

NOVEMBER 28, 2021
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD
JOHN 1:29
FALL QUARTER WEEK 12 OF 13

EFCC's definition of a disciple: Someone who is learning to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus.

EFCC's discipleship values: Pursuit, Obedience, Journey, Wholeness, Together, Mission.

EFCC's discipleship model: being WITH (upward focus), becoming LIKE (inward focus), doing AS (outward focus).

EFCC's discipleship methodology: focus on what we need to learn, what we need to practice and with whom we need to be in relationship in order to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus.

I think the discipleship value most highlighted this week is **pursuit**. Here is how we've defined it -

"We live in a God-bathed world and the Scriptures shout the good news that the God who is all around us is also the God who loves and pursues us. Our desire as the people of God is to respond by growing our awareness of his nearness. We do this so that we might truly know he is with us and so that we might encounter the love, life, peace, freedom, and joy he brings. Like the psalmist, we affirm that the nearness of God is our good.."

Ryan talked about *beholding* and not missing what the incarnation is and what the birth of Christ means. This is us growing in our awareness of Him and what He's done. We pursue living in the "awakeness" that is a response to His pursuit of us and that fact that He has caused us to be spiritually reborn. We were reminded that *advent* is about *awakening*. It's about *awakening*, or staying awake, to His first coming and being expectant about His second coming.

In the being **WITH**, becoming **LIKE** and doing **AS** paradigm, this week's message focuses us on **being with**.

We are reminded that **with** is an upward focus on Christ. Beholding Him is about thinking intentionally about Him and keeping our spiritual eyes on Him in the midst of our world which wants to lull us to sleep. The world, the flesh and the devil do not want us to behold Him, so we focus on Him, and especially in this advent season. One gift of advent is that it encourages us to renew and refine our spiritual focus, which is only good for us!

Renewed by Grace

1. Finish this phrase: "It's not Thanksgiving until..."

It's not Thanksgiving until I take my first bite of food. When I taste the turkey and the gravy and the stuffing and the cheesy potatoes and the rolls, then it's Thanksgiving! That meal is what really says, "Thanksgiving hath arrived!"

How about for you?

Equipped as Disciples

2. Read John 1:29, Isaiah 53:6-7; Matthew 1:21; Exodus 12:12-13.

- What are some of your observations from these passages?
- What was particularly special for you and your relationship with God? Why?

“29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look (Behold), the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” John 1:29

“6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

“7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.” Isaiah 53:6-7

“21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21

“12 ‘On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. 13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.’” Exodus 12:12-13

- What are some of your observations from these passages?
 - The fact that the Exodus happened and that exodus happens.
 - The fact that the Old Testament account of the Exodus was a picture and a foreshadowing of what Christ would come and do later.
 - The fact that exodus is a theme that runs throughout the Bible. God is constantly rescuing His people from their sins.
 - What “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” would have meant to every Israelite who heard John say it. They knew exactly what John was proclaiming. They knew the sacrificial system and the role of the lamb in covering their sins. They just knew that John was making some very significant claims about this Rabbi from Nazareth. We don’t live within the sacrificial system and so some of the significance is lost on us. But they knew clearly what was going on.
 - What else do you see?
- What was particularly special for you and your relationship with God? Why?
 - The idea and fact that He takes away my sin. The longer I walk with God the more aware I am of my own sinfulness, and so to realize again that He takes

away my sin is simply stupendous. I can just meditate on these four words, "He takes it away." I can let that sink in. (And it seems like I give Him more and more to take away. Can anyone else relate?)

- The idea and fact that the LORD lays on Him my iniquity. That is a heavy burden and a heavy thought. Realizing it creates lightness and joy. The burden has been transferred. Meditating on this brings joy. Again I think, generally speaking, that the longer one walks with God the more she or he becomes aware of his or her sin, and so then the thought that the LORD has laid that sin and all that goes with it on Christ is staggering, humbling, and joy-producing.
- I always think of Jesus paying the price, absorbing the wrath and taking my punishment. For that I am eternally grateful. Then add to that the truth that He takes away my sin, and it's almost too much to contemplate. As the song writer said, "He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free, His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood avails for me." (Charles Wesley, "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing".)
- What about you?

3. Pastor Ryan talked about four things that Jesus does for us when He takes away our sin.

- **Remind each other of what they are.**
- **They are all equally important (of course), but are there a couple that really resonated with your heart as you listened to the message? Which ones? And why?**

The four are:

- To destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:5, 8).
- To conquer our fears
 - The fear of punishment (1 John 4:17-18).
 - The fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15).
- To remove our guilt (2 Cor 7:10; Romans 8:1).
- To remove our shame.

- **They are all equally important (of course), but are there a couple that really resonated with your heart as you listened to the message? Which ones? And why?**

One that is meaningful right now is "to destroy the works of the devil." Why are the goals of the devil? "10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." (John 10:10) He wants to steal and kill and destroy, and Jesus came to destroy that. I look at the havoc the devil plays in people's lives and in our world, and I am so angry with him. It means a lot that Jesus came to destroy what he is trying to do. He ransoms people back and transfers them from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. He causes people to be born again. He makes all things new. He redeems broken people and fractured lives. Oh, this gives me such joy to think about!

The second is that He came to conquer my fears. I loved it when Ryan said that since Jesus took care of the fear of punishment and death, then what else do we really have to be afraid of? The older one gets, the closer one gets to the day of their death and to the day of reckoning with Him. To know that my punishment has been absorbed by Him and that punishment does not await me is amazing. And to know that death has been conquered and that resurrection awaits is so humbling.

These are the two that are particularly poignant for me. How about for you?

Sent in Love

- 4. To “behold” is to see and not miss. What is one thing you can do this week to see the Lamb of God and be reminded of what He’s done for you? What is your I WILL statement for the week?**

I am going to pray 2 Kings 6:17 for myself, my family and my Life Group every morning this week. And to remind myself, I have written a 2 Kings 6:17 on a piece of paper which I will place on top of my phone every night and so will see it every morning when I wake up. Here is what 2 Kings 6:17 says, “17 And Elisha prayed, ‘Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.’” (Go take a look at 2 Kings 6 for the fuller context!)