

GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL GOD SERMON SERIES DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

10 & 11 JULY 2021

OUR GOOD GOD LOVES US SACRIFICIALLY

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 2:9-18

If you meet weekly :

- Worship through song (10 mins)
- Discussion - 1 session worth of core questions (40 mins)
- Discussion - 1 session worth of additional questions (30 mins)
- Sharing, Prayer, Fellowship (30 mins)

If you meet fortnightly :

- Worship through song (10 mins)
- Discussion - 2 sessions' worth of core questions (60 mins)
- Optional - additional questions (10 mins)
- Sharing, Prayer, Fellowship (30 mins)

Core Questions for Discussion

(If your group meets fortnightly, combine Core Questions of two sessions and choose one Further Question from either session.)

1. **Read Philippians 2:5-11. In this poem, Paul asks us to be of the same mindset as Jesus Christ. (v.5). What characteristics of Jesus does this passage of Scripture describe?**

- 2. Read Hebrews 2:9-18. The author of Hebrews paints a picture of us united with Christ sharing in His glory. Why is Christ's sacrificial love necessary for us to be united with Him?**

3A. How do these passages deepen our understanding of Christ's love for us?

3B. How does Christ's example in Phil 2:5-11 change how we relate to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? (Hint: Refer to Phil 2:1-4, where Paul shares his hopes for the Philippian church)

Further Questions for Discussion

(Optional question for discussion if time permits. Do allocate adequate time for prayer and fellowship.)

4. Philippians 2:8 describes Jesus as 'Obedient to death – even death on a cross!' Why do you think Paul felt it was necessary to add 'even' to describe Jesus' death on the cross?

The Humiliation of Crucifixion

“Crucifixion was the most humiliating form of state-sponsored execution, a form of death reserved for slaves. It is clear that, from Rome’s perspective, those who were crucified were not simply humiliated, but humiliated by Roman power. The public display of the crucified body served both as testimony to Rome’s power over all bodies and as a public warning against future transgression.”

-Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary, p.99.

“As a man, Christ became what no one would ever want to become—forsaken, under a curse (Gal 3:13), and tortured. Humility and obedience marked his path to the cross. One can go no further in identifying with humanity than in experiencing death—but death on a cross is the most humiliating and painful death. This death was particularly revolting to Romans. [The Roman orator] Cicero said “The very word ‘cross’ should be far removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen but from his thoughts, his eyes and his ears” and that to crucify someone was to “hang him to the tree of shame.” But the Romans used it as a deterrent to any who would oppose them and as a way to keep their subjects docile. God uses it to reveal love beyond all comprehension. All human speculation about God stumbles at the foot of the cross. Being a slave comports well with dying on a cross, since slaves in this era were subject to this brutal death.”

-David E. Garland, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians–Philemon* (Revised Edition), p.221.

5. Suggested Spiritual Workout: Reading the Gospel of John

(For each session in this sermon series, a spiritual workout will be suggested for you to exercise on your own or together as a group. We encourage you to try this spiritual exercise, then share at your next small group meeting how it has impacted you.)

(The following is adapted from *The Good and Beautiful God*, by James Bryan Smith)

In the four Gospels, we encounter Jesus, seeing Jesus in striking ways. The brilliance of these written records is in their ability to bring Jesus into vivid view.

This week find a few hours to read the entire Gospel of John. It is not often that we read an entire book of the Bible. Usually, we read small portions or a short devotion based on a single verse. By reading the whole book, we experience the complete story, beginning, middle and end.

Some may wonder, Why the Gospel of John, and not one of the others? John is a unique Gospel. It begins with a prologue that tells us about the Logos, the Word or the Son of God, who was “made flesh, and dwelt among us.” John gives us a glimpse into Jesus with a series

of unique stories, but most important, John's Gospel clearly depicts Jesus' relationship with His heavenly Father.

Breaking up the Gospel into four sections and reading five to seven chapters at a single sitting may be helpful. Try to avoid constantly consulting the study notes (if you have a study Bible). If you have pressing questions that arise during the reading ("Why did Jesus turn water into wine?"), you might want to write them down and search for answers at another time. For now, simply read the Gospel as if you were reading a story with a beginning, middle and end. For most people, this will be a challenging exercise, but it is very rewarding.

Prayer Suggestions

6. Consider praying for the following:

- a) That God would reveal a deeper understanding and appreciation of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Take some time to thank Him for coming down to Earth and giving Himself up so that we may be made holy and be allowed into God's family.
- b) That God would grant us a heart of humility and service. If there are any areas of pride that we may struggle with, ask God to show you these areas and ask Him to allow you to see others just as He sees them.
- c) If God is calling you to make a sacrifice of your time, your money, or your energy, ask God to soften your heart that you may give of these things willingly and ask Him to teach you to trust Him as you give of these things.