



What makes Faith Church unique?

Life Group Work Sheet (Leader's Guide)

Gospel
October 13, 2013

Getting to Know Each Other

1. In your own words, what is the gospel? Why is it important that the gospel is one of our core values at Faith Church?

Some people in your group think that this question is unnecessary because it is a given, but it is good to make sure that everyone is on the same page as you begin this discussion. It will also help you as a leader identify if there are any areas that need to be corrected regarding your group's understanding of the gospel.

What you're looking for is something along the lines of: the gospel is the good news that although I was dead in my sins, God has paid for my sins on the cross, allowing me to have a restored relationship with him. (Read the passages below for a few different biblical descriptions of the gospel).

The second question, "Why is it important that the gospel is one of our core values at Faith Church?," can be answered simply with: because the church is not the church if it is not proclaiming the gospel. There are many good things that a church can do in this world in addition to proclaiming the gospel: social justice, community development, etc., but if the gospel is not preached, then it is not a church in the biblical sense.

Into the Bible

Pick 2-3 of the texts below, and then reflect on the following questions for each passage:

Rom. 3:21-26 1 Cor. 15:3-7 2 Cor. 5:14-21 Eph. 2:1-10
Col. 1:21-23 Col. 2:13-14 Heb. 9:11-15 Rev. 5:9-13

2. What do these passages say about the problem of sin? Have you seen this problem in your own life? How?

Each of these texts proclaim the gospel in slightly different terms, but they all proclaim the gospel clearly. When looking at the problem of sin, ask your group, "What does this text say about sin? What does this text say about the result of sin? What is the current state of those who live in sin?" Not every passage will answer each of these questions, but even if the question is not directly addressed in the question, it should give you enough of an indication for what it is trying to say.

Some people in your group could go on for hours about how wicked they are. Other people in your group may struggle understanding how detestable sin is in the eyes of God. Be aware of both of these positions and try to find some middle ground. (This isn't saying that the first position is wrong; it's just saying that your group could be dominated by someone acutely aware of their own wickedness and who hijacks the conversation with example upon example of their own sin. Recognize that everyone is sinful, and then move on to the next question.)

3. What do these passages say about how sin is removed?

Again, each of these passages speaks in slightly different terms as to how sin is removed. One thing that is constant throughout each passage however is that God in his grace sent his son Jesus to take away our sin. For some, it may speak in terms of justification. In others, salvation. In others, reconciliation. The point is not to get wrapped up in the distinctions between these theological terms, but rather to recognize that God in Christ offers each of these to us.

4. What do these passages say about the new life of the believer? Have you seen this transformation in your own life? In what ways?

Nearly every text speaks about the new life of the believer. (In some passages, such as Rev. 5, it is implied). Rather than spend time on this question, focus more of your attention to the second question. This is a good time to identify and celebrate the transformations that have taken place in each person's life. Celebrating how God has been at work in your life (and the lives of others) encourages further obedience to God and his will, and helps us in the process of sanctification.

5. How is the power of God revealed in the gospel in these passages? How does this power of God in the gospel apply to your own life?

Many of us have the tendency to see the gospel as only involved at the beginning the Christian life. "God saves me—that's the gospel. After that, it's all up to me," is a popular notion in American Christianity today. Yet this isn't Christianity, and is simply a form of works-righteousness disguised in Christian words. The gospel is applicable at the beginning of the Christian walk, throughout the Christian walk, and at the end of the Christian walk. Because not a day goes by that we do not need the grace of God, there is not a day that goes by that we do not need to live in the truth of the gospel.

One of the many ways that the gospel is applied to the life of the believer is through the power that it gives us to overcome sin in our lives. Take a moment to look how the gospel is applied beyond conversion in each passage that you are studying. How does this power of the gospel speak into your own life?

6. How do these passages speak of the hope of the gospel? How do these passages give you hope?

A second way that the gospel applies to the life of the believer is the promise of hope. This hope is what can get us through suffering and pain. There are at least two ways that the gospel gives hope: first, it tells us that no one is beyond God's grace. Second, it gives us hope in the midst of death.

From the Bible to My Life

The gospel gives the believer both the power to overcome sin in his or her own life and the hope to endure in the midst of hardship. With that in mind, reflect on the following questions:

POWER

7. How does the gospel give us the power to overcome sin in our lives? Read Eph. 1:19-21 and discuss how this power is at work within us.

Ephesians 1 gives a great example of how sin is overcome by the gospel. The same power that was at work in raising Christ from the dead is the power that dwells within each of us. For that reason, we are able to overcome sin.

8. A friend becomes a Christian but is struggling with alcohol abuse. How does the power of the gospel apply in his or her life?

This is a fairly common example in many Christian circles. “Alcohol abuse” can be substituted out for any number of sins: “pornography,” “fraud,” “fornication,” to name just a few. If “alcohol abuse” doesn’t fit the context of your group, pick a different sin for this situation and talk through that. The key is to recognize that the gospel gives us the power to overcome. That doesn’t mean that it is going to be easy; but it does mean that God is at work in us when we let him.

HOPE

9. How does the gospel give us hope in this life?
 - a. A close friend or family member has recently passed away. How does the gospel give you hope in the midst of the pain and anguish?

One of the greatest promises of the gospel is the promise of future resurrection. There will be a day when death will be no more, but today we have not yet reached that time. Imagine this situation twice: the first time, the close friend/family member is a believer. The second time, the close friend/family member is not. How does the gospel give hope in both situations?

It is obvious that the first example is much more hopeful than the second. But that does not mean that there is no hope to be found in the gospel in the second situation. In the second example, there is hope because God has graciously kept many people alive who are not yet Christians. God’s grace gives us hope for our own salvation, and it encourages us into action to share the good news with others before it is too late.

- b. Take a moment and think about your own life. Where does the gospel give you hope?

Hope is offered to every Christian as a part of the gospel. Be sure to allow time for your group to cover this question, as it is important and encouraging to share with one another how God gives us hope through the gospel.