

Grace

Pastor Don Brock

Discussion Guide

Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!

Open

In this week's sermon, Pastor Don encourages us to give up trying to be good enough to earn God's acceptance through our own efforts (which the apostle Paul calls "keeping the law"). Instead, God wants us to trust solely in Jesus and His work on the Cross (which Paul calls "grace"). The reason for this is because when we put all of our effort into living lives of perfection, our faith is actually in ourselves and not in God's work through Jesus. Our choice, then, is to do as Paul did: "So I died to the law - I stopped trying to meet all its requirements - so that I might live for God." (Galatians 2:19) To get your group started, let everyone share about a time when the only solution to a problem was to do the exact opposite of what they initially thought would work - what were the circumstances and what happened?

BIG THOUGHT

Because we can never be good enough to "earn" our way to a restored relationship with God, He asks us to trust in the grace He offers through Jesus' sacrificial work to make us right with Him.

Dig

1. To understand what prompted Paul's desire to clarify the foundational nature of grace for a follower of Jesus, read Galatians 2:1-14 (note: circumcision (v. 3) was an essential step for a non-Jewish person to officially convert to Judaism). Based on Paul's description here, how would you describe the initial tone of the meeting with James (Jesus' brother and head of the Christians in Jerusalem), Peter (Jesus' most bold disciple), and John (one of the three disciples in Jesus' inner circle)? Why?
2. Now read v. 15-16. What did Paul say to those who were Jewish by birth? How do you think this would've sounded to them? Why? What are some of the ways people today in our culture try to make themselves right with God? Give examples if you can...

3. Read v. 17-19. Why is still depending on our own good actions to make us right with God (even after we've made the choice to trust Jesus) a sin? How does "dying to the law" free us to live for God in the way that Paul is talking about here? How can our personal preference towards either structure or freedom influence how accepting we are of this kind of grace? Explain.
4. Now read v. 20. What does it mean to you to know that your "old self" has been crucified with Jesus when you make the choice to follow Him? To know that Christ lives in you? How does this verse connect to Jesus' own words in John 15:4-8?
5. To finish, read v. 21. What answer has Paul already given for whether keeping the law (being "good enough" for God) can make us right with God (see v. 16)? With that said, if we still trust in anything other than Christ's death how does Paul say we are treating God's graciousness to us?

Take it Further

Talk with God and thank Him for creating a way for us to be in relationship with Him based on Jesus' sacrifice and not our own ability to be perfect! Then ask Him for Jesus to be more and more evident in your life...

Daily Readings

Day 1: Ephesians 2:8
Day 2: John 1:17
Day 3: Romans 3:24

Day 4: Romans 5:1
Day 5: Romans 11:6
Day 6: Ephesians 1:7

Memory Verse: Galatians 2:20



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