

Small Group Homework

For the week of March 26, 2017

GETTING STARTED

What is an outstanding skill or talent you have?

LOOKING BACK

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

MY STORY

1. Abraham left his home for an unknown place because God told him to. Ruth left her home in order to stick with her mother-in-law, Naomi. When is a time you had to move away from somewhere/something familiar and into the unknown? How did it work out?
2. Have you ever seen someone stand out in a really positive way because of their faith? In a negative way?

DIGGING DEEPER

Judges 2:10-12 (NLT) ¹⁰ After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel. ¹¹ The Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight and served the images of Baal. ¹² They abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They went after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them. And they angered the LORD.

1. To what extent are we living as a generation who does not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things He has done?
2. Do you see any evidence that we may be in a generation that is actually recognizing our idolatry and turning back to God?
3. It was during the time of the judges that the events in the book of Ruth took place. We see that some people stayed faithful to God, even in a generation gone astray. How do you think Boaz's parents (Salmon and Rahab) may have contributed to his faith and character?
4. There is a growing percentage of people who claim no religious affiliation* (sometimes referred to as the "nones," because they would circle "none" on a survey asking about their religion). What is a disciple's responsibility in responding to this trend?

Matthew 1:5-6a (NKJV) ⁵ Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse begot David the king.

1. Why do you think Matthew makes it a point to bring up Tamar, Rahab and Ruth while omitting other women like Sarah, Rebekah and Leah?
2. What strengths have you seen displayed in the ancestors of Jesus we have covered so far?
3. What are some weaknesses?

Ruth 1:15-16 (NLT) ¹⁵ “Look,” Naomi said to her, “your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same.” ¹⁶ But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.”

1. What was Ruth sacrificing in order to go with Naomi?
2. What could possibly inspire you to be that loyal towards someone?
3. What does the account of Boaz and Ruth teach us about God?

BRINGING IT HOME: The tragic shooting in our community this week reminds us that we are not living in a time and a place where God’s ultimate will is being done. His ultimate will is for suffering to end as Christ rules with mercy and truth (e.g. Revelation 21, Isaiah 16:5, Daniel 7:14). In the meantime, we are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). Like Boaz and Ruth, let’s shine a light of hope that comes from faith in our King. May His Kingdom come, and His will be done in this community as it is in Heaven.

PRAYERS:

*“Today, nearly four in ten (39%) young adults (ages 18-29) are religiously unaffiliated—three times the unaffiliated rate (13%) among seniors (ages 65 and older). ...In the 1970s, only about one-third (34%) of Americans who were raised in religiously unaffiliated households were still unaffiliated as adults. [66% connected to some religion as they grew up.] By the 1990s, slightly more than half (53%) of Americans who were unaffiliated in childhood retained their religious identity in adulthood. Today, about two-thirds (66%) of Americans who report being raised outside a formal religious tradition remain unaffiliated as adults.” (Cited in <http://coldcasechristianity.com/2016/are-young-people-really-leaving-christianity/> from a Public Religious Institute study in 2016)