



WEEK 4 - STUDY GUIDE

Message by Chad Bruegman

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

Growing up, did you ever get into trouble...like really big trouble for something? If so, what was it and what did you learn from that whole experience?

SHARE

Welcome to our teaching Series called "The Outsiders." When you think of outsiders, you think of people who just don't seem to fit, or you think of outcasts and rebels; the people on the outside looking in. But what did Jesus think about outsiders? I think you might be surprised at who the outsiders are in God's eyes, and it certainly isn't who you think it is. That's because in God's eyes, we were all outsiders at one time. What if knowing that God loved us even when we were outsiders changed the way we saw people?

When we truly understand the Gospel, it changes everything. The Gospel tells us that because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, we now stand forgiven with a whole new identity and purpose. When we understand the Gospel, we all...every single one of us, realize that there was nothing we could have possibly done to have earned it. There is no restitution we need to pay; there was nothing inherently worthy in us to be chosen to be saved, God just found us. God pursues the prodigal and finds the lost sheep, the lost son, the lost coin (Luke 15). You are valuable to God because he loves you and wants the lost to be found in him. Understanding the Gospel changes how we view ourselves and those around us. All of us need to remember what Jesus did for us, it is essential to the Christian walk.

Read:

Luke 23:32-43

What was the difference between each of the men on the crosses that day?

Why do you think one of the thieves rebuked the other thief in front of Jesus?

What are the only two things that Jesus said in this passage?

When the thief asked Jesus to remember him, what did the thief do to earn it?

When the thief asked Jesus to remember him, what did the thief do to earn it? Did he show himself worthy in some way to be remembered by Jesus? What does this say to you about God's grace?

GROW

Have you ever attended a dinner or lunch and without knowing it, someone else covered the bill? It can be an awkward moment when you realize this. Some of us decide to play defense and promise that next time we will cover it, because we don't want to feel that we owe someone anything. Maybe you are the type to argue with the person, try to give your credit card to the server only to insult the graceful gesture of the other person. Very few of us will just gratefully say 'thank you.' When it comes to God's grace, we can't earn it, can't pay it back and trying to do so is useless. God's hope for each of us is that we would be gratefully changed by grace, not to abuse it, but to embrace it and extend it to others.

Let's read Colossians 2:11-15

The New American Commentary gives us more insight:

Paul discussed the Christian's relationship to the law because the teachers at Colossae attempted to bring Christians under obligation to the Commandments. Paul knew such obligation was enslaving and legalistic. Legalism is any philosophy or movement that assumes God's blessing comes from keeping the law, whether Jewish Law or human law. It assumes a contractual relationship whereby in one's thoughts God can be bought by human effort. Legalism is an ever-present danger for Christians. Both Christians and non-Christians confuse it with real religion. Some of Paul's most instructive teaching against Christian legalism occurs here.

Two metaphors express the heart of what Christ did for believers: the handwriting of ordinances being removed ("the written code") and nailing the accusations to the cross ("nailing it to the cross"). The first is the more complicated to interpret. Literally, the handwriting is a certificate of indebtedness written in one's own hand. Taken this way, this means that there is a pronouncement that the personal note which testifies against us is canceled.

How do you typically react to someone paying your bill at a dinner? Why?

Is there anything in this Colossians passage that stands out to you?

God made us "alive in Christ," what does that mean to you?

What does it look like to abuse God's grace?

What does it look like to be a legalist?

MOVE

Jesus answered the thief, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” It is interesting that Jesus used the word ‘truly’ here, reminding the thief that although it is hard to believe, the thief will be with Jesus in paradise. C.H. Spurgeon said it best:

Who is it that enters the Kingdom at the same time as Jesus? How wonderful is God’s grace and love for us that a thief gets to enter the Kingdom next to Jesus. Knowing that we are given this type of grace by God, how should this change the way we interact with those around us? Only because of what Jesus did for us are we able to be called “insiders, “ and sons and daughters of the King. This should change everything when it comes to how we live and how we treat those who are considered ‘outsiders’ by people.

Has God spoken to you about anyone you know who would be considered an “outsider”?

What can you do this week to reach out to an outsider and share God’s love and grace with?

After talking about the need for God’s grace in each of our lives, is there an area that you need prayer for?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women’s groups to talk more freely.

TO GO.

Colossians 3:3

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.