Grace Unveiled: Why Easter Matters, Week 2

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of March 1st

MAR 1ST SERMON SUMMARY

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is the restoration of a relationship between God and us.

1. Why is reconciliation necessary? (Ro. 5:6-11) We were powerless, ungodly sinners, enemies, deserving of wrath. God is righteous and just, and sin separates us from God.

2. How does reconciliation happen? (Ro. 4:3-5, 4:18-5:2, 2 Cor. 5:18-21) Jesus paid the debt for our sin. When we believe Jesus died for our sin, by faith, we are credited with the righteousness of Jesus, and our account is paid in full.

3. What does this mean for us? (Zech 3:3-5) We have been made clean, clothed with the righteousness of Jesus, because of our faith. God sees us as he sees Jesus; we don't have to do anything else, or wonder if we are good enough.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I. INTRODUCTION: Share briefly one high and one low from this past week or two.

II. THINK AND REFLECT.

Read Ephesians 2:11-18.

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)— **12** remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility … to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. **17** He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. **18** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

1. Think about reconciliation in Eph. 2. Paul is addressing two levels: with God and people.
   a. Who is Paul addressing in these verses and how are they described?

   b. What two groups (v. 14-15) need to be brought together, and why?

   c. Why do they need to be reconciled to God?

   d. What does reconciliation (on both levels) accomplish?

Romans 4:20 – 5:2 Yet he [Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **21** being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. **22** This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." **23** The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, **24** but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.
1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

2. Talk about the idea of being "credited with righteousness".
   a. Explain and discuss why believers are credited with righteousness (For help, read the rest of Romans 4).

   b. How does this help you to better understand grace and reconciliation?

   c. What is difficult for you to grasp or believe about this concept?

3a. What are the results of being credited with righteousness (5:1-2)?

   b. How does this impact your relationship with God or people? Give an example, if you can.

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

4. Some people think it's hard and/or boring to learn theology and doctrine. Do you think it's useful for us as Christians? Why or why not?
   [Please note: this question is repeated from last week. If your group meets every week and you already talked about this, skip this question!]

5. As you have listened to the sermon, and thought about these questions, how is God speaking to you? Is there a challenge, conviction, or encouragement, stirring in you? Consider any of the following:

- How you feel about yourself
- How you view sin
- How you view God
- How you view grace and Easter