

## WORSHIP

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

No Other Like Jesus, You, You Are God, The Same Jesus, You Are God Alone, Jesus, The Same Jesus

## WELCOME

What words will you use to describe our world today? What words will you use to describe how you feel about our world today?

## WORD

### ACTS 7:55-58

*<sup>54</sup> Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup> But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; <sup>56</sup> and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." <sup>57</sup> But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. <sup>58</sup> When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

There is restlessness in the hearts of people all around the world today. Troubles and tragedies like the accidental shooting down of a passenger airline, massive bushfires that engulf homes, human and animal lives, volcanic eruptions, and a new virus spreading across the globe have this effect on us. Governments enjoy popularity then after a while, gain opposition from dissatisfied citizens; and new leaders are elected who eventually lose popularity and are replaced by another set who go through the same cycle of "unrest".

What can one person do to change a world so filled with problems and pain? We can learn from the first-century Christians who lived in a world very similar to ours. In fact, the Roman world 2,000 years ago was characterized by widespread moral decay: absolute truth was considered non-existent, whoever was in power defined what was "right", the sanctity of marriage was gone, abortion was rampant, etc. This was the setting for Jesus coming into our world, and after his death and resurrection, the outnumbered disciples he left behind totally changed their world (**Acts 17:6, ESV**), restoring morality and uplifting cultural practices, and simply making the world a better place for human life to flourish. Today, those who acknowledge Jesus as God and Savior outnumber those from any other belief system! God has a design for the church, God has a design for you, and if we live our lives individually and as a community by His design, we will change the world.

How did the first Christians change their world? Three convictions were deeply held by Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian church, and all the other apostles and church fathers that became the basis for how they lived and witnessed for Christ. It is important to remember though that our convictions must be supported by truth and love. Convictions without love will make you obnoxious, your message will be repulsive, and you will be unattractive to those you are trying to reach.

### 1. THEY SAW THE FINGER OF GOD IN HISTORY AND CHRIST AS THE CENTRAL FIGURE

History is ultimately His story and Jesus is the point of reference for all that happened and will take place in the world. Christianity says that our being is more important than our doing; who you are defines what you do, unlike other worldviews that teach that what you do defines who you are. God is the God of history and you are here at this moment for a purpose — discover it! Your purpose will show you what you must do to help change the world. You are part of history and you can make a difference!

Jesus' disciples could not figure out what their purpose was at first. After Jesus' resurrection, two of them walked with Him along the road to Emmaus (**Luke 24:13-34**) without even recognizing that it was their risen Lord, as they were still overwhelmed by grief over his death. Jesus had to teach them a history lesson, culminating in his breaking of bread at dinner time — and that was when the disciples recognized that it was Jesus, alive from the grave. Christianity looks back in history because we know that God accomplished his greatest work 2,000 years ago through Jesus. Yet we also know we have a purpose for being alive today, and we look forward to the future for what God has in store for us. Now is our turn to understand God's purpose for us at this time in history. Time flies fast; redeem the time, pursue God's purpose for you in history.

### 2. THEY HARNESSSED AN ARENA OF PERSECUTION INTO A PLATFORM OF OPPORTUNITY

Once the disciples discovered that they were to be His witnesses wherever they are and around the world, they used every opportunity to share the gospel to others even when under intense suffering for their faith.

Don't be surprised that you encounter trouble because the moment you want to build something for God, there will be someone who would want to dismantle it! The full force of

## WORD (cont'd)

the winds will be against you as you take on the responsibility of making a difference in this world for Jesus. Prepare to take on the baton to be witnesses for Christ from those who have faithfully gone before us in the race. Run for God, train for God, study when you can, memorize Scripture, meditate on God's Word. Do not give up at the halfway point! What is your platform to proclaim Christ? Remember that a job is something that you choose, but a calling is something that you have been chosen for. Have you been called to be a mother? A grandfather? Maybe you were called to be an engineer, a doctor, a preacher or a businessman. Whatever your calling is, it is sacred. Use it as a platform to proclaim Jesus. You may be facing persecution, BUT CHRIST... is all worth it. You may be feeling pain because you follow Jesus, BUT CHRIST... is able to strengthen you to complete His calling for you. Don't look at the scars that life has given you, look at the Person who is willing to kiss those scars — Jesus; He himself has scars because of His love for you.

### 3. THE PRIORITY OF THE PERSON OVER A METHODOLOGY

Methods are just a means to accomplish a purpose, but different people will respond differently to the same methodology. One may succeed at it and another may fail to accomplish their purpose through it.

You cannot simply take a training and expect to become a great communicator. Training is not equal to the gift as it is God who gives the gift. Training just enhances the gift. You have a calling from God, you know it! He has given you a platform to fulfill your calling and you are on it right now — use it! Know that you as a person is more important than any methodology. David did not write a manual on how to slay giants with a sling, nor did Moses talk about how to hear God from a burning bush! Slings and burning bushes are just methodologies God used to enable His servants to fulfill their calling. Do not depend on methods, depend on God. He has fashioned you to fulfill a unique calling through the platform that He has given you at this time in history. Live out that conviction with truth and love, and you will help change our world for Christ.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

*(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)*

1. **Self-Check.** What convictions do you hold when it comes to who Jesus is? How do you see Him at work in your personal history?
2. **Setting It Right.** How have you demonstrated your beliefs about Jesus to others? Is it communicated with love? How can you improve?
3. **Living It Out.** How are you using the platform God has given you to live out your calling of being a witness for Christ? Of making Christ-committed followers who make Christ-committed followers?

## WORKS

### PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for the people that you are able to reach with the gospel because of the platform that God has given you. Demonstrate your convictions about Jesus to them with love, show that Jesus cares for them by sharing the gospel to them in the next few days as you encounter them at home, work, community, etc.

### WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

#### I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

#### II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

#### III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

#### IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

#### V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends