



Community Group Discussion Questions | Week of November 27-December 2

Covenant – Thankful

This week we put a bow on our Covenant series. Over the past few weeks we have looked at the beauty of the covenant that God has made with His people, first with the nation of Israel and now with those who are followers of Christ, the church. Michael has taught well on the differences between contract and covenant and has led us to see two beautiful pictures of covenant through the marriage relationship and the church.

Sunday we spent time in the 95th Psalm. It is a Psalm of David and helps us focus on a covenantal God and our response of gratitude.

Psalm 95:1-9

Say, the first point of the sermon was - **Thankful that He is the rock of our salvation.** Have someone read vs. 1-2 *Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!*

Ask, What pictures come to mind when you think of a rock? Allow for participants to respond. (Mountains, large boulders, big, big rocks.)

Say, David understood rocks. He understood what it meant to have to run from Saul and hide in caves. He understood what it meant to be pursued and in need of shelter. His imagery here is one of strength and protection and things that are solid and not easily moved, if at all.

Ask, How is God the rock of your salvation?

Say, the 2nd point of the sermon was - Thankful He is a great God. Have someone read Psalm 95:3-6.

3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

Ask, Why is it important for Christ followers to understand and believe that God is a great God, rather than just an okay or good God?

Say, David says that God is above all gods. At times, we are guilty of placing other things as priority in our lives. These “gods” can easily become our focus.

Ask, What are some things that you can easily place above God in your life? (Take note to listen and make a mental note so that you can pray for them throughout the week. Writing them down at this point may seem like you are keeping score. Allow participants to share without being judged. Encourage and guide them to repentance and confession if appropriate, but commit to pray for one another as they share.)

Say, At this point we are reminded that we can be **Thankful He is Our God.** We are reminded that God is not a distant God who happens to occasionally check in us, but He is actively involved in and through us. While God is too big for us to contain, He is a God who knows us intimately. **Read** vs. 7 - For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Ask, how can we be assured that God is near us?

Say, The writer of Hebrews reminds us of this in Hebrews 13:5. - Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Say, This does not give us the right to claim that we have the real God and you don't so there as if it is a competition. Our hearts when in tune with Him are able to see that all people are created in the image of God and our desire is that people will come to know our God as the One, true God.

Ask, would anyone like to comment on that? Why is it biblical that we see people as God sees them? (They are like lost sheep in need of a shepherd. We have the Good News to share. Christ came to Earth: He lived a sinless life; Died on the cross; Rose again and is coming again to take us home.)

Say, The final point of the message this week was - **He is the God of the here and now.**

Read vs. 7b-9 *Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.*

Ask, Does anyone remember what happened at Meribah? (Moses was commanded to speak to the rock so that water would come from it, but "in his desire to do it his way, he struck the rock.")

Say, We are prone to take matters into our own hands and try to improve upon what God has commanded in our lives. God, in His grace and mercy, will never force us to obey Him. He also reminds us that there are consequences to our sins. We are often prone to return to our pasts and God is most concerned with our here and now and of course secured our eternity.

Ask, Why do you think we are at times, very quick to return to old patterns of behavior that do not reflect Christ in our lives?

Say, God is quick to forgive when we confess and repent, but our sin always causes consequences that affect us and many times others around us. Meribah was a reminder to the Israelites that not obeying God always has a consequence. He can and will forgive but the Israelites still had bitter water to drink. Meribah was known as the place of testing or quarreling.

Ask, Are there any other thoughts you have had regarding the Covenant series. We have had the pleasure of being reminded that God is a promise-keeping God. We have seen the beautiful picture of covenant in both a local body of believers and in the marriage relationship.

Remind participants that they can pick up a Friendship Covenant sheet if they have not already. They also can get a piece of wood that they can sign and present back to the church to go on the stage wall as a visual reminder of the beauty of the members of the body living in covenant with one another.

Take time for prayer requests and close your time in prayer.

You may want to mention that there are a number of volunteer opportunities at Friendship. If there are participants who have served in the past or ones who are looking to get more involved, to contact the church office for more information regarding those opportunities.

Thank you for serving as a Community Group host. There are more groups that will be starting after the first of the year.