

Home Group Study Notes - 14/2/21

Limitless Grace

Introduction

Have you ever been treated by someone much better than you deserved or expected? What did it feel like? How did you respond there and then? Did it have a lasting effect on anyone in the group?

Discovery

Read John 21:15-19, about Peter's 'reinstatement'.

Chat about it for a short while. Think particularly about the words 'grace' and 'gracious' for a few minutes - both from the personal recollections of members of your group, and Jesus's dealing with Peter, above. If like, ask if anyone would be willing to say what they feel is the difference between grace and mercy. (Don't worry if this doesn't take off - mercy isn't going to be developed in the notes today.)

Discussion

Offer the following idea for living the Christian life: 'The more you understand and appreciate kindness and grace from others, the more you will be willing and empowered to treat others in the same way.' Does that strike a cord with people?

Read Ephesians 1:3-8.

If we appreciate and are motivated by a little bit of grace from someone, how would we respond if we really understood how rich God's grace is, and how much has lavished his it on us? If you like, you could respond to the verses from Ephesians above with some moments of praise right now.

These verses, and most of the first 3 chapters of Ephesians, are pretty hard to get your head around; you know they're full of truth that feels glorious, but they're so dense that they feel almost too rich to take in.

Mike offered the idea of memorising chunks of the bible on Sunday. He suggested that if we 'inhabited' them by having them in our minds and hearts, we'd be able to meditate on them more easily. Maybe we'd find ourselves energised to with great love and exploits for God, beyond what we ever imagined we'd find ourselves doing for his glory.

Mike gave some ideas for memorising scripture. They're written out below. You could chat about them a bit if you like, or pass them to people by email for later.

And the idea from Sunday that bible study is a bit like doing a jig-saw puzzle that you don't have a picture for might interest people too. In summary this is:

- All the jigsaw bits = verses / words;
- Turning over all the bits = reading through the whole bible, maybe via 'bible in a year';
- The edge bits = key verses, ideas;
- When the edge bits are connected up = framework of doctrine, theology, history, characters etc;
- Sections of the puzzle with a whole picture of something (like a yacht!) = a chapter or two;

- Making this little section is fun and gives something nice to look at = memorising a key part of the bible so that you can meditate on it at any time of day or night - like Psalm 1:1-2 says;
- The more you do of the jig-saw = the more you get to know God!

Response

So, how about it! Are you up for exploring God's wonderful, limitless grace?

Offer your group "The bible memory challenge": between now and Easter, memorise a whole chapter of the bible or a complete psalm. You could think about which ones might be favourites for this in the group. Ps 23, 103 and 139, Romans 8, Ephesians 6 maybe?

Pray for each other - for an increased desire to know God and serve him with increasing passion and power. As the first greater Westminster Catechism puts it: 'The chief end of man is to enjoy God and glorify him for ever'.

God bless you as you meet today.

Mike

Tips for memorising a chunk of the bible (chapter or psalm):

- Write or type it out on paper - unless you only ever use one, paper bible (this keeps it in the same format while you learn it, which helps it burn into your memory);
- Put all of it on one page, ideally with multiple columns;
- Break it up into chunks - maybe 3 or 4 per column;
- Use colour, different fonts etc;
- Make 2 or 3 copies (e.g. for one downstairs, one upstairs and one .pdf version on phone / tablet);
- Learn a verse a day, and recite the whole lot multiple times a day, ideally at a time you're not having to concentrate on what you're doing much, e.g. as you have a walk;
- Try, particularly, to memorise the start of sections so that you can get going on each one each time;
- Try to figure out the meaning of complex sections. I reckon its best to use a close translation rather than a paraphrase like the Message, because you have the proper meaning of it, which you can come to understand as you learn it;
- Ruminant on it as you walk, sit, lie in bed at night - it will become a place you enjoy being;
- Of course, ask the Holy Spirit to help you with it all. May God bless you as you give it a go and, maybe, make it a way of life.