

SCRIPTURES FOR 4/8/07 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

John 10:11-12

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation

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.

OPENING:

ICEBREAKER or GET YA THINKIN' QUESTION: _____

OPENING PRAYER NOTES: _____

INTRODUCTION:

(have someone read Psalm 23) Jeff suggested that we should live the resurrection daily, trusting Jesus as the shepherd described Psalm 23, who guides us to safety and sustenance, protects us in dark times, corrects our error, and provides us peace.

Q: What does “the resurrection” have to do with us trusting Psalm 23’s “good shepherd?”

Q: *(have someone read John 10:11-12)* How does this passage connect these two ideas? *(good shepherd can be trusted, hired hand cannot; He established himself as the good shepherd on the cross; therefore live in trust)*

APPLICATION:

Jesus made a flashy entrance at His birth – angels, prophets, etc. – but made a fairly quiet departure at the Ascension. Likewise, before the cross, His ministry was pretty bold, but when He appeared to His followers after His resurrection, they didn’t even recognize Him until He wanted them to.

Q: What do you think this says about the relationship of Christ to His followers before and after His earthly ministry? *(we have to seek Him; He will be harder to spot unless we are looking; we find Him when He is ready, etc.)*

The evidence of His death, burial, and resurrection is practically incontrovertible *(death of martyrs: who consents to die for a fraud? Christ followers reported the risen Christ appearing to hundreds of followers but there is no legitimate argument against these reports in the historical record)*, yet we continue to question it.

Q: Why? (Jeff suggests that resurrection is, at the very least, *unusual*; believing it happened requires *change*).

Q: Which of the questioning Christ followers are you most like? *(Mary M. – couldn’t get her brain around it; Thomas – had to touch the wounds; Peter – had to see a miracle; Emmaus travelers – had to see a recognizable behavior)*

We are a new creation in Christ *(2 Corinthians 5:17-18)*, but the world sees this as nonsense.

Q: How can we prove this “newness?” *(through our example; our changed lives; our story; what we do)*

CONCLUSION:

Q: If the cross leads to fear (of punishment, pain, etc.) and the resurrection leads to hope (of forgiveness, life, reconciliation, etc.), what does the combination of the two lead to? *(change; how can you see life without Christ and the life of hope His resurrection gives and stay the same?)*

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

GROUP NEEDS: _____ SHUT-IN MINISTRY: _____

WHO’S LEADING...

THIS WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____

NEXT WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____