

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide – Soul Cleanse Week #1

Cleansed by Communion / March 8, 2020 / Pastor Paul Taylor



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker: Sorry for your lost hour of sleep due to Daylight Savings Time. On the bright side, what's one thing you're looking forward to as the season changes from winter to spring?
2. Reflect on your past experience either observing or taking Communion. How does that compare with what you've learned about and how you've practiced Communion during your time at Rivers Crossing?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read Exodus 12 together as a group. Then read Mark 14:22-26. Discuss the corresponding questions.

Mark 14:22-26 (NIV) – “²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take it; this is my body.’ ²³Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,’ he said to them. ²⁵‘Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’ ²⁶When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

Does the historical context and meaning of the Passover that God performed and instituted with the Israelites help you to better understand Communion? Explain your answer. Was there a particular area of your understanding of Communion that Pastor Paul's sermon helped you grow in?

4. At the very heart of Jesus' identification with the Passover is the concept of salvation by faith in a substitutionary sacrifice. Read the following Bible verses and discuss the corresponding questions.

Isaiah 53:3-7 (NIV) – “³He [Jesus] was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. ⁴Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the

punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”

1 Peter 1:19-20 (NLT) – “¹⁹It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. ²⁰God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake.”

John 1:29 (NLT) – “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

- a) Did Pastor Paul’s explanation of how and why Jesus had to die on our behalf make sense to you? If not, where are you still wrestling with making sense of it all? Explain your answer.
- b) Pastor Paul shared that all real life-changing love is a substitutionary sacrifice. Real love models what God did for us through Jesus. How have you experienced this in your own relationships? Where may God be calling you to grow more deeply in sacrificially loving others?

TAKING IT HOME

5. Pastor Paul shared three ways that we can appropriate how God desires to work through Communion to transform our lives – dependency, community, and expectancy. Read the brief descriptions about these below and answer the corresponding question.

Dependency – The gospel is all about us depending on Jesus’ commitment to us, not on our commitment to Him. Our identity as a child of God is not based on our performance; rather it is based solely on the performance of Jesus.

Community – Believing in Jesus’ death is a basis for unity that is as strong and powerful as anything that has ever existed. Additionally, it’s through community that God works down deeper into your life the meaning of Jesus’ death.

Expectancy – We look forward to and eagerly await our future inheritance and eternal life with God.

Which of these is God calling you to reflect on more deeply as you spend time with Him and prepare your heart for Easter? How can your Community Group help support you in that?

PRAYER REQUESTS

6. Prayer Exercise: Pastor Paul mentioned that during the conclusion of the Passover meal, there was a singing of the *Hallel* – Psalm 113 through Psalm 118 (see Mark 14:26). Assign these Psalms for group members to read aloud. After reading, encourage your group to pray and give thanks to God for the truth in these Psalms and for what God may have spoken to them while the Psalms were recited.

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. Men's Conference – As men, there is a drive in all of us to be better and to do more. We look for role models and people to inspire us, when we should be taking our cues from Jesus. The key to masculinity is understanding that Jesus takes responsibility for himself, and he also takes responsibility for me. Join us on Saturday, March 14th as we hear from Pastor Mark Driscoll and help you take some tangible next steps to being a godly man. The Men's Conference will conclude with some incredible experiences - a golfing long-drive competition, axe-throwing, tug-of-war, and cornhole to name a few - that you won't want to miss! Lunch and dinner are provided with your ticket purchase.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-mens-conference-tickets-92061677957>