



Community Group Discussion Guide

The Story: Rescue and Restoration –April 28, 2019

Brown Community Group version

I. Intro

As a church, we've been covering Why We Do The Things We Do. It's helpful for all of us to clarify our beliefs and how they relate to our actions, our motives for this church stuff. This can also be a very helpful evangelistic tool, in case unbelievers are here with us, or just to help us as we try to explain our beliefs and actions to unbelievers. Last week we celebrated Easter, where Jesus, after dying on that cross for our sin, yours, mine and the world's, actually came back from the dead. As Jesus came back to life, He would have felt that familiar cool morning air on His face, yes that's what it felt like before he was crucified, opened His eyes to the morning light (that He had created) as it began to peek over the hills and olive trees surrounding the area. Yes, He was back, back to this world, in the flesh again, to this world He had died to Restore! Restore us to the abundant life that He had originally created us to enjoy with Him. Restore us back, back to Eden again. A way to be Adam or Eve—Again. And we will get there someday!

We will see a glimpse of what we are being rescued *to*, and our prayer is that you long for this eternity. This longing for eternity, this “hope laid up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:4-5), is what should power your sacrificial love and service *today*. To repeat, Colossians 1:4-5.

II. The Story: Rescue — Recap- last week-Easter

We reveled in the Story of God's love for us as demonstrated through His divine rescue of us. We were dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), yet God initiates the rescue plan! It is foretold even in the earliest chapters of the Bible.

Genesis 3:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Last week we studied “offspring” or “seed” that would crush Satan's head, Who's that “seed”?

John 3:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

For Discussion:

1. Why do you think verse 16 is the most well-known summary of the Gospel?
2. What is the scope of the word “whoever” in verse 16?
3. If we trust in Jesus, what are we being rescued *from*? What are we rescued *to*?
4. What is the significance of the phrase “might be saved”.

III--The Story: Restoration

Context: Our Redeemer has offered *rescue* to the world, to anyone who trusts in Him! We know now that we are rescued *from* brokenness, sin, death, perishing – an eternity separated from God.

Let us now look to what we are being rescued *to* – a restoration, “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17). We will experience a new heaven and a new earth *and* restored bodies, complete with full emotional, social, moral, and spiritual restoration. Best of all, we will be with Jesus, with God, and we *will see His face!* Praise God!

Revelation 21:1-6 (ESV)

The New Heaven and the New Earth

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

We’ve studied this restoration in depth in our class recently, and this really is the big hope, the end game, our ultimate goal. Life, more full than we can imagine, with Jesus, with God, forever.

NOW, one of our church’s big goals in this series, really in everything we do, is to help us, each one of us, to share this most wonderful news with others.

The world will know we are Jesus’ disciples by what? Our love.

Love for each other and for the world. As Christians, God has given us that love. Bible says so. So, we are trying to help us all share this Good News that we would love to share with the lost and dying world out there, all around us.

IV---Ice Breaker (Spiritual “Pick-up lines”, gathering sheep to the fold)

The Goal: To equip the members of your community group to steer everyday conversations into Gospel conversations. *It's important that as believers we know how to create opportunities to share the Gospel. (It isn't always dropped in our laps, except sometimes after we pray for it)*

How could you break the spiritual ice to begin a natural discussion about God and His gift of Jesus? How can you work up to it, so it isn't so staged, so that it is a natural discussion?

What are some approaches you have used in the past? How does prayer fit in this plan?

What approaches can you use in these typical situations? (pick-up lines-if you have some good ones, we really would like to learn it)

1. *Eating at a restaurant*
2. *Riding in a taxicab*
3. *Sitting on a patio with friends*
4. *Sitting with an acquaintance on the sidelines, watching your kids at a game or playground*
5. *Eating lunch in the breakroom at work*
6. *Waving to your neighbor as they walk by or you walk by*
7. *Sitting in a hospital waiting room*
8. *Run into a friend at the grocery store*
9. *Getting a pedicure/manicure*
10. *Tip well*
11. *Any other situation ideas?*
12. *What are some reasons why we find this difficult to actually do?*
13. *PRAY that God will give you opportunities, He may just drop them in your lap!*

Generally useful “Pick-up”/ Ice Breaker lines:

1. *Do you have a church you like to attend?*
2. *What do you believe? (after listening well) Here's what I believe. . .*
3. *Note: I used to shy away from mentioning church, since it's not really about attending church, it is about Jesus, but it really is a good ice breaker. Gives them the chance to even say I don't go to church, or I'm a Buddhist, or atheist.*

It is critical for you to take time to pray for your “one” and for daily opportunities to witness, to share Christ.

Pray for our church! Pray that, through our response to the Gospel, that many would call on the name of the Lord!