

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

Icebreaker

What do you consider yourself good at?

Worship: John 8:12-16

(Read the poem or a Scripture passage to meditate on)

Practice lectio divina (sacred reading) by attentively reading John 8:12-16 aloud several times. Enter into a time of worship through prayer by using a word or a phrase from the passage.

Text for Discussion: John 7:53-8:11

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

We believe that the Bible is the unerring word of God. It's not simply inspired or influenced by our Creator, but breathed out by Him (2 Tim 3:16-17). This is important to take to heart as we read some of its more difficult passages.

Grace confronts self-righteous attitudes. Grace – especially when offered to someone deserving of punishment – can make us extremely uncomfortable. Jesus extended grace to the adulteress of John 8, but then offers the very same to her accusers by showing that their hearts were no different from hers. The same is true of us, meaning we must let go of our self-righteousness and come face-to-face with our own sinful nature.

Grace is redemptive and transformative, offering compassion and love. And it doesn't make sense to us a lot of the time because we're not receiving what we deserve. The woman in John 8 had expected a violent death. Her sin was on full display for the entire community. But in the midst of this public humiliation and disgrace, what she receives is the love and forgiveness and grace of Jesus. She receives this grace – even calling him Lord – and so he asks her to live a life worthy of the love and grace she has been shown. Grace makes us different than we were. It's ok that we are broken and come to Him broken; but Jesus loves us too much to keep us that way.

What are some take-aways from this story of Christ's abounding grace?

If we are in trouble, we need to go to Jesus. It doesn't matter what kind of trouble we're facing. Though we may feel ensnared by sin we cannot escape or overcome with the guilt of our past, we have a Savior who looks upon us with love and says "Neither do I condemn you."

When Jesus gives us Grace, He also asks for obedience (John 8:11). Grace changes us; it does not leave us the same. Through it, God has adopted us into His holy family. Therefore, we have been called to act differently (Rom 12:1-2). Jesus calls us to this transformation... but He also gives us the grace necessary to help us transform. And our obedience is out of gratitude for that gift (not out of obligation).

The Gospel removes all shame. At the cross, all sin and shame was removed, meaning there are no second-class followers of Jesus. No matter what our past was. For in Christ, we are a new, beloved creation.

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.)

Why the silence of Jesus in this passage? What did He accomplish by His silence?

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.)

- Imagine yourself in this scene: What would be the emotions of the woman caught in the act of adultery?
 - What motive did the Scribes and Pharisees have? Discuss the trap they presented?
 - What do you think the crowd gathered around Jesus was thinking?
- Why the silence of Jesus in this passage? What did He accomplish by His silence?
 - Discuss why the Scribes and Pharisees left rather than stone the woman?
 - Why do you think the older ones left first? What was confronted?
 - How do you see Jesus' deity in this passage?
 - Can you remember a time when Jesus showed you what was in your heart?
- What is significant about the question Jesus asks the woman? vs.10
 - How did she express her faith when she answered Him?
 - How did He answer? Is this cheap grace?
 - How does this scene help point us toward the purpose of the cross?
 - What did Jesus ask of her and ask of us as well?
 - Is obedience considered an obligation or a response? Explain your answer. (See Romans 6:2)
- How does the way Jesus treated this woman help you face some of the sins you struggle with?
- What is something you most want to remember from this passage?
 - What life application do you want to make?

Prayer

Prayer is a vital part of community life that should not be skipped or zoomed through. This week use the A.C.T.S. model of prayer - Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Allow at least 5 minutes for each category as you pray together in smaller groups. Have the members pray their own prayer requests during the supplication time.

Experiment of the Month

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

Spiritual Formation Experience:

More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us. The Daily Examen is be done through prayer and often a journal. Try this version of St. Ignatius's prayer: 1) Quiet yourself before God's presence. 2) Review the last 24 hours with gratitude. 3) Reflect on your emotions and present them to God. 4) Pray about an aspect of the day with joy or ask for pardon and peace. 5) Ask God to guide you for tomorrow and look forward to the next 24 hours with trust and hope. This practice helps you to build the habit of reminding yourself of God's presence wherever you are, whatever you are doing.

Missional Experiment:

Do you know your neighbors? Do you know what they like? Do you know what they do? Could you invite them to your CG? How can we look beyond ourselves to reach out to the people around us? What can you do? As a group, continue to pray for one another and hold each other accountable to reach out to those without a relationship with Christ. Celebrate any answers to prayer.