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COMMUNITY GROUPS

RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide

April 21, 2024

Life is Like a Roller Coaster Week #3

How To Make Jesus Vomit / Pastor Paul Taylor

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Question | What's something you're exceedingly passionate about? How did this passion originate and how do you structure your life around it?
2. As a group, read through Pastor Paul's primary teaching text – Revelation 3:14-22. Then discuss the corresponding questions together.

Revelation 3:14-22 (HCSB) – ¹⁴“Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea: “The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Originator of God’s creation says: ¹⁵I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, ‘I’m rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,’ and you don’t know that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, ¹⁸I advise you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness not be exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see. ¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be committed and repent. ²⁰Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me. ²¹The victor: I will give him the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I also won the victory and sat down with My Father on His throne. ²²“Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

- a) Pastor Paul shared a lot about the historical and cultural context of the city of Laodicea. How is that information helpful in illuminating this passage?
 - b) Pastor Paul made the claim that we’re living in a modern-day equivalent of the city of Laodicea. Do you agree with this claim? How can the prosperity of our surrounding culture impact our need and zeal for God?
3. Pastor Paul defined a lukewarm Christian as someone who, though they believe in Jesus Christ, has set the supreme passion of their heart - their highest love - on something *besides* Jesus. To facilitate humble self-reflection on being lukewarm, the following list was shared. Review this list and discuss the connected questions.

You might be lukewarm if...

- You crave acceptance by people more than God.
 - You rarely share your faith in Jesus.
 - You rationalize your sin.
 - You’re motivated by earthly reward rather than eternal investment.
 - You only turn to God when you need something.
 - You give your money only when it is convenient and on your terms.
 - You are not much different than a non-Christian.
- a) Read over the list and reflect silently. Which characteristics or attitudes do you recognize in your own life? Would you label your faith as lukewarm? If so, explain.
 - b) Share about a time you struggled with lukewarmness in your relationship with Jesus. What factors contributed to this state, and how did you address it?

DIVING DEEPER

4. Do you believe the process of someone becoming a lukewarm Christian is more instantaneous or gradual? Explain your answer and support it using not just personal stories, but also examples you can draw upon from the Bible.

Read the following quotes from James K. A. Smith and John Mark Comer.

“Liturgies (i.e. worship practices)—whether “sacred” or “secular”—shape and constitute our identities by forming our most fundamental desires and our most basic attunement to the world. In short, liturgies make us certain kinds of people, and what defines us is what we love. They do this because we are the sorts of animals whose orientation to the world is shaped from the body up more than from the head down. Liturgies aim our love to different ends precisely by training our hearts through our bodies. They prime us to approach the world in a certain way, to value certain things, to aim for certain goals, to pursue certain dreams, to work together on certain projects. In short, every liturgy constitutes a pedagogy that teaches us, in all sorts of precognitive ways, to be a certain kind of person.” – James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love*

“Now, I recognize that turning God into a habit may sound about as inspiring as turning romance or laughter or poetry into a habit. In a culture that equates authenticity with spontaneous emotions, habit is a tough sell. But show me a person’s habits, and I will show you what they are *truly* most passionate about, most dedicated to, most willing to suffer for, and most in love with.” – John Mark Comer, *Practicing the Way*

What role do our daily habits play in shaping both who we are and who we become? How can this idea be applied to either being a lukewarm Christian or being a person who is zealous for the Lord?

5. Jesus’ response to those who are lukewarm is straightforward – “be committed and repent” (Rev. 3:19). Other translations read “be earnest/zealous and repent.”
- a) What does it mean to truly repent, and how does repentance lead to personal spiritual renewal and intimacy with God?
- b) Share about a time when you experienced the refreshing and renewing presence of God after a time of confession of sin and repentance.
- c) Read Isaiah 55 together. Then discuss the corresponding questions.
- Isaiah 55 (NIV) – ¹“Come, all you who are thirsty,
come to the waters;
and you who have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without cost.

²Why spend money on what is not bread,
and your labor on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,
and you will delight in the richest of fare.

³Give ear and come to me;
listen, that you may live.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
my faithful love promised to David.

⁴See, I have made him a witness to the peoples,
a ruler and commander of the peoples.

⁵Surely you will summon nations you know not,
and nations you do not know will come running to you,
because of the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
for he has endowed you with splendor.”

⁶Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.

⁷Let the wicked forsake their ways
and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

⁸“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,”
declares the Lord.

⁹“As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

¹⁰As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
¹¹so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

¹²You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.

¹³Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.
This will be for the Lord’s renown,
for an everlasting sign,
that will endure forever.”

What aspects of repentance do you see in this passage?

Reflect back upon your self-evaluation of lukewarmness in Question #3. What would it look like to repent as you mature as a follower of Christ? Be practical!

TAKING IT HOME

6. What's your biggest takeaway from this week's sermon and our group discussion? How can you put that into action this week?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary | Join us for a night of worship and prophetic ministry on Sunday, April 28th at 6pm at our Rivers Crossing Mason campus. When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary is an incredible way to experience God's power firsthand in a tangible way through extended worship, ministry time, and corporate prayer. Come expectantly and join us as we seek the extraordinary life together.
2. Men's Night | We're hosting a FREE Men's Event on Sunday May 5th! We'll start at 5pm with a message from our Lead Pastor Paul Taylor. Then we'll have an extended and unhurried time of food (City BBQ), fun (outdoor games, fire pits, etc.), and fellowship as we enjoy our renovated outdoor lawn and lobby spaces! You're not going to want to miss Men's Night and you're going to want to invite a friend!
If you're planning to join us, please let us know by registering. Thanks!
<https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2212814>
3. Baptisms - Saturday May 18th | We believe baptism is an integral part of your spiritual journey and necessary as you seek to become a fully engaged follower of Christ. If you've recently decided to follow Jesus or you've been a Christ follower for a while but never gotten baptized, now is the perfect time to take this next step! This baptism service will be held on our renovated lawn space at 3pm. Learn more and sign up by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/grow/>