

Stand up and be different

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Read Psalm 139:1-18

I really love this Psalm, now a psalm just means like a song or a poem and in the bible there are heaps of songs and poetry, but this one really hits the truth about a few things. Now tonight there are going to be some people who are Christians and some people who don't yet believe in what Jesus did for them, but I think this verse in some ways can have an impact on all of us.

Be different, God knows us & made us different, twins

I want to talk to you tonight about being different. Now this verse says that God knows us really well and we can't escape from his love and care. He's amazingly creative and has made each of us to be totally different from everyone else. Even twins who look very similar, still have so many differences in their personalities and characters, that when we get to know them, we can see that they are two distinct people. So we're made to be different, but so many of us are just happy to look different but in every other area in their life, they are the same.

Normal to be same, when should we be different

Now this is pretty normal, don't get me wrong, we all want to be loved and accepted in our lives and there is an element that we need to share some similarities with our mates, or our differences will drive us apart. But there are areas in society, that we need to be looking at and having a good think about where everyone else is going and question if that's really the direction that you want to follow.

We aren't willing to be different - pollution, water, sex; woah... too radical!

As a Christian, there are heaps of things that are different with my life. I look at things in the world where there are problems and I think that the solutions are really easy, people just aren't willing to be different enough to make the change, especially if it doesn't help them out in the short term. Think about stuff on a worldwide scale, we're all taught to care for the environment, but if it meant that we had to walk or ride to places instead of getting a lift. Or to be uncomfortably hot, instead of turning on the air con, then most of the time, we wouldn't do it. Water's a big one in Queensland, we're all keen on saving water, but if we had to spend less time in the shower or turn off the tap while we brushed our teeth, then we wouldn't bother, because it's a hassle. Think about how different it would be if there were no lonely kids at your school. What if it meant that just a couple of you went out of your way to talk to some kids who have no friends, to involve them in what you're doing during lunch break. How would that make you feel? How would it make really lonely kids feel? Even to do simple things when you're at the shops, to actually smile at the person at the checkout when you're buying things and to say thank you. How would that change you? How would it change those around you?

Encourage the different Christians

So I want to encourage all those out there who are being different in their lives. For all of those Christians out there who live a life that is different than the rest of society, because they believe in a God who is greater than our society. To you who give up time to care for others, to share the love you have for Jesus with other people and to live a life that is different from other people. You are the ones who will change the world.

My dreams; sports, famous, for you to be different, not popular

I think of the things that I've dreamt of being in my life, like a great sports star, but you need a lot of natural ability to help you along there and I'm getting old, so that's no good. How about a celebrity and be famous in the movies or TV, well that's great, but again, you need to be naturally talented as well as putting in heaps of work into your acting and then to have a face and body that will suit a role, so there's not much chance there. So for me, my dreams have changed, sure I might want to strap on the boots and play for Queensland in the Origin, but even more than that, my dream is that I would help you to be different in your life. That you will stand out from the crowd because you are apart from it, or you lead it. Because I think that there isn't one person who has ever been remembered for doing good, who didn't take some pretty big steps out of the lime light to get there.

High school start to end

My high school ended a lot differently than it began. There were all of 4 of us from my primary school that went to my high school and I didn't like 3 of them (I was the 4th!) So really early on, I wanted to find friends and I changed who I was to be a part of the crowd. 5 years later at the end of year 12, my life had changed a lot, I'd done a lot of things that I'm not proud of now, but I did learn how to be different and to live a life that showed my love of Jesus to the people around me. It didn't get me any friends to do this, but the people who I was friends with, accepted me and understood me and I was able to have some great chats about God with them, because I was different and that became ok.

No one changes the world by being the same, Jesus was different, will you be?

I want to leave you with this thought. No one who has changed the world, ever got there from doing the same as everyone else. I think of the one guy who changed the world so much that they changed the calendar to show it. A guy who was loved by some, but hated by most for his radical ideas of love and acceptance. A guy who went out of his way to help the poor and needy and then died and was raised again, so all of us who are needy can call on him to find peace. That's the level of difference that he had in his life, an amazing life that I'm trying to copy with the way I live. I'm not perfect, far from it, but I do want to be different by following him with all of my heart. I know it's a big call, for me it means that I probably won't be rich, I probably won't be famous and the main people who will know me, will be the teenagers that I hang out with each week. That's pretty different for any guy, but where I'm looking, it's an awesome difference that I'm glad that God's given me the opportunity to live out.

You could be happy with being the same, you're individual, why not be different too!

Now I don't know where you're at in your life, you might be really happy with just going along with the crowd and doing what everyone else is doing, even if it doesn't always seem right to you. But when I look out on our group, I know that I'm talking to a group of highly individual, creative and special young people, who have their whole lives ahead of them, but who are in a time of their lives where they will shape the things of their future. So you've got to ask yourself, will you be the same as everyone else and just fit into the crowd, or will you stand up in life and be different and live a life that will change the world around you?