

Small Group Guide: The Rented Veil

Hebrews 9:1-15

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by thanking God for the access we have to His presence through Jesus Christ and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion.

Icebreaker Question

What's something that you once had restricted access to but now can freely enjoy? (Examples: a place, a relationship, an opportunity) How did that change feel?

Sermon Summary

This week's message explored the Old Testament temple system and its many restrictions on access to God's presence. Under the old covenant, layers of limitations kept most people at a distance from God—Gentiles in the outer court, women in their designated area, men in theirs, and only the high priest entering the Holy of Holies once per year. But when Jesus died on the cross, the temple veil was torn from top to bottom, symbolizing that God Himself removed the barriers between us and His presence. Through Christ's sacrifice, we now have direct access to God—no longer restricted to the "yard of the house of God."

Key Takeaways

1. **The old covenant was a shadow and symbol** of heavenly realities that would be fulfilled in Christ
2. **Religion creates restrictions**, but Jesus creates relationship and access
3. **The torn veil represents God's desire** to be present with His people
4. **Jesus straightens out the twisted, broken places** in our lives that religion cannot fix

5. **We are called by God** to receive the promise of eternal inheritance through faith in Christ
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. **The Temple Restrictions:** Before hearing this sermon, how aware were you of all the restrictions and limitations in the Old Testament temple system? What surprised you most about these restrictions?
2. **Layers of Access:** The sermon described different courts (Gentiles, women, Israel, priests, Holy of Holies). Why do you think God set up this system? What was He teaching His people through these limitations?
3. **The Veil:** What significance do you see in the fact that the temple veil was torn from *top to bottom* rather than bottom to top? What does this tell us about God's heart toward us?

Personal Reflection

4. **Your Access to God:** Have you ever felt like you were standing in the "yard of God's house"—close to God but not truly experiencing His presence? What created that distance?
5. **Religion vs. Relationship:** The pastor said, "Religion can't do that for you. The church can't do that for you. Good works can't do that for you. Only Jesus can take the crooked things of your mangled life and straighten them out." Where have you been tempted to rely on religious activity rather than relationship with Jesus?
6. **Twisted and Straightened:** What are some "twisted up" or broken areas in your life where you need Jesus to bring straightening and healing? Are you willing to share one with the group?

Applying the Truth

7. **Living with Access:** How should the reality that we have full access to God's presence change the way we pray, worship, and live daily? Do you take advantage of this access?
 8. **Gratitude Check:** Read Hebrews 9:14 together. How does understanding what Jesus did to give us access to God increase your gratitude? How can you express that gratitude this week?
 9. **Sharing the Gospel:** Many people today are still trying to earn their way to God through good works and religion. How can you share the truth about access through Jesus with someone who is stuck in performance-based spirituality?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to practice this week:

Daily Access

- Set aside 10-15 minutes each day to "enter boldly into His presence" (Hebrews 4:16). Thank God specifically that you don't have to stay in the outer court but can come directly to Him through Jesus.

Examine Your Heart

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas where you've been relying on religious activity rather than genuine relationship with Jesus. Confess this and recommit to knowing Him personally.

Share Your Story

- Share with one person this week about how Jesus has "straightened out" a twisted area of your life. Give testimony to what only Jesus can do.

Study the Torn Veil

- Read the Gospel accounts of Jesus' death and the tearing of the veil (Matthew 27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38; Luke 23:44-46). Journal about what this means for your relationship with God.

Worship with New Eyes

- The next time you worship, whether at church or privately, consciously remember that you are entering God's presence—not standing outside. Let this truth deepen your worship.

Memory Verse

Hebrews 9:14 *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

Prayer Focus

Praise: Thank God for tearing the veil and giving us access to His presence through Jesus.

Confession: Confess any ways you've relied on religious activity rather than relationship with Christ.

Intercession: Pray for those in your life who don't yet know Jesus and are still trying to earn their way to God.

Personal: Ask Jesus to straighten out the twisted, broken areas of your life that only He can heal.

For Further Study

- Read Hebrews 10:19-22 about our confidence to enter the Holy Place
 - Study Exodus 26:31-33 about the original construction of the veil
 - Explore the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16
 - Read about Jesus as our High Priest in Hebrews 4:14-16
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Closing Reflection

"The veil was torn, not from bottom to top—man could have torn it from the bottom. But it was torn from top to bottom. God's the one that tore it. And when the temple veil was torn, not only did it mean that now people have access to the presence of God, it also meant that God wanted to be present with His people."

Take a moment of silence to let this truth sink in: **God wants to be present with you.**

Next Week

Continue reading through Hebrews 9 in preparation for next week's study.

Guide prepared for small group discussion based on the sermon "The Rented Veil" from Hebrews 9:1-15