

The Gospel Uncut / Fall 2009

Weekly Questions

Curriculum Guide

Aims:

- To put the Scripture as the highest authority
- To help make clear the meaning of the text
- To help contextualize the themes for personal and communal application
- To resource Vintage21 for further study

Introduction for Community Group Leaders

Dear Community Group Leaders & Members,

Vintage21 Church has a high view, regard, and love for all of Scripture because it all points to the person and work of Jesus Christ, who is the leader and head of our church.

As a result, we preach the whole of Scripture in each Sunday service and desire to respond accordingly, in ongoing repentance to, and faith in, Jesus. Furthermore, we teach, study, and apply Scripture as we do life together in our Community Groups.

The Curriculum Guide is designed to be a helpful supplement to your individual and collective study and application of Scripture for each sermon series.

We hope you will enjoy and be equipped by the Curriculum Guide and drawn closer to Jesus through your study of Scripture. May God be in your study and application of His Word!

Pastor Taylor

WEEK 1: THE GOSPEL IS CHRISTOLOGICAL – IT'S ABOUT JESUS

Text: Colossians 1: 15-23

Introduction

Jesus Christ is the Lord over all Creation, both visible and invisible. His kingdom extends to all peoples, places & times and has been from eternity past to eternity future. He is worshipped rightly by some, and will eventually be by all.

Discussion

What does it look like to worship Jesus as Lord over all?

Explanation

What is Jesus' relationship to creation?

What works does Jesus do in v15-23?

What is the result for the Colossians?

Questions to Answer

According to v15-23, why is Jesus superior/preeminent?

Preeminent means above and before all others. What are the most important people, places and things in your life?

What should it look like for Jesus to be the head of your Community Group?

In what areas of your life are you prone to forget the gospel?

As a Community Group, how can you guard against "shifting from the hope of the gospel you heard"?

WEEK 2: THE GOSPEL IS OF FIRST IMPORTANCE – IT'S OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY

Text: Romans 1: 1-17¹

Introduction

Paul's letter to the Romans is all about the Gospel and its effects for all people – regardless of race, religion, worldview, time or place.

Paul received the Gospel, and it changed every aspect of his life – his name, his job, his decisions, and his direction in life.

Discussion

How has your life been affected by the Gospel?

Explanation

What is the "Gospel of God"?

How has the Gospel affected Paul?

What kind of relationship does Paul have with those in Rome?

Questions to Answer

How do you describe the Gospel in your own words?

How has your understanding of the Gospel grown over time?

What difference would it make to see the Gospel the way Paul did?

How do you experience or witness the power of God?

How does the Gospel influence the decisions you make in your life? What other factors tend to influence you?

Elsewhere, Paul says, "imitate me, as I imitate Christ." How does your life need to more closely imitate Paul?

¹ The actual text preached is v1-6 but to further study and understand the context in the curriculum guide we have included v1-17

WEEK 3: THE GOSPEL IS THEOLOGICAL – IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

Text: John 3:1-21

Introduction

All peoples are already condemned because they love darkness and do evil works. Jesus went to the cross to satisfy the wrath of God for sin and experience all condemnation in our place as our substitute. Jesus then rose from the dead to give us new birth, which is also called regeneration.

Word Study

Regeneration is the inner renewal of the heart by the Holy Spirit, so that we have new and greater affections for God and his desires, which results in our freedom and joy.

It is a radically new beginning rather than a mere restoration of previous conditions. This renewal involves a mighty change in the person. It is a work of the Holy Spirit, breaking the dominion of sin and implanting proper attitudes and desires. The regenerated person freely and joyously does the will of God. The ultimate goal of regeneration is the creation of a new heaven and earth that will be totally righteous and without sin (2 Peter 3:13). The present working of the Holy Spirit in the believer is a foretaste of this future cosmic regeneration (Ephesians 1:13–14). The new heavens and earth are still future. But God's renewal of his people, foreseen by the Old Testament prophets, is already a reality (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1).

The believer now possesses a new life from God through the process of spiritual birth. Christians are born of God (John 1:12–13). And it is only through this spiritual birth that one may participate in the kingdom of God and receive his Spirit. Those born into God's family reflect his righteous character (1 John 2:29). They are freed from habitual sin (1 John 3:9; 5:18). In James 1:18 this process of birth is attributed to the power of the Word of God.

Extending this metaphor for regeneration, Jesus taught Nicodemus about the absolute necessity of being born again, or born from above, as a prerequisite to entering the kingdom of God. Those who are thus reborn possess a living hope (1 Peter 1:3). Again, this new birth is brought about through the power of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

The initial experience of regeneration is followed by a continuing renewal in the life of the Christian. The newborn are to desire the pure milk of the Word of God in order to grow (1 Peter 2:2). Paul commands an ongoing transformation by the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23). The new person remains in a process of constant renewal (Colossians 3:10), and the inner self is renewed daily (2 Corinthians 4:16).

The present result of the new birth is a new person or new creation for whom old things are replaced by new (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is this new creation, rather than superficial participation in religious practices, that is the goal of the Christian life (Galatians 6:15). It involves laying aside the old nature (Ephesians 4:22) and putting on the new nature (Ephesians 4:24). In the final analysis, however, this is never the result of human effort alone. We are God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10).

Discussion

What part do we play in being born?

Explanation

What does it mean to be "born again"?

How does someone have eternal life? (John 3:14-15, Numbers 21:9)

Why is there resistance to Jesus?

What work does God do for the world?

Questions to Answer

What is the testimony of God in your life?

How has your understanding of God's love changed how you live?

How are you communicating through your life that Jesus came to save and not condemn?

How are we prone to condemn others?

What darkness has Jesus called you out of? What does the light look like in your life?

What would it look like for your Community Group to love the world like Jesus does?

WEEK 4: THE GOSPEL IS THEOLOGICAL – IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

Text: Luke 24:13-27, 44-49

Introduction

All the Scriptures – Old and New Testament – are all about Jesus. The Gospel is therefore found in every page of Scripture and every book of the Bible. Like the Pharisees, we are prone to miss the Gospel, and like the disciples, we are prone to misunderstand Jesus. So, we need the Holy Spirit to bring revelation about Jesus, rather than rely on human speculation about him.

Discussion

How is it possible to read the Bible, yet miss Jesus?

Explanation

How did Jesus view the Bible?

What does the Bible say about Jesus?

Questions to Answer

What has been your experience of reading the Bible?

What is the difference between using the Bible for information and hearing the Bible for transformation?

What value is there in knowing the Bible well?

What prevents you from knowing the Bible well?

How could you be studying the Bible better as a Community Group?

WEEK 5: THE GOSPEL IS HISTORICAL – IT'S FROM BEGINNING TO END

Text: Genesis 12:1-3, Luke 10:1-12, Revelation 7:9-12

Introduction

The Gospel has always been about Jesus – pointing to Him in the Old Testament and testifying to Him in the New Testament. Here, we see how God calls, how God sends, and how God is worshipped in the past, present and future.

Discussion

How does God bless us?

Explanation

How does God call Abram?

How does Jesus send the disciples out? (verse 1)

What can we learn from Jesus' missionary strategy?

Questions to Answer

What does it look like for your life to be in line with God's sovereign plan?

How are you called to follow Jesus like Abram and the disciples did?

Who are the "wolves" for you to avoid? Who are the "lambs" you need to welcome?

What do you spend time and energy praying for?

What are you looking forward to in meeting Jesus face to face?

WEEK 6: THE GOSPEL IS PERSONAL – IT'S FOR YOU

Text: 2 Corinthians 11:22-33

Introduction

The gospel has always been about Jesus – pointing to him in the Old Testament and testifying to him in the New Testament. Here, we see how God calls, how God sends, and how God is worshipped in the past, present and future.

Discussion

How are you making much of Jesus in your circumstances?

Explanation

What are Paul's predominant emotions here? What do they reveal?

What is the difference between Paul's boasting and that of the false apostles?

What do you think it would have been like to go through the sufferings and trials that Paul went through? How would these affect your faith?

Questions to Answer

What do you spend time talking about most?

What do you look for to find meaning, purpose and happiness in your life?

What things or person, if you lost it, would cause you to lose hope and be angry with God?

How do you personally apply the Gospel to your life?

WEEK 7: THE GOSPEL IS UNIVERSAL – IT'S FOR EVERYONE

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-19

Introduction

Paul actually saw Jesus and received the Gospel from him. This meeting changed the rest of his life as Paul began a new life as a church planter and missionary who continually practiced the Gospel he preached.

Discussion

How have you seen the Gospel impact those around you?

Explanation

How did Jesus work in Paul's life?

How did Paul come to receive the Gospel? (verses 3-11)

What ways does Paul call the Corinthians to respond to the Gospel? (verses 1-2)

How is it significant for all that Jesus is alive today?

Questions to Answer

How do you preach the Gospel to yourself?

How has God's grace changed your life?

How do we present Jesus most clearly in the culture we find ourselves in?

Would you say that the Gospel is the only hope for every person you see?

How do we make the Gospel known to every person in our neighborhood, RDU, the east coast, America and the world?

What is your role in this?
