Small Group Homework

For the week of March 19, 2017

GETTING STARTED

When is a time you felt like an outsider?

LOOKING BACK

Looking back on Sunday, is there anything that stood out to you, confused you, or challenged you?

MY STORY

1. Rahab was an example of someone who had faith that was expressed through her actions. When is a time you expressed your faith through your actions? (Hint: being baptized as an expression of faith in Christ is one example.)

2. Who have you seen come to faith in Christ who you never thought would?

DIGGING DEEPER

James 2:24-26 (NLT) ²⁴ **So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.** ²⁵ **Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road.** ²⁶ **Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.**

1. Rahab said to the spies she had hidden, **"I know the LORD has given you this land," she told them. "We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror" (Joshua 2:9 (NLT))**. Everyone in Jericho believed in the power of God; Rahab put her belief into action. What parallels do you see between how God saved Rahab and how God offers to save us?

2. From what you know of New Day's Backyard Missions service initiative (July 24-28), how might God use that as a catalyst for putting your faith into action?

3. In response to people who believed it is a person's responsibility to earn salvation, Paul wrote:…**yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also 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 no one will be justified (Galatians 2:16 (ESV))**. How would you explain to someone what it means that they are saved by God's grace when they put their faith in Christ?

The twelve tribes of Israel made a journey from being an ethnic minority in Egypt to establishing a new nation in Canaan. They drove out most other people from that land, but also enfolded some (like Rahab). In the United States today there is an ongoing discussion about who should be enfolded into this nation. It is important for disciples to be involved in this discussion. It is just as important *how* we are involved. We need to be expressing faith, hope and love through conversations that are both gentle and respectful (1 Peter 3:13-17). Practice having a discussion with the goal of gaining a better understanding of the issue. Do this without mentioning political parties or politicians.

1. What may be some of the fears and concerns behind the effort to protect U.S. borders?

2. How much responsibility do you think disciples of Jesus have for bringing support to minorities, immigrants and refugees? What might that look like?

3. Whether a person supports more open or more closed borders, what actions might disciples of Jesus agree on that we can take together as an expression of our faith in Christ?

When God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, He gave them a series of laws to govern their new nation. One of those laws reads: [33] **"Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your land.** [34] **Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners living in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:33-34 (NLT)).**

1. What do you think are some ways the Israelites could have taken advantage of foreigners living among them?

2. Who are the "foreigners who live among us" in Central Wisconsin?

3. How might our upbringing influence our treatment of "foreigners"?

4. Regardless of what the government does, what might we do as individuals to love the foreigners among us?

SERVICE PROJECT AND SOCIAL EVENT: Have you planned these important components of your small group yet? If so, great!

PRAYERS: