

Small Group Discussion Guide — January 5, 2020

- Sermon: The Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - Scripture: 2 Timothy 1: 9-10, Colossians 1: 6, Romans 1: 16 (New Living Translation)
-

FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

How did Christ's humility affect your experience of Christmas this year? How easy is it for you to remember this message in the middle of all the Christmas hoopla, and how can you facilitate that for next year?

CONNECT:

What is a hope you have for 2020? If you have a "word for the year," what is it?

ENGAGE:

1. Read 2 Timothy 1: 9-10 and Colossians 1: 6 (NLT).
 - What does verse 9 tell us about the timelessness of the gospel? Does it change your understanding of the gospel to know it was always God's "Plan A"?
 - According to these verses, what is the main message of the gospel?
 - What is the result of the gospel?
2. Read Romans 1: 16 (NLT).
 - Why would someone be ashamed of the gospel of Christ? In what ways could it be uncomfortable to discuss with others? How does Paul reject this idea?
 - What is the significance here of saying the gospel is for the Jew and the Greek?

APPLY:

1. In your own words, how would you define "the gospel"? How can we have a "too-small" understanding of it, missing its implications for all of life? In other words, is the gospel just about initial conversion, or is it something more? What does the gospel actually mean for your daily life?
2. What is a challenge for your own heart to fully receive the gospel? (ex. admitting you are sinful, receiving it as a *gift*, living in the freedom of the gospel, etc.)
3. The first step to receiving the gospel is repentance (see Matthew 4: 17 and Proverbs 28: 13). Discuss what "repenting" means and why it is the key to life in Christ. How does the call to repent present a challenge to your heart?

PRAY:

Father, thank you for the truly great news that Jesus became human, lived and suffered here on earth, died for our sins, and defeated death forever. This gospel literally changes everything. Help us to turn from our selfish natures and allow You to be the center of our lives, living as your true children. Change our hearts and change our lives with this holy gospel of Christ. Thank you for the freedom and life you have given us, in Jesus' name, Amen.

GOING DEEPER:

12 Life-Changing Realities of the Gospel

Discuss which of these realities are most meaningful to you at this point in your life and faith. Try to memorize the verses associated with the one(s) that speak most to you right now.

1. You are personally known and loved.
Psalms 139:13,15-16 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.
2. You have a new identity and a new start.
1 John 3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!
1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
3. You have a root system to hold your life together.
Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.
Hebrews 6:18-19 ...We who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.
4. You are never alone.
Deuteronomy 31:6 ...for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."
Matthew 28:20 And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
5. You are immensely valuable.
Luke 12:6-7 Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. Indeed, the hairs of your head are all counted. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows!
Ephesians 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.
6. Your life has meaning.
Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you..."
Colossians 1:27 God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
7. You are a human being, special to God.
Genesis 1:27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
Genesis 9:6 for in the image of God has God made mankind.
8. You have moral dignity.
Psalms 8:4-5 What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.

Romans 6:13-14 So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. 14 Sin is no longer your master...

9. Your pain is purposeful and God uses it for good.

Psalms 56:8 You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.

1 Peter 1:6 There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while.

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

10. You are given grace and peace.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Revelation 22:21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Romans 1:7 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

11. You are a member of a global and eternal community.

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us...

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...

12. Your life is eternal.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 Peter 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you...

Quotes for Reference

“The gospel story of Jesus is the underlying reality to which all the stories point. It gives us more than a passing inspiration because it is the true story; it happened.” Tim Keller

“God made you to love him supremely, but he lost you. He returned to get you back, but it took the cross to do it. He absorbed your darkness so that one day you can finally and dazzlingly become your true self and take your seat at his eternal feast.” Tim Keller

“What was new with Jesus was that the kingdom of God had become available for human beings to enter into and live in. That's his gospel: the kingdom of God is now available, and if you want to, you can come right on in and live in it.” Dallas Willard