

Reckon Yourself

February 5, 2017

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Philippians 4:4-9

(Here is a passage to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in prayer)

Read Philippians 4:4-9 using the prayer practice of Lectio Divina. Read the passage aloud 3 times. After each reading, spend a few minutes reflecting. After the first reading, open yourself to the presence of God. On the second reading, listen for a certain word or phrase that stands out to you. On the third reading, listen to what God's invitation might be for you.

Icebreaker

What was your "identity" in high school (i.e., jock, computer nerd, popular kid, theater person, etc.)? Is it the same today, and if not, how did that change for you?

Text for Discussion: Romans 6:1-12

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

In Christ, we have been given a new self. We are to be changed, transformed by the renewing of our minds. Romans 6 offers unique insight about our new mindset. As followers of Christ, Jesus has united His life to ours so completely that whatever is true of Him is now true of us. But the distance between these promises and our actual lives can be discouraging and leave us doubting. How do we connect what we read in the Bible to the life we are living?

We're used to believing that our feelings and experiences define our lives, but the Bible says something very different. Our new identity in Christ is true because God declares it over us, even if it seems to contradict our feelings. What is critical is that we come to see our lives from God's point of view. We gradually live our way into our new reality, eventually becoming the people God knew us to be from the beginning

Making a change in our mindset has real and dramatic implications. We are so prone to be led astray by our deceitful desires. If we only stop to think and slow our wandering minds, true change is possible. The faith that saves us is Jesus' doing. But our new mindset and the discipline of meditating over God's promises are critical to the faith that transforms us.

This isn't something we can do on our own. It takes relationships and community. We need spiritual friends because the vulnerability, accountability, and affirmation of sharing our struggles and growth will further our faith in God's promises. Because the truth is that God loves us so much more than we love ourselves. The faith that makes us right in God's sight may be tiny and small, but it is secure. Once we are in Christ, we are free to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

What does it mean to be dead to sin? It means we know that our old self was crucified with Christ, so sin is now rendered powerless. We no longer have to torment ourselves with guilt or self-doubt. The penalty for our sins has been paid in full. We don't have to tragically walk in our old paths any longer because that's not who we are anymore.

What does it mean that we are alive to God in Christ Jesus? The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in us. That is how we can walk in newness of life. That is how we defeat temptation – not from a position of willpower, but from a new mindset that it is Christ who strengthens us. Alive to God means our eyes have been opened to a new purpose and a new self. We finally glimpse that we were made for so much more, to be like God in true righteousness. However weak or hopeless we might feel, we have the power of God at work in us. And that is something we can rest in.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How can we see ourselves the way God sees us?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- 1) What stands out to you after reading Rom 6:1-12?
- 2) Have you ever had to change your mind-set on something? How did you do it?
 - Social scientist Jonathan Haidt believes change is possible but it requires two things: a new mind-set and meditation. How can we transform our mind and meditate on what God says is true of us?
- 3) **Guiding Question: How can we see ourselves the way God sees us?**
 - What are some ways of thinking that you struggle with as you try to see yourself as God sees you?
 - How can we trust God's word over what we believe about ourselves? Or things we have experienced?
- 4) How can we walk in newness of life (see Col 3:1-17)?
 - Looking at Rom 6 vs. 11, what does it mean to be alive to God in Christ Jesus?
- 5) How can we, as a community, help one another see ourselves as God sees us?
 - What practices can we put into place this week that will help transform our minds in Christ?

Praying for One Another

(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)

- Thank God that He has died for us and we are made alive in His resurrection.
- Ask God to help us see ourselves as God truly sees us.
- Pray that God would transform our minds so that we can all walk in newness of life (Col 3).