

Small Group Guide

Revelation, Restoration, Response · Mark Lewis · October 11, 2026
Bernal Church

Overview

This guide is designed to help your group move from simply hearing the message to genuinely wrestling with it together. The sermon centered on three words: revelation, restoration, and response. The central idea is that experiencing the love of Jesus restores us, and that restoration compels us to live and love like him. Use the questions below to encourage honest conversation, not just right answers.

Key Takeaways

- 1. The love of Christ must move from the head to the heart.** Most believers can affirm that Jesus loves them. Far fewer live with a daily awareness of being deeply, extravagantly, and relentlessly loved. Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19 asks God to give believers the power to understand something they cannot grasp on their own. The love of Christ requires spiritual intervention to be truly known.
- 2. Restoration begins with reconciliation to the Father.** As described in 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, Jesus did not come simply to save us from something. He came to restore us to someone. The cross was an act of deliberate pursuit. This restored relationship is the foundation from which all other healing flows.
- 3. Restoration is ongoing and happens in community.** Sanctification is a lifelong process. God does not work in isolation. The messy, imperfect relationships within the body of Christ are often the very context in which his restoring work is most active. We are called to be as patient with one another as Jesus is with us.
- 4. Restored people become restoring people.** As stated in the sermon, we live in response to Jesus as a loving and gracious response to what he has done for us. We are not just recipients of his love. We are invited to participate in his work of reconciliation as ambassadors of Christ, as described in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.
- 5. Reaching out is a lifestyle, not a program.** Discipleship and

evangelism are fundamentally relational. Jesus entered people's worlds, sat with them, noticed the overlooked, and loved those others avoided. We are called to do the same, not through formulas or pressure, but through genuine relationship motivated by the love of Christ.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

Think of a time when something you already knew intellectually suddenly became real to you in a deeper way. What changed, and what did that feel like?

Revelation

The sermon described a gap that often exists between knowing that Jesus loves us and actually living with an awareness of that love. How would you honestly describe where you are in that gap right now?

The speaker suggested that the dark places in our hearts can make it difficult to believe that Jesus truly loves us. What makes it hard for you personally to receive his love? What lies or doubts tend to get in the way?

Paul prays in Ephesians 3:14-19 that believers would have the power to understand and experience a love that surpasses understanding. What does it say about this love that Paul frames comprehending it as something requiring prayer and spiritual help?

Restoration

The sermon drew a distinction between Jesus saving us from something and restoring us to someone. How does that reframing change the way you think about the gospel and your relationship with God?

Psalm 23:3 describes God as the one who restores our soul, not us restoring ourselves. Where in your life are you currently trying to fix or clean yourself up before coming to God, rather than inviting him into the mess?

The speaker said that restoration happens most often in community and that God does not sprinkle magic restoration dust over people living in isolation. Has there been a season in your life when community played a meaningful role in your healing or growth? What made that possible?

Is there an area of your heart you have kept closed to Jesus, even as a long-time believer? What would it look like to surrender that to him this week?

Response

2 Corinthians 5:14 says that Christ's love compels us. The sermon contrasted being compelled by love with being motivated by guilt, duty, or obligation. Honestly, what most often drives your engagement in serving, giving, or reaching out to others?

The sermon asked whether people who think differently than you would describe you as a friend to sinners, in the same way Jesus was criticized for that in Luke 7:34. How would the people in your life who are far from God describe you? What does that tell you?

The story of the woman in Luke 7:36-50 highlights how the presence of Jesus created space for someone deeply ashamed to be completely vulnerable. Do the people around you feel safe enough to be real with you? What might make you more approachable to someone carrying shame or doubt?

The sermon challenged the idea that evangelism and discipleship have been made unnecessarily complicated and strange. What would it look like practically for you to reach out to someone in your life relationally, without an agenda, simply by being present and building genuine friendship?

Practical Applications

The following are concrete steps your group can take individually or together in the coming weeks.

Pray Paul's prayer for yourself. Pray through Ephesians 3:14-19 this week, personalizing it. Ask God to help you understand and experience how deeply you are loved. Consider journaling what comes up as you pray.

Identify one person to reach out to. Think of someone in your life who is far from God or who is lonely, hurting, or overlooked. This week, take one simple step toward them. Send a message, invite them to coffee, or simply show up. No agenda required.

Invite community into a closed place. If there is an area of your heart or life where you have been trying to manage things alone, consider sharing it with one trusted person in your group this week. Practice the vulnerability that restoration in community requires.

Host a meal. Take the sermon's practical suggestion seriously. Plan a casual gathering that includes both people from your church community

and people who are not connected to faith. Focus on relationship, not program.

Examine your reputation. Spend some quiet time this week asking yourself honestly how people who do not share your faith would describe you. Bring what you discover to God in prayer and ask him to form more of his character in you.

Closing Reflection

Close your time together by reading Paul's prayer from Ephesians 3:14-19 aloud as a group, slowly. After the reading, allow a moment of silence. Then invite anyone who wants to share one word or phrase from the passage that stood out to them.

Close in prayer, asking God to move each person from intellectual knowledge of his love to a lived experience of it, and to make your group a community where restoration happens and from which his love reaches outward.