

Small Group Guide: Torah in the Gospels

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time with prayer, asking God to open your hearts and minds to understand how the Old Testament reveals Jesus and transforms how we live today.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you completely missed something obvious that everyone else seemed to understand. How did it feel when you finally "got it"?

Key Takeaways

1. **Jesus is the fulfillment of Torah** - The entire Old Testament (Law, Prophets, and Psalms) points to Christ and must be understood to fully grasp the Gospels.
2. **The Pharisees' problem** - They claimed to follow the Law but missed its heart: God's character of mercy, compassion, and receiving repentant sinners.
3. **Israel's story repeating** - The pattern of rebellion, judgment, and restoration in the Old Testament plays out in real-time during Jesus' ministry.
4. **Salvation by faith alone** - There is nothing we can do to earn salvation; it comes only through believing in what Christ has done.
5. **How we treat others reflects our view of God** - Our treatment of neighbors, enemies, and the marginalized reveals what we truly believe about God's character.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (15-20 minutes)

1. **Luke 15 and the Three Parables**
 - Who is Jesus actually addressing in these stories? Why does this matter for interpretation?
 - How does understanding that the Pharisees are the "older son" change your understanding of the Prodigal Son parable?
 - What does the father's response to both sons reveal about God's character?
2. **The Law and Jesus' Ministry**

- Read Deuteronomy 22:1-4. How does Jesus use this passage in Luke 14 to expose the Pharisees' hypocrisy?
- What does "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28) mean in light of Deuteronomy 28?

Going Deeper (20-25 minutes)

3. The Pharisee in the Mirror

- In what ways might we be like the Pharisees—thinking we're saved by what we do rather than by faith alone?
- How does the statement "show me how you treat your brother, and I'll show you what you think of the Lord" challenge you personally?

4. Grace vs. Works

- Discuss the illustration: "If you could do what only Christ could do, you wouldn't need Christ to do what only Christ could do." How does this challenge "Jesus plus my stuff" thinking?
- Why is it so hard for us to accept that salvation requires nothing from us except belief?

5. Loving Enemies

- Read Deuteronomy 32 and Romans 9-11. How does understanding Israel's rejection of Christ help us understand loving our enemies?
- Who are the "enemies" in your life that God might be calling you to pray for and love?

Closing Reflection

Read this quote from the sermon:

"While we were yet enemies... If I was God, I would have wiped me out a long time ago. Is there any reason at all why you would let you in if you were honest? I'd say not a chance. Not a chance. That's a good start. So what do you have to say for yourself? Nothing. Well, then why should you be allowed into this? Because you said."

Spend a few moments in silent gratitude for God's undeserved grace.

Closing Prayer

Pray together, thanking God for:

- His mercy toward us while we were enemies
- The complete sufficiency of Christ's work
- Eyes to see Jesus throughout all of Scripture

- Hearts that rejoice when sinners repent

Ask God to help you live out the character of God revealed in Torah—showing mercy, loving sacrificially, and receiving those who come to Him.