

Small Group Lesson week of March 8, 2010

Getting to Know You

1. Would you characterize yourself as a “seeing is believing” kind of person or as one who says, “prove it.”
2. What does the phrase “relationship with God” mean to you?

Getting into the Scriptures

1. Isaiah 55 marks a shift in Isaiah’s prophecy to speaking directly to “the Gentiles” not just the children of Israel. What are some signs that people you know are “thirsty” for something more in their lives?
2. What would happen if you were to offer God as the answer to some of the problems you hear about from your friends? What made you answer like you did?
3. Isaiah says that we shouldn’t spend money on what is not bread. What do you think that means? Could it mean that we are using our resources to seek nourishment from things that simply don’t satisfy? Surely we aren’t talking about food here, what are we talking about?
4. How is coming to God like coming to the “waters”, as Isaiah says? Why do you think Isaiah uses this image to help us understand God?
5. What happens to our bodies without food or water? What happens to our souls without Jesus? Jesus has been called the River of Life and the Bread of Life. How do these titles inform our understanding?
6. What would it/does it take for you to really come to Jesus, drink deeply of him, and begin to change?

@the End of the Day

1. The most ancient statement of our belief is found in the Apostles Creed (see below). These are the things that Christians always and everywhere have held as non-negotiables. Do you believe these things? If so, pray a prayer of thanks mentioning some of these and what they mean to you.
2. As you pray, ask the Lord to build your faith so that you can step forward by faith into the refreshing waters of his provision.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic (or universal) church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. AMEN.

Living in the Sight of Water Isaiah 55: 1-5

How often fear [scared dog] or confusion [stranded travelers] holds us back from a life-giving encounter with God.

Isaiah: Prophet in Judah/Jerusalem. Calling God's people to return to obedience to him. Ch. 55 makes a shift from the restrictions of Judaism to the open invitation to "whosoever", prefiguring Jesus' call.

I. Open Invitation...(55: 1)

- "come" – effort
- "thirsty" – acknowledge your need
- "to the waters"—Jesus the River of Life, the Crystal Fountain
- "without money" – as you are
- "...buy..." – makes no sense, God's life-giving salvation isn't rational

II. ...to Forsake Futility... (55: 2)

- " why spend on what is not bread..."--So guilty of chasing a cure for our pains
- "why...labor on what does not satisfy..."—[mirages]
- Wear ourselves out in pursuit of happiness/peace [God-shaped void]
- All human efforts/any efforts W/O God, are futile

III. ...to Drink... (55:2b)

- "listen, listen"—a repeat for emphasis
- "give ear", "seek", "come", "hear"
- Submit to his voice, listen, embrace his agenda-not consumed by our own
- "eat"—be nourished by "...what is god"
- By the Way of Jesus who is the "Bread of Life"

A Step of Faith

What is needed most? A step of faith! Stop figuring, fearing, and rationalizing and take the step.
Philippians 1: 3-6, "...He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion..."

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- By the Way of Jesus who is the " _____ "

What is needed most? A step of _____ ! Stop figuring, fearing, and rationalizing and take the step. Philippians 1: 3-6, "...He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion..."