

Unified Purpose: Mission

March 18, 2018

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: Psalm 96

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

Read through the passage out loud several times; then have everyone join in a focused prayer time of praise and thanksgiving. Encourage your group to give praise to God for His attributes that are featured in this passage, and then give thanks for one specific circumstance in their life in which one of these attributes showed up in the last week.

Icebreaker

When was the last time someone tried to convince you of something? How did it make you feel?

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Our goal is to be a place where people who have walked with God for years feel challenged to go deep, where those living immoral lifestyles feel safe and welcomed, and where those who are skeptical feel their questions are respectfully addressed. We believe mature disciples of Jesus will live lives of worship both publicly and privately, will be involved in intentional community, and will live lives of mission so all may know Christ.

We want to form a community that contributes to a culture of public faith, identifying ourselves as followers of Jesus both by our words and our lives. This is extremely controversial and even offensive today. Christianity isn't seen as something that brings people together as a force for common good. But living a life of mission has always been offensive. So we must ask ourselves: Because we believe Jesus is Lord, what does it look like to live a life of public faith in Los Angeles?

Why must mission be a priority? Psalm 96 makes the astounding, unapologetic claim (written within a highly diverse, polytheistic world like our own) that there is one true God, creator of all, with Jesus as Lord who came to live with us. And if there is one god, then everything was created to glorify, enjoy, and hold God in reverent awe. By making the Lord our ultimate concern, we allow all other worries to be put in their proper place. God alone is worthy; He alone can satisfy, and because of this, mission to all people is essential.

Why is mission something we often avoid?

A fear of the costs – social and otherwise. By faithfully aligning ourselves with Jesus, we may experience family, social or even financial costs. But if our identity and hope are in Christ, how much will these costs really harm us? Sometimes it's easy to be embarrassed by Christians, but we should never be embarrassed by Jesus.

A fear of others' opinions of us – being seen as arrogant and judgmental. Christians can be unattractively self-righteous, and we don't want to be seen as "one of those people." We are sinners saved by grace which should eradicate any trace of our superiority. The main reason why we must engage in a life of mission is that we believe God has opened our eyes – not because we deserved or earned it, but purely of grace.

A lack of personal confidence in what we say we believe. We don't share Christ more widely because we don't enjoy Him more deeply. For those whose hearts are warmed by the Gospel but feel a lack of confidence in sharing its truth: where is our confidence in Christ's own words? If Jesus is Lord, shouldn't we want the people we care about to know Him?

How does the Gospel enable us to live a public faith? How do we participate in the mission of God as we go about our normal lives but with intentionality for God?

- (1) Make an honest self-assessment of what is inhibiting us from a life of public faith.
- (2) If we want others to share our faith, we must first get serious about our own.

(3) Live lives of intentional relationships through which others might see how the Gospel makes the difference in our fears and failures as well as our hopes and successes.

(4) Before we open our mouths in public, we pray in private. This is the hidden engine of a life of mission. It reminds us that this is God's mission, not ours. For if the key activity is hidden from view, a life of mission requires stillness more than activism, faith more than effort, dependence more than programs, and humility more than boldness.

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 do we overcome concerns about sharing our faith?

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.)

Looking at the issues...

Look up Colossians 1:2-8

- What is your definition of "maturity" in Christ?
 - How does Paul define it in this passage?
 - How do you feel about the church's three marks of a disciple as a way to describe maturity?
 - Worship publically and privately
 - Engaged in intentional community
 - Living a life of mission

Read Psalm 96:1-5

- Why is the "one God" idea in this passage important in today's context?
- Describe your understanding of "the fear of the Lord."
 - It is your ultimate concern? Why or why not?
- Rankin talked about three things that keep us from sharing our faith
 - Fearing the cost of true discipleship.
 - Is this an issue for you?
 - Rank it from 1-10, 10 being the highest/most dramatic as it relates to you. Then discuss why you chose the number you did...
 - Seeming judgmental
 - Is this an issue for you?
 - Rank it from 1-10, 10 being the highest/most dramatic as it relates to you. Then discuss why you chose the number you did...
 - Lacking personal confidence in the gospel
 - Is this an issue for you?
 - Rank it from 1-10, 10 being the highest/most dramatic as it relates to you. Then discuss why you chose the number you did...

Application Questions

- What spiritual discipline could you engage in that would help you to have more personal confidence in the gospel *this week*?
- What spiritual discipline could you engage in that would help you to be less judgmental *this week*?
- What spiritual discipline could you engage in that would help you to have less fear of the cost of true discipleship *this week*?

Experiment of the week

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

- Engage in one new spiritual discipline this week based on your answers to the questions above.
 - Come to CG next week ready to discuss the impact the discipline had on you during the week.
- Choose three people to begin praying for who need Jesus. Pray for them every day this week.
 - Come to CG next week ready to discuss what impact praying for them has had on you.