

Why Does a God Who Loves Us Warn Us?

April 7, 2019

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: Amazing Grace

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

Sing Amazing Grace together as a group: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDdvReNKKuk>

Icebreaker

Are there any warnings you wish you would have listened to in life?

Text for Discussion: Hebrews 2:1, 3:12-15, 6:1-9, 2 Corinthians 13:5-6, John 10:27-30

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

When it comes to hearing from God or growing in Christ, nothing beats reading and reflecting on scripture. This daily practice is nourishment for the journey of life. Why then does the Bible contain so many warnings? Why do passages seem threatening (Heb 6:4-6), confirming some people's suspicions that God is *not* good, but rather a great foreboding power worthy of being feared?

Warnings are tests before the tests that are sure to come. These verses call us to be vigilant and mindful of the state of our own heart (2 Cor 13:5). Genuine faith in Christ alone will have endurance and persevere. But the only way to know is to persevere. And to persevere, we need community (Heb 3:12-13). Sadly, it is rare today to have a true friend. Our friendships might include sympathetic listening, but for the ancients, comfort and care always included exhortation and challenge. Lacking these, we further deceive ourselves, becoming less forgiving and more cynical rather than more tenderhearted, kind and forgiving.

These passages warn that we may have been deceived into thinking we have a true faith. It's possible to go to church for years yet never really trust Christ (John 3:36). How do we know if this is us? There are many examples of those who say their faith is important... only to have the trials of life snuff it out. Others have their faith drowned by the riches of life (Mark 4:19), attempting to find their security, comfort and identity apart from God. If this is us, our faith is fleeting. We've never fully given ourselves to Him. We haven't allowed Jesus to become the foundation on which we build our lives.

If these passages cause us to look deeply at the state of our heart, it shows we are sensitive to God and His Spirit. What should concern us is if reading these passages doesn't provoke, challenge or trouble us. Casual indifference. When our sloth or pride or cynicism dulls and hardens our heart. When we lack repentance (Heb 6:6, 10:26). When the person and work of Jesus no longer move us. When we grow bored. When we drift.

The Bible isn't saying that someone can lose their salvation; Jesus assures us of this (John 10:27-29). A living faith will persevere. Not because of our own merit or strength, but because God's promises cannot fail. This affirmation should embolden us to remain both steadfast in every trial and humbly willing to please the One who loves us so faithfully. Hebrews should stir in us a desire toward love and good deeds, not to grow weary or fainthearted (Heb 12:3-4). Our assurance of salvation is not because we are free from reasons for being

condemned for our sin but because we place our trust in a Savior who was condemned in our place. That is our hope (Heb 6:9).

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 are God's warnings in the Bible evidence of His love for 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.)

- What does it mean to you that the Bible is both a love letter and a letter of warning?
- Discuss the use of the word "drift" in Hebrews 2:1 and what "drifting" looks like in daily life.
 - What does this verse ask us to do in order to guard against "drifting"? What personal application can you make?
- What are the warnings of Hebrews 3:12-15?
 - Can we do life with Christ on our own, apart from community? Why or why not, based on this passage?
 - How often are we called to exhort or encourage one another? Why?
 - How does this draw us closer to the Lord and away from the deceitfulness of sin? Share an example.
- Read Hebrews 6:1-9. Do you think this is referring to someone losing their salvation? Why or why not? Compare your answer to Hebrews 6:9.
 - If this passage doesn't refer to someone losing their salvation, how would you explain "once been enlightened", "tasted the heavenly gift", "shared in the Holy Spirit", and "tasted the goodness of the word of God" and then have fallen away? See 1 John 2:19-20.
 - What is the big warning here? What impact should this have on us? See 2 Corinthians 13:5-6.
- How are God's warnings in the Bible evidence of His love for us?
 - Discuss the promise of John 10:27-30 in light of these biblical warnings.
 - How are you encouraged and challenged by this passage and discussion?

Prayer

Practice lectio divina (sacred reading) by taking a Bible text that you love, reading it over attentively, then entering into prayer through a single word or phrase from the passage. Meditate on the word or phrase as a love note from God who loves you abundantly.

Experiment of the Month

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

Spiritual Formation Experiment - Either by yourself or with a friend, read through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6-7. List all the warnings Jesus gives. Your list will be a mosaic of what the Christian life should look like according to Jesus. Commit to following His ways.

Missional Experiment - If you have not done so, visit a kitchen or homeless shelter in your community. Record in your journal the effects of the visit on you. Share with your Community Group. Discuss the Mission of PCC and how it fits in with Community Groups. How is your group Gathering, Growing, and Sending?