

Small Group Discussion Guide — November 22, 2020

- Series: Gospel Truth - Good News for Everyone
 - Sermon: “You Are Members of a Global and Eternal Community”
 - Scripture: Matthew 16: 15-18, 1 Corinthians 1: 2, Ephesians 1: 22-23
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

Last week David focused on how we are given grace and peace through Jesus. However, not everyone decides to *receive* that grace and peace. Were you able to do that this week - both to receive and extend grace and peace? Share if you feel comfortable.

CONNECT:

1. What one thing stood out for you from this weekend’s services?
2. What do you think it was like to be on the ground-floor of a global start-up like the Church? Do you think the disciples had any idea of the magnitude and reach of the mission when they said yes to Jesus at the beginning of his ministry?

ENGAGE:

1. Read Matthews 16: 15-18, noting Jesus’ poignant question to Simon Peter.
 - What is Peter’s answer to the question? According to Jesus, how does Peter know this?
 - What is “this rock,” to which Jesus is referring?
 - If you’d been there, how do you think you would’ve answered? How do you answer it now?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 1: 2.
 - Which part of this definition of the Church attracts you the most? Which part is the easiest for you to forget?
 - In your own words, how would you define the Church?
3. Read Ephesians 1: 22-23 and Romans 12: 4-5.
 - What do we learn about Christ in these verses? About ourselves?
 - What does this suggest about our kinship with other believers? How does it inform our understanding of differences between us?

APPLY:

1. David made references in the sermon to the global nature of the Church, with believers in far-away nations ushering in the new day with worship, setting off a wave of worship that spans the globe. What does it mean to you that you are a participant in a larger story? Does this overwhelm you, inspire you, encourage you, scare you? How does it change your understanding of your personal role in the Church? How does it affect your love for Jesus and for others?
2. One can view the Church with two different visions - a “cruise ship” vision, and a “rescue ship” vision. What are the fundamental differences in these ideas? If you honestly evaluate the way you engage with the Church, which vision do you embrace? What would it look like for you to fully embrace the “rescue ship” vision? How would it change the way you live on a daily basis?
3. Read Isaiah 6: 2, 3. It’s interesting that the seraphim (angels) were calling out to each other as they worshipped God. What do you think it adds to worship when it’s a shared celebration with another believer? What is a time you remember when worship has been deeper and richer because of the fact that you were worshipping with a community of believers, as opposed to alone? Why do you think God works this way?

PRAY:

Dear Lord, please comfort us during times of isolation and feelings of aloneness. Even when we are with others under the same roof, we may still feel alone. Help us to take comfort in the Gospel, that as believers in Christ and part of that body of believers transcending all of time, we are not alone. We can take comfort that you have comforted many others just like us. We are a part of them, and they us, through you in the body of Christ. Amen.

GOING DEEPER:

1. Thinking about all the social, racial, and political unrest in our country, re-read 1 Corinthians 1:2 again.... "together with those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - their Lord and ours..." What does this mean about the availability of Jesus and the Gospel, regardless of race, political parties, and economic groups? How can the Christian faith be a great unifier and place for healing and reconciliation during times of division?
1. What have you missed most about corporate worship and being all together at Hope under normal, pre-Covid conditions? Did we take it for granted before and not fully appreciate and embrace the power of being together as one body under one roof? What is something you look forward to getting back to or doing differently once Covid is behind us?

SUPPORTING VERSES:

Hebrews 12: 1

Matthew 9: 35-38

QUOTES

"The church doesn't exist to satisfy the consumer demands of believers; the church exists to equip and mobilize men and women for God's mission in the world."

Brian MacLaren

"In the same way, the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time."

CS Lewis

"The church is the only institution which without irresponsibility, can expend all its resources on great and lavish outbursts of compassion. It is ordained to give itself away, yet without loss. The church, above all earthly symbols, bears the responsibility for declaring in the outpouring of resources, the utter dependability of God. To preserve its life is to lose it."

John Perkins

"What is absolutely certain is that Jesus had no time for purely individual religion. Real repentance and faith brought you into a kingdom, into a family. Christianity that does not begin with the individual does not begin, but the Christianity that ends with the individual ends."

Michael Green

"Only if you are committed to a community of believers seeking to resemble, serve, and love Jesus will you ever get to know Him and grow into His likeness."

Tim Keller

"One of the many ways we know of the reality of Jesus is the presence of His Church. The Church is the society which Jesus started and with whom He remains in close communion to this day."

CS Lewis

"God's work done in God's way, will never lack God's supply."

Hudson Taylor