

Small Groups Curriculum

Week of September 20, 2020

OPENING PRAYER

Shine in our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, the pure light of Your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind that we may comprehend the proclamations of Your Gospels. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments so that, having trampled down all carnal desires, we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the illumination of our souls and bodies, and to You we offer up glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Before the Reading of the Gospel
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

For the Sunday after Holy Cross.

SUNDAY EPISTLE

St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20

SUNDAY GOSPEL

The Gospel According to Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

All readings are available at goarch.org or the Daily Readings app.

EPISTLE READING

Brethren, knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified.

But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

GOSPEL READING

The Lord said:

"If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God come with power."

Discussion

INTRO NOTES

1. Justified before God
 - A. In his epistle, St Paul says we are “not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ”
 - B. Salvation is not something we “earn”
 - C. As Jesus tells us in the Gospel, to save our life is to lose

2. New life in Christ
 - A. True life (and salvation) are found, not in our efforts, but in Christ
 - B. As St Paul writes, “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”

3. The Christian life can be hard
 - A. Jesus will remember us when “He comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels,” not in the glory we might want (wealth, status, etc.)
 - B. Being a Christian involves setting aside our own ambition; it doesn’t benefit us to “gain the whole world” and lose communion with God
 - C. Our goal is the Kingdom of God, which we can experience today; this is the “already” and “not yet” that so many theologians describe.

For more on this Sunday’s readings, watch: [Be the Bee #68 | Salvation in Christ](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How are you feeling right now?
2. Do you ever think that you've somehow justified yourself, that you’re a “good person?” What would St. Paul say?
3. What do you deserve? Does feeling you “deserve” good things make you more or less grateful? How?
4. What do you need to set aside to better follow Jesus? What in your life is hard to let go so you can better follow the Lord?

If you don’t get through all the questions, that’s ok!

Discussion

WRAP-UP NOTES

Each Wrap-Up should be personal and based on your time together as a Small Group. These three questions can help you, as a Small Group Leader, wrap up your weekly meeting:

1. What are you grateful to have learned or heard in the conversation?
2. What simple statement or question from the conversation can you share again that would be most helpful to hear again three years from now?
3. If you could share up to twelve words on the topic of “salvation” what would you say?

AT THE END OF MEETINGS

We give thanks to You, invisible King, Who by Your boundless power fashioned the universe, and in the multitude of Your mercy brought all things from nothing into being. Look down from heaven, O Master, upon those who have bowed their heads before You; for they have not bowed before flesh and blood, but before You, the awesome God. Therefore, O Master, make smooth and beneficial for us all, whatever lies ahead, according to the need of each: Sail with those who sail; travel with those who travel; heal the sick, Physician of our souls and bodies. Through the grace, compassion, and love for mankind of Your only-begotten Son, with whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Following the Lord's Prayer
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom