

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide – Good News? Week #1

Go And Tell / March 7, 2021 / Pastor Paul Taylor



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Question | In the world of advertising, word-of-mouth marketing is considered the most effective form of reaching potential consumers. What is a recent thing – say a restaurant, book, movie, vacation, local contractor, etc. – you shared a glowing review about with a family member or friend?
2. Share briefly about how you heard the good news and began a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. What part of the good news resonated most with you? Did you believe and choose to follow Jesus as a result of an encounter with an individual you had no prior relationship with or an encounter that developed from a relationship with an individual whom you knew well?

If you don't yet have a personal relationship with Jesus, share about the circumstances that led you to attend church and participate in a group. What is it about God's good news that has your attention?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Pastor Paul spoke about the idea of oikos – our unique “extended household” of about 8 to 15 people – with whom we share life most closely and have the greatest influence. These are the people for whom God wants to prepare us to become an ideal instrument of His grace. Our oikos is the most natural and common environment for evangelism (i.e. sharing the good news) to occur.
 - a) Have each group member share briefly about who makes up their oikos. Is there a particular person who stands out as someone God is calling you to *urgently* reach with the good news?
 - b) Read Romans 10:9-13. The good news of Jesus Christ is for *everyone*. No exceptions. Is there any person or group of people you see as undeserving of the good news? Explain why. How might God want to change your perspective of this person or group?

Romans 10:9-13 (NLT) – ⁹If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. ¹¹As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” ¹²Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. ¹³For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

4. The book of Acts records the origin and expansion of the early church. As such, it contains a great number of examples of the apostles sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Read one of those examples – Acts 10:34-48 – together before answering the following questions. In this passage, the Apostle Peter is addressing a gathering of people organized by a Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) centurion named Cornelius.

Acts 10:34-48 (NIV) – ³⁴Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. ³⁶You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” ⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

a) What content makes up Peter’s sharing of the good news?

b) As Tom Mercer said¹, “Nobody would ever say Christianity is easy, but [the message of Christianity] has always been simple.” How would you explain the good news to someone who asked you? In your explanation, strive for clarity and simplicity.

¹Quoted from the book *8 to 15: The World Is Smaller Than You Think*

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) – But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect

5. When you hear the word evangelism, what first thoughts come to mind and what emotions do you feel?

a) If you’re hesitant or perhaps even lack the desire to share the good news, can you relate with any of these reasons? *Question adapted from Steven Lee’s article “Four Reasons We Don’t Share the Gospel”*

- Lack of Gospel Knowledge | struggle with articulating the truths of the gospel
- Apathy | lack of prioritization to interact, engage with, or even pray for those who don’t know Jesus Christ
- Fear | paralyzed by the thought of being disliked, marginalized, laughed at, or openly mocked
- Lack of Compassion | lack of care for those who are without hope

- b) Read Philemon 1-6. The word “sharing” in verse 6 has a wide range of meaning, including the ideas of generosity, fellowship, and partnership. It encompasses an extraordinary life devoted not only to others who know Christ, but also to others who don’t yet know Christ.
How can your community of Christian friends inspire you to continue sharing the good news? Why do you believe sharing the good news connects us more deeply with Christ (verse 6)?

Philemon 1-6 (ESV) – ¹Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker ²and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

TAKING IT HOME

6. Prayer Exercise | Sharing The Good News With Your “8 to 15”

As you conclude group, pray over a few names from each person’s 8 to 15 list. Ask the Holy Spirit to provide discernment on how to best engage and nurture these relationships. Ask for opportunities to invite to church, especially as we approach Easter. Ask for opportunities to share the love of Jesus Christ and to humbly serve those around you. Ask for boldness in sharing the good news. Ask for the fear of evangelism to be replaced by the joy of seeing lives changed. If you’re looking for additional structure for this prayer time, pray back to God the following passage of scripture.

Colossians 4:2-6 (NIV) – ²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. Women’s Bible Study | For the Spring study, Women’s Bible Study will be working through the book *Get Out of Your Head* by Jennie Allen. In-person and online groups are available! The Spring study begins on March 23rd. For more information and to register, visit <https://riverscrossing.com/womens-groups/>.

2. 2021 Men's Conference | There is a desire in all men to be better and do more, but an extraordinary life isn't found sitting on the sidelines. Men, it's time to step up and become the man God designed you to be. Hang out with us on Saturday June 12th at Men's Conference for a day of spiritual renewal, motivating messages from Mark Driscoll and yes, some manly fun. Lunch and dinner are provided with your ticket purchase. To learn more and purchase a ticket, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-mens-conference-tickets-143828790785?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>.
3. Volunteer Opportunities | What we do as a church wouldn't be possible without our incredible volunteer teams. If you're looking to serve, get started by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/get-involved/>. If you're unsure where to start, there's a great serving assessment at the top of that webpage.

If you're watching exclusively online and want to volunteer, consider joining our Online Host Team. If you think about our online ministry like our physical buildings, Hosts are like our welcome, next steps, and prayer teams—all in one. Reach out at <https://riverscrossing.wufoo.com/forms/q1wout2k1cx5poi/>.
4. Growth Track – Now Online | Looking to experience the extraordinary life found in Jesus? We've moved our Growth Track classes online so you can engage with them on your own schedule. Learn more and take the classes by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/growth-track/>.