

Revenge of the Purple Gorillas Lesson 1: Ok with Different

-Last year we kicked off a series called "Purple Gorillas."

-Does anybody remember the story behind it? (Christean Covington's huge gorilla from King's Island)

As I was thinking about this ridiculous purple gorilla concept, I started thinking about this ridiculously awesome event that we do every year called "Goodwill Hunting."

Don't you guys love Goodwill Hunting? (Describe it)

I can't help but think about this memory every year when Goodwill Hunting comes around.

Pulled the bus up to Cheddars. Ok, guys. Let's go. And for a couple of seconds, nobody moved. People were like, "Wait, we're going out in public like this?"

But I'll tell you what I saw that night, and something that sort of takes place every year at Goodwill Hunting: **learning to be ok with looking different.**

Are you ok with that? We don't like to look different, do we?

*Bell's Palsey story. I can't remember if I've shared this or not. My teacher went in and explained to the class what was going on, all because I looked different. I was really self-conscious about it. Why? Well, because I didn't want to look different.

What I want to suggest to you tonight though, is that we've got to learn to be ok with looking different.

When we follow Jesus we're going to look a little bit ridiculous sometimes. When you take a stand for what's right, be prepared to be the only one. And be ok with that.

Paul said about being an apostle: "We are fools for Christ's sake." Do you understand what he's saying there? People looked at the apostles and they said, "Those guys are foolish." People ridiculed them and made fun of them and even tortured them, but look what he says. (1 Cor. 4:10a, 12-13) 12b When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

You guys who were in here with me on Sunday morning, I apologize but I could not get Bartimaeus out of my head when I was working on this lesson. I love his story so much.

This is Mark 10:46-52 **46** And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.

Ok, so quick side note: his name is? He was? Blind. And he was a? Beggar. On roadside. Why is he by the roadside? Why do beggars today stand right off of the interstate exit ramp or busy intersections?

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" **48** And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

Bartimaeus! Chill out, man. Shut it. Be quiet. Don't bother Jesus. Don't be a nuisance!

And by the way, to a lot of people beggars are a nuisance. They're not worth their time. They don't treat them with any compassion. They ignore them. They roll up the windows.

They say things like "There's a reason they're standing on the street corner begging. They brought this on themselves."

Ever heard that before?

And so here is this crowd trying to keep Bartimaeus quiet.

How does that work out for them?

'But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

What did we say earlier? We've got to learn to be ok with looking a little bit different.

Some things are worth being different about. Jesus is one of those things.

When the world told Bartimaeus to shut his mouth, he didn't care.

Why? Because he knew Jesus was worth the commotion. He cared a whole lot more about Christ's attention than the crowd's.

People look at us and say things like: "Man, what's the big deal? Why don't you just give it a rest. You don't want people to think you're weird do you?"

There was nobody that was going to keep Bartimaeus' quiet for the cause of Christ!

But what about you?

49 And **Jesus stopped** and said, "Call him."

Bartimaeus had a purple gorilla kind of faith. A faith that when Jesus saw it, **stopped** Jesus in his tracks. A faith that Jesus stopped to notice.

And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." **50** And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. **51** And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." **52** And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

The Christian life isn't about shopping at Goodwill and dressing up or have something like Bells Palsey, but listen, following Jesus requires us to look different.

And we've got to learn to be ok with that. We've got to accept the fact that we aren't always going to be accepted.

Jesus said, "Matthew 5:11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

We think "Oh, man. They're going to make fun of me. If I don't go to that party, they're going to single me out. If I speak up at school about this topic, I don't want people to label me and gossip about me behind my back.

And Jesus says, "Wait, they're making fun of you because you follow me? They singled you out because you're a Christian? They labeled you and gossiped about you behind your back because you take a stand for me?! That's awesome! That means you're doing this right!

They did the same stuff to me! And they did the same stuff to the prophets who came before! You're in good company!

You've got to love these verses out of John 15.

*18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.
19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

And so tonight I ask you, are you ok with the idea of looking a little bit different?

Purple Gorillas purpose: if someone is watching you, how long will it take them to figure out, "Oh, that guy's a Christian."

Last year one of my favorite things about this series was the way that you guys were given a challenge each week. And I wanted to begin by giving you one of the challenges that I gave you last year.

So here we go! Here's your purple gorilla, and I want you to carry it around all week. Meaning here's something practical I want you to do until we meet on Sunday.

Are you ready? My challenge for the week: start saying a prayer at the lunch table every day this week. You just see how long until someone notices "that purple gorilla." You better believe people will notice.

In fact, I want all of you to try this one out tomorrow, and I want you to text me how it went!

You might, before you bow your head say, "Hey, this might sound weird, but I'm going to say a prayer before I eat today. Is there anything I can be praying about for you?"

They're going to look at you funny at first and they might even say something back jokingly at first, because they're not going to know what to do or say, but once they figure out that you're serious, they just might ask you to pray for something going on in their life.

So you know what you do the next day? Do it again. And the next day, and the next day and the next day.

Before long, guys, you might even be leading a prayer for the whole lunch table. Someone looks over and says "Hey. What are y'all doing?"

"Oh, we have a prayer at our table before we eat. Why don't you come over tomorrow and sit with us."

Why are we so afraid of that?

Well, because someone might notice. Good!!! They'll know that you pray! People might even start a really terrible rumor about you. You see that girl over there? She prays before she eats. (Gasp!)

How awesome of a reputation would that be!!? He goes to Mt. Juliet church of Christ. I saw another girl from that church praying yesterday. Yeah? They must really care about their faith. I need to get more serious about my faith. I might go there sometime.

You're in a pretty awesome situation if the worse case scenario is that people start saying things like "Yeah, she's a Christian."

It's not about being showy. It's about being a city on a hill. It's about shining a light on Christ. Jesus didn't want us to put that light under a bushel!

So there's your purple gorilla of the week! Hope that you'll all do it!

Revenge of the Purple Gorillas Lesson 2: People Looking for People

-Hide several Waldos around the room and have the kids looking for them as they come into the building.

-Last week we kicked off “Purple Gorillas!”

-And btw, if imitation is the highest form of flattery, I give you Pink Hippos!

Other youth groups in other places, some in Brentwood, some down in Alabama, and honestly, who all really knows who all is ripping our material because it’s online and anybody could! But nevertheless God’s work is being done and we just want him to be glorified!

I love the fact that some of you really took last weeks’ message about standing out to heart...

Take McKaylee Hassel for instance...

Last week’s Purple Gorilla was for you to lead a prayer at your lunch table. Here’s what a few of you said about that experience... =)

Feedback here...

Ok, who found Waldo tonight?

When I came into the room tonight, here’s what I was looking at: I was looking at a room full of people who were looking for something.

Tonight, what if we decided to become a room full of people looking for people that are looking for something?

Let me say that again in case it didn’t make sense the first time.

What if we decided to become a room full of people looking for people that are looking for something?

People looking for people that are looking for something.

Jesus described people like that in His ministry.

In Matthew 5:6 He said “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.”

That’s people that are searching, people that are hungry for something that is good. Jesus says if that’s who you are you’re going to find fulfillment.

In Matthew 13:44 He says “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Here was a man looking for something, and when he found it, he knew just how important it was.

In Matthew 13:45-46 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, **46** who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Another man looking for something and when he found it, he was all in.

Last week’s purple gorilla went with you to the Lunch Table. But tonight’s Purple Gorilla is going to be a little bit different.

Everybody who came tonight should have received a Bible. Did we miss anybody? If so raise your hand...

Here's my challenge to you over the course of the next week, and this week's Purple Gorilla: I want to challenge everybody here to look for someone looking for something and give them a Bible.

*Purple Gorilla #2: Look for someone looking for something and give them a Bible.

Do you mean like if someone lost their phone I should give them a Bible? No.

What I'd love is for you to find someone at school that doesn't own their own Bible and give this one to them.

Now, everybody got it? What's the Purple Gorilla this week?

I think I've got a pretty good idea of what's running through a lot of your minds.

How in the world am I going to do this?

Well, I'd like to sort of paint a picture for you of what this might look like. If you are going to a good job at this, it's going to require a few things of you.

1. It's going to require you to pray.

If this task of giving a Bible away sounds a little bit overwhelming, then that's probably a good indicator that you're taking this seriously. But here's the good news: God will not let you fail when it comes to following His will.

As we think about becoming people looking for people looking for something, I'm not sure that there are any verses in Scripture that fit better here than these.

"Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you."

Think about how well those words apply to this mission.

God says "Just ask me and I'll do it. Look and you'll find what you're looking for. Knock and I'll open up a door.

Pray about this task. Take it seriously.

2. It's going to require you to think. (Think through what you want to communicate.

I suggest you think about writing a note in the front of the Bible that talks a little bit about why you chose to give them that Bible.

How many of you knocked doors this summer on the 12 Questions campaign?

How important was it to think through what you wanted to communicate before that door was opened?

This week, we're going to be asking, seeking, and knocking.

What if God opens the door that you're knocking on? What if God opens up that person's heart and they're very receptive and appreciative of what you gave to them?

Think about standing on that doorstep. You'd better know what you want to say when that door comes open.

Maybe you can role play in your cocoon tonight and think about what that looks like...what would you say? What would your note look like? What do you want to communicate to them?

3. It's going to require you to pay attention. (Pay attention to people that you typically ignore.

I could preach more on that one, but I have preached on that one a lot of times, so I think you probably get the idea there. =) It's going

to require you to step out of your comfort zone and talk to people that you wouldn't normally talk to.

4. It's going to require you to get awkward.

But Philip, won't this make for an awkward conversation?

YES!

Remember this from last week's lesson? We've got to learn to be okay with looking different. That's the whole premise of the Purple Gorillas series. If you look different, good!

Guys, tonight's cocoon time is going to be very special and I think you guys are going to really enjoy it.

Let's pray for our mission and then we'll dismiss. Help us become a room full of people looking for people looking for something.

IN COCOONS

Let the students spend time describing the person that they would like to give a Bible to, without naming names, and then spend some time praying over the Bibles and the individuals we are trying to reach.