Community/Grace, Week 8

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Nov. 16th

NOV 16TH SERMON SUMMARY

The Power of Grace (Romans 8:1-11)

The power of grace sets us free from condemnation, and this includes freedom from feeling condemned and guilty. That power is based on Jesus' death on the cross, and experienced by the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives.

1. **The Power of the Cross (v. 1-4)**. Jesus died on the cross for our sins, so that we are set free from condemnation, and forgiven for all our sins.
2. **The Power of the Spirit (v. 5-11).** We can set our minds on the desires of the Spirit and live in the realm of the Spirit, where there is grace and not judgment.
3. **Prayer** is our connection to the grace and power of the Spirit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I. INTRODUCTION: Share briefly about a time you gave grace or received grace recently.

IL THINK AND REFLECT. Read Romans 8:1-2, 5-11.

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, **2** because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death…

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. **6** The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. **7** The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. **8** Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. **10** But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. **11** And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

1. Verse 1 says: *There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* Why is it difficult for us to believe there is NO condemnation?

2. Verses 5-11 are descriptive - they describe who we are in Christ OR without Christ (in the flesh). You are meant to Be Who You Are, i.e., recognize who you are, what Christ has already made you, and act/think/live like it. Jot down some characteristics in the chart below:

IN CHRIST/IN THE SPIRIT	IN THE FLESH
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

a. Think of a worry or fear you have had recently. How would someone "in Christ" respond differently from someone "in the flesh"?

b. Can you really choose how you think? What does it mean to have your mind set on the desires of the Spirit?

c. How does it help you to think of yourself living "in the realm of the Spirit"?

3. Think about this: *When you cannot ask for help without self-judgment, then when you offer other people help, you are always doing so with judgment. Always. Because you have attached judgment to asking for help, and worthiness to helping others.* (Brene Brown)

a. Agree or disagree? Discuss how you feel about helping (worthy?) and asking for help (judgment?), and how these feelings affect your attitude toward God and people.

b. How do we attach judgment instead of grace in other areas? Select from the following and talk about how we feel condemnation, and how we can choose grace instead.
   - confessing sin
   - serving and ministry in the church
   - community and authenticity
   - serving those in need
   - witnessing to friends and family

III. PERSONAL APPLICATION (Choose 1 of the following if time is limited)

4. Verse 1 says: *There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

   a. Do you really believe - and feel - that there is NO condemnation? Why or why not?

   b. What difference would it make if you absolutely felt it?

5. Romans 8 begins with *no condemnation* and ends with the love of God:

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... **38** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

   a. Meditate on those verses – read them slowly a few times and reflect on how God is speaking to you in them.

   b. How can you begin to embrace these truths more fully?

   c. How do you want to think, live, or pray differently?