



EPHPHATHA! BE OPENED!

God doesn't need you to be perfect. He just wants you to be His.

IGRE: LD.2.2 / 2.A / 2.7 / 3.1
SENIOR RE-NON-EXAM: A1 / A3 / B1 / G2 / G3 / H1

TRY TO THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU REALLY FELT THAT SOMEONE CARED ABOUT YOU, WHEN THEY STOPPED WHAT THEY WERE DOING AND CAME TO YOU BECAUSE YOU NEEDED THEM. HOW DID YOU FEEL IN THAT MOMENT?



HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ABLE TO BE THAT PERSON FOR SOMEONE ELSE?





WATCH FR MIKE SCHMITZ' VIDEO: "WHY GOD LOVES YOU" AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW

Reflecting on how his sister cared for his little niece when she was sick, Fr Mike says there are two attitudes the human heart can develop based on how people respond to us when we're in need:



I'm chosen, I'm loved when I'm at my _____
or I'm chosen, I'm loved when I'm at my _____.

THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY IS THIS:

God does not love us _____ of our weakness, but _____ of our weakness.



But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

MANY OF US BELIEVE THE ANTI-GOSPEL WHICH TEACHES THAT:

In order to be CHOSEN you've got to be _____.



In order to be LOVED you've got to be _____.

In order to BELONG to someone, enough for people to stop what they're doing and come and be with you, you have to be w_____, strong, h_____, great and s_____.



WHAT'S THE MESSAGE OF THE REAL GOSPEL?



- In order to be redeemed by Jesus you have to be _____.
- In order to be loved by God you have to be, in some ways, _____.
- In order to be made righteous you have to be someone who's _____.

FR MIKE SAYS THAT SO MANY CHRISTIANS DISQUALIFY THEMSELVES, SAYING: "I'M TOO _____, I'M TOO MUCH OF A _____, I'M TOO _____." REMEMBER, THAT IS NEVER TRUE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -



"EPHATHA! BE OPENED!"



EPHATHA: There's a lot going on with that spelling... and even more going on with the consequence of the word! Jesus pronounced it ("Be opened") and the man's hearing and ability to speak were restored to Him.

Such an unusual miracle, with a method that can even make us a little uncomfortable! We're not used to that level of closeness or intimacy with Jesus. We might even avoid it. Why is that? Are we worried He'll see our flaws and our imperfections? Are we worried, He'll see the real us? Are we worried, deep-down, that we're imperfect, broken, a failure, unlovable?

Are we deaf to hearing God tell us He loves us because we've filled our ears with messages telling us we're never good enough? Sometimes we're so afraid of what the world thinks, that we're afraid to even speak about our faith. We can find it difficult to affirm and build others up because of our own insecurities. We all have a deafness and muteness that need healing.

This week, spend time trying to hear God tell you that you are loved, you are chosen, you are His. See what opportunities He provides for you to build up others too, or speak about Him. Pray for the grace to want that transformation in your life too!



READ: MARK 7:31-37

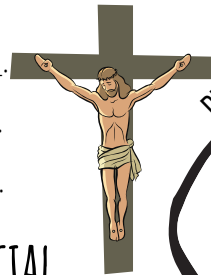


THE TRUE GOSPEL HOWEVER, TEACHES US THIS:

When I'm in need, the Lord _____.

When I'm stuck, the Lord _____.

When I'm dying, the Lord _____.



DID YOU KNOW? JESUS SAID TO ST FAUSTINA:

I perform works of mercy in every soul. The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy.

(Diary of Saint Faustina, 723)

**YOU'RE NOT CHOSEN BECAUSE YOU'RE SPECIAL.
YOU'RE SPECIAL BECAUSE YOU'RE CHOSEN!**



MISSION!

Who can you affirm and support this week? Look for opportunities to show others that they are loved, special, worthy simply as they are. Be a reflection of God's love in the world this week as you open your own heart to receiving His love too!

PRAYER TIME!

God, despite all the messages I hear from the world, despite all my fears and insecurities and weaknesses, my true identity is found in You! Help me to believe the true message of the Gospel: You don't need me to be perfect, You just want me to be Yours. Thank you for your deeply-personal, never-ending, unconditional love. Amen



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON WHAT'S INSIDE YOUR HEART THIS WEEK



- Belovedness (Sarah Kroger)
- Healer of my Soul (Tribes and Tongues)
- Open my eyes (Jesse Manibusan)
- Broken Vessels (Hillsong)
- Closer (Amanda Cook)
- Just one touch (Kim Walker)
- Healer (Kari Jobe)
- Hold on to me (Lauren Daigle)