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# COMMUNITY GROUPS

**RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH**

Community Group Discussion Guide

February 12, 2023

Super Bowl of Baptisms

What Is The Gospel? / Pastor Paul Taylor

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Question | Share about a favorite memory you have of the Super Bowl. Perhaps it was a time your favorite football team won, a celebration you had with family and friends, a halftime performance by your favorite musical artist, or even a commercial that had you buckled over in a fit of laughter.
2. Would you rather always say everything on your mind or never speak again?
3. During the Super Bowl of Baptisms, we celebrated alongside and praised God for more than 100 people who made the decision to get baptized and go public with their profession of faith in Jesus Christ! Have each group member share their personal story and experience with baptism.

## DIVING DEEPER

4. In his sermon, Pastor Paul focused on the question – What is the gospel? As a group, read Romans 3:20-26, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, and Colossians 3:3-4 before discussing the corresponding questions.

**Romans 3:20-26 (NLT)** – <sup>20</sup>For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. <sup>21</sup>But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. <sup>22</sup>We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. <sup>23</sup>For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. <sup>24</sup>Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. <sup>25</sup>For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, <sup>26</sup>for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NLT)** – <sup>17</sup>This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! <sup>18</sup>And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. <sup>19</sup>For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” <sup>21</sup>For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

**Colossians 3:3-4 (NLT)** – <sup>3</sup>For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

a) What stands out to you from these scriptures? Explain why.

b) How would you answer the question – What is the gospel? If you could only use three words to explain the gospel to someone, which words would you pick?

c) How does God see those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ?

5. How do we know if we're saved and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ? Theologians refer to this question as one's assurance (i.e., confidence) of salvation. Read a quote by the late Anglican bishop J.C. Ryle (1816-1900) before discussing this topic.

"That a child of God ought to act in a certain decided way, they quite feel; but the grand question is, 'Are they children of God themselves?' If they only feel they were so, they would go straightforward, and take a decided line. But not feeling sure about it, their conscience is forever hesitating and coming to a deadlock. The devil whispers, 'Perhaps after all you are only a hypocrite: what right have you to take a decided course? Wait till you are really a Christian.' I believe we have here one chief reason why so many in this day are inconsistent, trimming, unsatisfactory, and half-hearted in their conduct about the world. Their faith fails. They feel no assurance that they are Christ's, and so feel a hesitancy about breaking with the world...[Assurance allows a person to] always feel that he has something solid beneath his feet and something firm under his hands—a sure friend by the way, and a sure home at the end"— J.C. Ryle

a) If you've made a decision to believe in Jesus, have there been times you've felt uncertain about your salvation? If so, share about what this looked and felt like.

b) Read Colossians 2:2, Hebrews 6:18-20, and Romans 8:15-16,31-39 together. What stands out to you from these passages? Do you believe God wants Christians to have assurance of their salvation?

**Colossians 2:2 (NLT)** – I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself.

**Hebrews 6:18-20 (NLT)** – <sup>18</sup>So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. <sup>19</sup>This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. <sup>20</sup>Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

**Romans 8:15-16,31-39 (NLT)** – <sup>15</sup>The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "*Abba, Father.*" <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children...<sup>31</sup>What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. <sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be

slaughtered.”<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

c) For those wrestling with the status of their salvation, theologian Wayne Grudem puts forth three questions a person can humbly ask of themselves<sup>1</sup>:

1. Questions taken from *Bible Doctrine: Essentials Teachings of the Christian Faith*

- Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation?
- Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?
- Do I see a long-term pattern of growth in my Christian life?

How would you comfort someone wrestling with doubt about their salvation? If you're currently wrestling with doubt, are any of these questions helpful?

## TAKING IT HOME

6. As you close your time together, we encourage you to spend time in prayer for all those who made decisions to get baptized during the Super Bowl of Baptisms. Pray that the Lord would honor and bless their obedience, and that the power of the Holy Spirit would be poured out on their life.

**Romans 6:4-8 (NIV)** - “<sup>4</sup>For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. <sup>5</sup>Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. <sup>7</sup>For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. <sup>8</sup>And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him.”

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. Baby Dedication | Have you welcomed a new baby to your family over the last year? If so, we're excited to celebrate your child at Baby Dedication on March 25th. The Baby Dedication experience will teach you how to lead your child in their faith, show you ways that Rivers Crossing will partner with you on this journey, and give you the opportunity to dedicate your child. Learn more and register using the link below!  
<https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1544572>
2. 2023 Global Trips | Have you ever wanted to serve on a Global trip to help our international church partners? From Ghana to Guatemala, this year might be the best time for you to get involved with what God is doing beyond our borders through Rivers Crossing! Find out more information by clicking the link below!  
<https://riverscrossing.com/global/>
3. 2023 RC Students Summer Camp | Next summer (June 19-24, 2023), RC Students is going to Eagle Sky of the Ozarks for camp! We truly believe that Summer Camp is one of the best ways for your Junior High or High School student to get connected in RC Students. They'll build lasting bonds with other students and their leaders that will continue throughout the year. Most importantly, your student will have a week to focus on connecting with Jesus in a new way. Learn more and register below:  
<https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1450605>