

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Psalm 96

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

Meditate on Psalm 96 as a group.

Icebreaker

What did everyone in High School have or do that you thought you should have or do in order to be cool?

Text for Discussion: 1 Samuel 8; 2 Samuel 7:1-17

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

The Bible is the epic story of God restoring what was lost in Eden, so that we might have communion with Him and find joy in His presence. Through God's covenant with Abraham, Israel's grand calling was to be a kingdom of priests, representing the wisdom and beauty of God to the world. And yet, by the events of First and Second Samuel, they actively reject God as their king, instead demanding for a human to rule over them.

When things got hard, they didn't want to stand apart or be different. But are things any different today? As followers of Christ, we too are called to be conspicuously different from the world. But when things get difficult, our fear, anxiety and grumbling reflect our lack of faith in our Father. The sad irony is that asking for any other authority in our life (other than God) makes us less free. We choose to believe that what is most real – and therefore what should guide our lives – are our own limited experiences instead of allowing the Bible, the story of God, to tell us what is real.

Jesus calls us to see our lives as part of His story. But to comprehend Jesus, we must understand David. Fallible though he was, David was a man who sought the heart of God – in all his sufferings, trials, failings, temptations and joys. How? Because he believed in a story greater than his own life. But David was still just a man. In 2 Samuel 7 he crossed the line from being full of God to being full of himself. And God must remind David: the Israelites' success was entirely because God had been with them, not because they had earned those successes or earned God's favor. Christianity has never been about doing good so that God will love us. Christianity says: God loves us first. Period. Then, in light of His perfect love, we are called to love God and others. David needed to be reminded of this, and it's the very thing we need to hear today.

The focus of 2 Samuel 7 is on what God has done, is doing, and will do. Here, God promises that a descendant of David will become the king whose reign will never end. Neither death nor sin nor even time will break this promise. This passage also reveals a complex tension. God's deep and boundless love is apparent in this promise. But the many "ifs" throughout the Bible seem to say God's favor is conditioned by us. Some tune this out, saying it doesn't matter how we live because God loves us no matter what. The problem with this is that it ignores Old Testament history. Others turn up the volume on these "ifs" so high that the implication is God won't love us if we don't obey Him. Which is it? Does God really love me no matter what? And if so, does it not matter how I live?

In Jesus, this tension comes to a head. God is holy and commands obedience, and God is loving and faithful to His promises. God loves us exactly as we are, but because of this love, He cannot give up on us. But neither can God abide us giving up on Him. And so, God in Christ became one of us, so that on the cross God's

holiness and love would meet. Jesus fulfilled the conditions of God's law, assuring us of God's unconditional, unwavering commitment to His children.

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.)

Since the Bible is written with Jesus as the primary subject and only true Hero, how is Jesus seen in these chapters?

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.)

- Why did the Israelites say they wanted a king and what were their real reasons? Can you identify?
 - What did God say about their desire for a king? What would the people lose by having an earthly king?
 - Why did God not give up on His people? What eternal promises is He true to? (See Genesis 17:7; Exodus 6:7 etc.)
- The Israelites recognized the Lord as their Deliverer but rejected Him as their King. Compare this to the life of a Christian.
 - Name some ways we do the same thing by refusing to trust God to meet our needs and calm our fears?
- Why did King David want to build a house for God? What types of things do we think we need to do for God and why?
 - Notice all of the "I will" statements in 2 Samuel 7. What do we learn about God's character and attributes from them?
- Since the Bible is written with Jesus as the primary subject and only true Hero, how is Jesus seen in these passages?
 - What promises are given concerning Him?
- Describe the Ineluctable Love of God. (Some synonyms for ineluctable are inescapable, inevitable, unpreventable, certain, and sure.)
 - How does this encourage you? What area of your life do you most need to apply this?
- What will you do or think differently after today and because of this discussion?

Prayer

Pray that God would set your hope and mind on Christ above all other things for He is our true King and our only true source of joy and peace.

Experiment of the Month

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

Missional Experiment - What would you include if you were to tell a brief, concise, yet complete version of God's story to an unbelieving friend or neighbor if asked? Write the story and practice sharing it with your community group for feedback. Feedback questions to ask - Did this story make sense to you? What sticks out to you? What did you learn about God? What do you wonder about? Ask a friend if you can practice telling the story to them as you learn to share it from memory. Have the community group pray that God would give you the opportunity to share it with an unbelieving friend, neighbor, or loved one.

Community Experiment - Renewing your mind with truth on a daily basis is essential, especially in difficult times. Additionally, we can receive strength from being in community with others, hearing their faith stories and watching them grow in their walk with Jesus. The experiment of the month is to spend some time each week sharing with others how you see God at work in their lives. Bless a couple members of the group each week. The leader can tell who the members will be the week prior to allow for prayer and preparation time.

Continue your Bible reading plan and share something you've learned from your reading.