All Together

1. Andy encouraged us to be active stewards of the Christian faith, engaging with a local church to ensure that the faith thrives in generations to come. That can seem fairly “big picture” and kind of abstract. What do you think this task looks like in practical terms?
2. How can we pursue this goal outside of an organized weekly church meeting?
3. What specific elements of our culture, country, or society do you see as being in particular need of engagement from followers of Christ?
4. What tangible steps could we take to engage these people, practices, or institutions?
5. What, specifically, will you do this year to become more of a steward of faith, and less of a consumer of church?