

SCRIPTURES FOR 4/30/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Ephesians 2:8-10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Leviticus 19:9-10

“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.”

Deuteronomy 24:17-22

Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

1 Peter 2:11-12

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Matthew 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

SUGGESTED BY JON FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 4:32-37

Luke 3:7-11

James 1:26-27

James 2:14-19

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

INTRODUCTION:

This week, Jon described the importance of what we do and its relationship to evangelism.

Because Paul tells us that our salvation is by grace and not works, do works get a bad rap?

Have someone read Ephesians 2:8-9.

GIFTS

So we receive our salvation as a gift, by grace. Jon explained that the word used here is the Greek word CHARIS or undeserved gift.

If we look at salvation as an undeserved gift, what else might we consider an undeserved gift from God?

How does this work with our American idea of independence – our “bootstrap” mentality?

ARTWORK

Jon shared that the Greek word translated as “workmanship” is POIEMA, which means to the Greeks would have been more related to a work of art than a construction project or something of that nature. Paul tells us we are God’s artwork.

Do you feel like a work of art? How does it feel to know that God thinks of you that way?

GOOD WORKS

So often, we want to focus on the first part of this passage, ignoring the last.

Have someone read Ephesians 2:10.

We are God’s workmanship, his artwork, created for good works. There is a Hebrew word for good works, MITZVOT, which would work well here. We are created for MITZVOT.

Does this make you look at the little things you do for people in a different light? How?

Have someone read Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:17-22.

These acts for the foreigner, the orphan, the widow, are our MITZVOT. He keeps coming back to these folks who seemingly have nothing, showing our obligation to them.

Do we still need to do MITZVOT, or does GRACE cover that?

What are some practical MITZVOT we can do today?

BE A LIGHT

Have someone read Matthew 5:14-16.

So Jesus tells us to be a light. Yeah, we are saved by grace – there is no way around that – but now that we are saved, what do we do about it? Can we be happy on that hill not shedding light on others?

Have someone read 1 Peter 2:11-12.

Peter tells us to “live such good lives among the pagans,” those Roman pagans who would KILL Christians, that they would praise God. Wow.

Do you think this is possible or even necessary today? Do you know of Christian prosecution today that rivals that of Nero’s Rome?

How does this translate to evangelism?

ARE WE SHEEP OR GOATS?

Have someone read Matthew 25:31-46.

This is pretty strong. Where are we on this? Are we sheep or goats?

Obviously we can’t do everything and help everyone, but what CAN we do?

CONCLUSION

Have someone re-read Ephesians 2:8-10.

We are His artwork, designed to do good works in order to reflect His love to our fallen world. While they don’t save us, it is absolutely critical that our MITZVOT are what define us.