

Life Group #4: The Cross

Objectives: Repentance and forgiveness of sin are possible because Christ died and rose.

Launch Question: Think of a time you forgave someone who wronged you. Was it easy? Now think of the opposite, a time when you were forgiven. How did you feel?

Read Luke 24: 36-49

When Jesus appeared to his disciples and said these words, Luke says they were surprised and afraid (Luke 24:37). Why? (He had died three days earlier)

Put yourself in the disciples' place. What are you thinking and feeling?

-The disciples had not expected to see a man they thought was dead. *(Take some time here to tell the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus to your Life Group, in your own words. It would be a good idea to read through one of the Gospel accounts ahead of time (Luke 22:39-24:12). Overview is the key; 5 minutes is probably the absolute limit here, 2-3 would be better.)* Christians believe Jesus' death, burial and resurrection are factual (1 Cor 15: 3-6), they actually happened, and they are crucial to what we know about Him. In fact, the events of this one week thousands of years ago are the tipping point of history and the centerpiece of God's plan for the world. **Why do you think this is?** *(the death and resurrection of Jesus offers us forgiveness of sins and gives us open access to God)*

In this passage, Jesus talks about what is "written" several times (Luke 22: 44, 45, 46).

What does this mean? *(Jesus is talking about the Scriptures, the Old Testament, that foretold what would happen to Him, Jesus honored the Scriptures in His own teaching as the wholly correct, authoritative Word of God)*

What is your experience with the Bible? Do you think it is important? Is it difficult to understand? What in this passage is encouraging if you find the Bible confusing? *(Jesus gave his disciples the ability to understand Scripture [Luke 24: 45] and, knowing God helps us understand is an encouragement, especially going into a difficult passage like the one we're about to read)*

We're going to take a look at one of the passages Jesus talks about, from the book of Isaiah, written by a prophet of the same name, over 700 years before Jesus was born.

Read Isaiah 53: 2-6

What does this passage have to say about Jesus? *(There's a lot here: his humility, low social standing, the pain he went through, that his hurt was for our benefit. Steer the focus to verses 5 and 6; we're about to talk about sin)*

What does it mean that Jesus was ultimately "smitten by God," not Jewish leaders or Roman soldiers? *(sin is ultimately against God, so Jesus' atonement was to God, also consider the sacrifice of God the Father in taking an active role here against his Son)*

How does this passage make you think differently about the story (the crucifixion and resurrection) we told earlier? *(If Jesus went through all that He did for us, it really personalizes the story. "For our transgressions" and "for our iniquities" are important additions)*

Moving back to Luke. Jesus mentions 2 things in verse 47 that He wants everyone to be told about. What are they? *(Repentance and forgiveness of sin)*

What is repentance? *(Recognizing and turning away from wrong/old things and desires, the idea of turn or change is key)*

We've talked about two stories in the past few weeks: Jesus' parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14) and His conversation with the rich ruler (Luke 18:18-30) How do each of these connect to the idea of repentance? *(The tax collector recognized his own unworthiness and Jesus called the ruler to turn away from the things he valued over God)*

What is sin? *(There are a lot of ways to answer this question: rebellion against God, wrong things we do and good things we don't, lawbreaking, that our offenses are ultimately against God is important)*
Does our sin need forgiving? Why? *(We talked earlier about how important the death and resurrection of Jesus is for all of history. This is why; they make this forgiveness available to you and I, who do not deserve it. Take this opportunity to share the gospel with your Life Group. Use the 4 Laws booklet or another method you're comfortable with)*

Application

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died by torture and came back to life three days later. **What is the significance of these events?** *(This is a chance to briefly review what we've talked about: His death*

was for us, we are called to repent of sin, God offers forgiveness)

What should we do with this information? *(God desires for all of us to believe it, non-Christians and Christians alike, and to share it with others (Luke 24:47, 48))*

Jesus' death and resurrection is often thought of as a message primarily for those who don't call themselves Christians. How is the gospel important for those who already believe in Jesus?

What about the idea of repentance? Does it include Christians? Think carefully. What should you turn away from to turn more fully toward Jesus?

Who is someone you can share the good news of this story with? Let's pray for those people now.