

MOMENTUM BUILDERS

DIGGING INTO THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE.

AFSHIN ZIAFAT

"BE UNCOMFORTABLE"

Afshin Ziafat shares his powerful testimony, challenging us to give up the life we had imagined for ourselves to follow God's plan.

MESSAGE OPENER: DEAD OR ALIVE? When elderly Adele Gaboury turned up missing four years ago, concerned neighbors in Worcester, Massachusetts, informed the police. A brother told police she had gone into a nursing home. Satisfied with that information, Gaboury's neighbors began watching her property. Michael Crowley noticed her mail, delivered through a slot in the door, piling high. When he opened the door, hundreds of pieces of mail drifted out. He notified police, and the deliveries were stopped. Gaboury's next-door neighbor, Eileen Dugan, started paying her grandson \$10 twice a month to mow Gaboury's lawn. Later Dugan's son noticed Gaboury's pipes had frozen, spilling water out the door. The utility company was called to shut off the water. What no one guessed was that while they'd been trying to help, Gaboury had been inside her home. When police finally investigated the house as a health hazard, they were shocked to find her body. The Washington Post (10/27/93) reported that police believe Gaboury died of natural causes four years ago. The respectable, external appearance of Gaboury's house had hidden the reality of what was on the inside. Something similar can happen to people: We may appear outwardly proper while spiritually dead. All sorts of religious activity may be happening outside, while the real problem is missed: spiritual death on the inside.

SOURCE: Vialo Weis, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Leadership, Vol. 15, no. 3.) Contributed by Gerald Flurry

<http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustrations/sermon-illustration-sermoncentral-stories-holyspiritattributes-kingdomofgod-growthinchrist-6824.asp>

READ: 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

WATCH: Afshin Ziafat—Momentum 2012. 55 Minutes. <http://onmissioninsights.com/Beuncomfortable>

KEY POINTS:

You Were Chosen. Before the apostles went out in ministry, they were chosen, loved, and were extended extravagant grace. Similarly, before you reach others, you need to be in awe of what God has really given you. Before you can grasp the good news, you need to understand the bad news that was previously yours. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

The Bad News. You previously were dead, an enemy of God, dominated by sin, and destined for wrath. You were directly opposed to God, his will, and living life with his order. This is the bad news. But we, who believe, have good news. Jesus came to make us alive.

The Good News. Jesus didn't come to make you a better person, he came to make you an alive person. God is a holy God and he must punish sin—the beauty of his love is that he turned that wrath upon himself, upon his Son. The Good News is that we have been made alive, reconciled to God, freed from sin and are pardoned from wrath—through Jesus.

CLOSING CHALLENGES:

Embrace the Cost. There is a cost to following Christ. Salvation is a free gift – but it isn't easy. It's a lifetime commitment. Afshin said, "Some of you are never going to see the life Christ has for you because you are never going to turn from idols to serve him. (Luke 16:25) Some of you want to follow Christ, but there is an idol in your life that you are holding onto." What do you need to give up to fully embrace the committed life that God has designed for you.

Letting Go. What life is waiting for you outside you giving up your life to Christ fully? What would happen if you let go?

Youth Leaders, provide time for students to evaluate their hearts and meet with the Lord to discover what he may be calling them to sacrifice. Be available for those who may need to talk through some of their thoughts.

