

Small Group Discussion Guide

“Christmas UnWrapped (pt. 2)” – 12.08.2013

Scripture: Genesis 45:4-8a; Genesis 50:20-21

Bottom Line: When we unwrap the story of Joseph, we find Jesus.

INTRODUCTION (BREAKING THE ICE):

It's Christmas! Therefore, important Christmas questions must be asked: 1) Artificial or real tree? 2) Favorite Christmas movie? 3) White Christmas or green one? 4) Favorite Christmas food?

UNPACKING THE GOSPEL IN THE BIBLE:

Review the Story of Joseph

Read through Genesis 47-50 during your study time and choose some of the the main points to share with your small group. Here are some of the highlights of Joseph's story:

- Joseph is the 11th born and his father's favorite.
- Joseph has a dream where he saves his brothers.
- Joseph communicates the dream to his brother's and they plot to kill him and end up selling him into slavery.
- Through remarkable circumstances God places Joseph in a powerful position over Egypt.
- 7 years of famine hit the land (Joseph dreams about the famine and how to respond to the famine become a reality).
- Joseph's 11 brothers/family are starving and about to die.
- Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to buy food, but they don't recognize their brother as they stand before him.

Read Genesis 45:4-8a

These verses weren't simply written as good advice to follow, but as good news to embrace. We could take away positive ways to live such as flee from adulterous women, be faithful in tough situations and return evil with kindness. The problem is we won't always be successful in following rules. The story of Joseph is not teaching us how to live, but pointing us to the coming of Jesus. Thankfully, there is one who will come to fulfill the law on our behalf. He will be an even better Joseph.

- 1) What sticks out to you in these verses?
- 2) How do we find Jesus in this story?

Read Genesis 50:20-21

God was completely in control throughout all of Joseph's difficult situations. He endured traumatic and heartbreaking events during his life. His own family betrayed him and sold him into slavery. How does he respond to his brothers? He offers them grace and mercy as He points to God's involvement in all things. In Joseph's story we see a foreshadowing of the coming Savior. Jesus, God in the flesh, would be betrayed by His own people. His response to our betrayal? Grace and mercy. What we intended for harm, God intended for good. God was at work redeeming His people through Jesus' death.

- 1) How does Joseph's story foreshadow the coming of Jesus?

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE GOSPEL APPLIES TO MY LIFE:

The story of Joseph is a sign post pointing to Jesus. It's not merely a story pointing us to morality or a "good way" of living. He wasn't just an example of what we are to do, but pointed to the good news of what God was going to do for us. Joseph's story and the entirety of the Bible points us to the coming Savior. The truth about the story is we are not Joseph. We are like Joseph's brothers who betrayed our good brother. We turned against Jesus and even sold Him to those who would put Him to death (Judas' betrayal). However, what we intended for harm, God intended for our own good. Jesus' death was God's plan. He willingly offered Himself in our place for our sins. Jesus' death and resurrection would ultimately save His people/family from spiritual death. **When we unwrap the story of Joseph, we find Jesus.**

LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE:

- 1) God went to the ultimate lengths to show His love for us! Take time to thank Him for the gift of Jesus.
- 2) How could you share the great gift of Jesus with someone this holiday season (generosity, special gift, invitation, etc.)?
- 3) Who do you plan on inviting to our Christmas Eve, Eve, Eve service (Dec. 22 - 6:30pm)?