

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 51:1-19

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship.)

Read Psalm 51:1-19 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 is your enneagram number or the results of another personality/spiritual gifts test you have taken?
What did you find out about yourself?

Text for Discussion: Revelation 3:14-22

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

We don't know ourselves very well. Of course, we think we do, but we consistently fail to understand our motivations or recognize the deeper reality of our identity. Instead, we adopt a persona that helps us navigate life, deal with our fears, and manage how others see and interact with us. We're not awake to our true selves. We can't even see this truth unless someone lovingly helps us.

We think our weaknesses are our greatest hindrances, but in God's economy, they are our source of strength. It's our weakness – cheerfully, continually realized – that offers access to God's grace. Who says "My strength is made perfect in your weakness," (2 Cor 12:9). So we must beware of our strengths, for anything we're prone to boast in blinds us, leading us away from the freedom, peace and joy we yearn for.

This is the healing truth behind Christ's letter to the church in Laodicea. Jesus put a spotlight on their willingness to compromise with the values and lifestyle of their city. He found their complacency about this repulsive. What defined Laodicea had come to define these church-going people. And they didn't even realize it! They were blind to their true condition because of their strengths. But our loving Savior will not bear such lukewarm spiritual indifference.

In addressing them, Jesus calls Himself the Amen – the Truth. In other words, He's going to reveal the deepest truth about their lives. And He will do the same with us. His words will be difficult to hear, even devastating, but He does so entirely out of love. Because He wants nothing more than to heal us. So: If Jesus wrote a letter to Pacific Crossroads, what would He say? What are our blind spots? What hinders the power of the Gospel and the joy of Christ from being unleashed more fully? And what are we to do with this knowledge?

No matter what Christ reveals, the whole truth is that we are still completely loved by our Father. He sees us and our flaws... and He moves toward us. God desires to awaken our hearts and enter into them. His truth cuts through our self-deception; His grace opens the door to what will finally satisfy us. The only condition of grace is to see our need of it (Is 55:1), for grace is available to us only to the measure we know we need it. Our prayerfulness reveals where we look to for strength. So, how can we pray in a way that further roots us in our Father's truth and love?

Confess. Admit how much we rely on our own strength... and that we don't see it as a big problem. We think we're capable and strong, when in fact we are poor and pitiable. Because our self-sufficiency has left us lukewarm and blind.

Be zealous. Each of us gives our heart fully to something it trusts in. Yet we fear being seen as going overboard with our faith, and use this as an excuse to not be wholehearted toward God.

Repent. What can we do when we don't know what to do... or even see what the problem might be? Jesus' answer is to repent – to turn away from what we are proud of and from what we're ashamed of. Both are forms of pride. We repent by turning and listening to Jesus. Because Christ's aim is to help and heal, not to scold. He reproves because he loves.

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 the book of Revelation help re-frame your life?

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.)

Opening Questions/Digging In...

- After reading Rev 3:14-22, what stood out to you?
- What do you know about the church at Laodicea from this passage?
 - What does the “faithful and true witness” see when he looks at the Laodicean church?
 - How does the church view itself?
 - Why the contrast?
- How does Jesus describe His present relationship to the church in Laodicea (see vs. 20)?
- How does this passage expand the picture of Jesus in the gospels?
- What might be some characteristics of a lukewarm faith?
- How might “self-sufficiency” or “having it all together” keep us from an honest, rich relationship with Jesus?
- If Jesus were walking among our church today, what would He say about PCC?
 - Where would He encourage us?
 - Where would He challenge us?
- Have you ever been through a time where you felt like the Lord was disciplining you? How did you experience God's love through the discipline?

Application Questions

- In what ways might you be blinded to your true spiritual condition?
- What strengths in your life might be leading you away from God?
 - What does your prayer life say about where you are looking for strength?
- What are some specific things that keep us from having the relationship with God that we long for?
 - What can help combat against that?
- How is the Amen, the faithful and true witness going to speak to us today?
- How will you answer the knocking of Jesus and receive what the promises to those who hear and open the door?

Experiment of the week

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

Ask a close friend to help you see the truth about yourself, possibly identifying some blind spots in your life. Journal about receiving the tender grace and promises God has for you in this passage. Share with the group about the experience next week.