

Message Discussion Guide THE CROSS-CENTERED LIFE

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

December 5, 2010

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to answer the following questions:

Have you ever experienced from the opinions of others that the cross of Christ is absurd?
How have you handled those situations?

Explain that today we will discuss how the cross seems absurd to the lost, but is at the center of our salvation and lives as Christ-followers.

Option 2

Encourage learners to answer the following question:

Do people in our culture, even those who call themselves Christians, discount the cross of Christ for hope in everyday life?

Explain that today we will discuss how the cross should be in the center of every Christ-follower's life.

Review the Message . . .

Five Reasons Why The Cross Is The Center Of Your Life...

- Because the cross represents God's predetermined _____ affection _____ for you.
 - The contrast...
 - To those who are perishing, the cross seems _____ absurd _____.
 - To those who are being saved, the cross evokes _____ awe _____.
 - The cause...
 - Not the specific _____ quality _____ of those who are called.
 - Only the sovereign _____ mercy _____ of the One who calls.
 - The caution...
 - Recognize the _____ initiative _____ of God.
 - Remember the _____ responsibility _____ of man.

Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read 1 Corinthians 1:18-28. How many times does Paul use forms of the words "called" and "chosen"? Explain that the uses of these words are indicative of God's drawing people to Himself for salvation.

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- Looking at verses 26-28, who alone initiates salvation? Why can no man boast of his salvation?
- Enlist a learner to read Ephesians 1:3-10. When does this passage indicate that God determined to bring salvation to each of His people? What does this convey about His love for His people?
- Enlist a learner to read Romans 8:28-30. What does this passage convey about God's determination to complete the entire salvation process of justification, sanctification, and glorification? What does this indicate about His relationship with His people?
- Looking at 1 Corinthians 1:21, what is the responsibility of man in the process of salvation?
- How can man be required to believe and yet God do **all** of the work of salvation?
- How is man's belief in Christ for salvation **not** a works-based salvation?
- Why must we be cautious to consider and preserve the relationship between the sovereignty of God and the will of man for the truth about our salvation?

Application . . .

- What are some of the tools that Satan uses to make us question God's love for us?
 - When do we most doubt His love? Why is doubting God's love and care for us dangerous in our relationship with Him?
 - How can we know with full assurance that God not only loves us now, but has loved us from before the foundation of the world?
 - How should this knowledge and belief affect our relationship with Christ? How should we view ourselves in light of this predetermined affection?
 - In light of God's great mercy in salvation, why must we always approach the cross with humility and awe?
 - How does God's affection for us help us to stand firm in a world that thinks we are foolish for trusting in Jesus?
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- Because the cross demonstrates God's past substitution for you.
 - The essence of sin...
 - Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be.
 - The essence of salvation...
 - God sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be.

Discussion

- Read verses 22 and 23 again. Explain that the Jews believed, because of the Law, that anyone who hung on a tree to die was cursed. Therefore, thinking that the coming Messiah would not only die, but would be hung on a cross to die, was completely absurd to them. The Greek culture was renowned for their search for

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knowledge and wisdom, with even some groups believing that knowledge was the way to attain enlightenment or a sense of salvation.

- How did both of these groups set out their own demands in terms of their salvation?
- How did their self-centeredness cause them to place themselves in the role of God? How was their position a demonstration of the heart of sin?
- Remembering that Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross was a substitution for the sins of mankind, how did His provision for salvation (taking the wrath of God on Himself), contrast man's sinfulness?

Application . . .

- How do our actions indicate what we think we can do to earn salvation?
 - What terms or conditions might we give to God as ransom for our trust in Him?
 - What things in life are we most guarded about? What things influence us to become the most upset or the happiest? Are these things centered around ourselves, or do they reflect the heart of God?
 - What are some gods in our lives that take the place of God's rule in our hearts?
 - How can Satan use past sins and failures to seek to discourage us?
 - Why can we claim Christ's final victory over all sins, failures, and regrets? How should this give us freedom to live in Christ?
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- Because the cross makes clear God's daily _____ execution _____ of you.
 - We die to _____ ourselves _____ in this world.
 - We rely _____ completely _____ on God.
 - We die to the _____ stuff _____ of this world.
 - We do not revel in worldly _____ power _____.
 - We do not revel in worldly _____ intellect _____.
 - We revel _____ only _____ in God.

Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read Galatians 2:20. What does Paul indicate that a Christ-follower's life should look like every day?

Application . . .

- Why is it so difficult to place ourselves and the pursuit of worldly "stuff" on an altar of sacrifice before God?
 - What things or people do we struggle with to give over to God's control?
 - What does our reluctance to sacrifice these things/people indicate about what's at the center of our hearts?
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- Because the cross makes possible God's constant _____ communion _____ with you.
 - Christ our righteousness: He has saved us from sin's _____ penalty _____.
 - Christ our sanctification: He is saving us from sin's _____ power _____.

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- Christ our redemption: He will save us from sin's _____ presence _____.

Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read 1 Corinthians 1:30-31.
- How does the cross give Christ-followers a guaranteed relationship with God for eternity?
- How did the cross provide victory over sin in the lives of Christ-followers?

Application . . .

- How does eternal communion with God give us our identity in Him now?
 - What things in this world do people look toward to give them their identities? What is the danger in allowing things like sports teams, jobs, children, hobbies, etc. to give us our identity or contribute to our identity?
 - How can we keep a proper perspective of these things while having a healthy enjoyment of them?
 - How does the cross help us to have a proper perspective of things in this world?
- Because the cross makes certain God's future _____ glorification _____ of you.
 - The Spirit _____ speaks _____ to us on earth.
 - The Spirit _____ seals _____ us for eternity.

Discussion

- Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-11.
- Who reveals the things of God?
- What future has God determined for His people? How did the cross make this possible?

Application . . .

- What do we fear most about the future?
- How does the cross give us genuine hope instead of fear for the future?
- How does this hope in God's future give us the strength to endure and trust Him in our current struggles?