

WE ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE
Family Lenten Bible Study 2010

Week One - CALLED AND GATHERED TOGETHER

Discussion starter: What is the worst job you ever had? What is the best job you ever had? What is your dream for your life?

John 10:7-18

I AM - God confronts Moses with His name: I AM. (Ex. 3:14)

God is the Shepherd of Israel - Ps. 23; 80; Is. 40:10-11; Ezek. 34:11-16. How is Jesus our Good Shepherd?

Vs. 7 - What comes next is truth and not fiction. Why is it necessary for us to believe Jesus spoke truth when He taught His disciples and us?

Vs. 8 - Those who came before Jesus in this case are the leaders of His day, not the true prophets of Israel. Why is Jesus warning the people against the religious leaders of that time?

Vs. 9 - The sheep gate was the shepherd. He was placed so no one or nothing could get at the sheep except over the top of him. Neither could anyone sneak out into danger except over the top of him. The way to salvation alone is through Jesus Christ. How has Jesus been your gate?

Vs. 10 - False prophets are the thief. There are many today who would scatter and destroy the sheep, offer false ways to paradise and steal believer from His Lord. They don't always use ideas. How might they use the follow: sex; drugs; alcohol; food; control; power; fame; riches; etc? How do false teachers steal what is necessary from unsuspecting sheep?

Vs. 11 - The real shepherd is willing to die for the sheep if necessary but always expects to come through the experience alive. In Jesus' case it would be His death. This verse is another I AM statement. Jesus' analogy that he is both Gate and Good Shepherd is difficult for us. But this picture was explained above the shepherd at times was the gate. Why is it amazing that a shepherd would die for sheep? How does that carry over to God dying for humans?

Vs. 12 - Hired hands didn't own anything. They only cared about their own pay and their own safety. Predators waited to pounce on the defenseless sheep and destroy them. (Is. 56:9-57:2). There are still predators today same as then: Satan, world, self. How can self be a predator to destroy our own life?

Vs. 13 - Running away is easy to do when danger is near. Self preservation is a powerful drive. What might you and I run from to save ourselves?

Vs. 14 - I know my sheep - The theme song from "Cheers", "want to go where everyone knows your name". Jesus knows His own like the Father knows Him. Think about it (Is. 43:1). When do we receive our name? Where is it that everyone knows your name?

Vs. 15 – Here Jesus speaks of His own death and says how it will happen. No one takes His life from Him. He lays it down willingly and gladly for the sheep. He knew what was in store for Him and He willingly went that way. Ezekiel gives a contrast and a prophecy (Ezek. 34:23). Who is "my shepherd David"?

Vs. 16 - Jesus here again unfolds the plan of the Father, as He did in John 3:14-16. Who are the people 'not of this fold'?

Vs. 17 - What will be the result of laying down His life for the world? What does He mean He will take it up again? The Shawnee Chief Tecumseh told his followers that if his chief body guard could tap him four times with a rod when he was killed he would rise again to live and fight on. No one has risen but Jesus. Why is that significant for us?

Vs. 18 - When Jesus speaks of authority He is speaking of power from the Father. Jesus was the Chosen One, the anointed One, obediently He went to die. Because He died and rose we are chosen ones, too, through our salvation. What are we chosen to?

Read Psalm 23 together

Prayer Time

Pray for the person on your right.

WE ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE
Family Lenten Bible Study 2010

Week Two - BLESSED WITH GIFTS

Discussion starters: Look at the person on your right and tell two gifts either physical, intellectual or spiritual you have seen in that person and how you have seen him/her grow.

Ephesians 6:10-18

Vs. 10 - Power = dynamis = our word dynamite. Explosive power to ignite more than what nature provides or humans have at their disposal. Strength = more than steroids can provide. Why is human strength inadequate in our battle (The example of Samson)? How is God's power invincible? How invincible did Jesus look while He walked this earth? How about on the cross? Resurrection and invincibility go together.

Vs. 11 – This verse describes full armor. Many people think that when Paul wrote this he was looking at a Roman Legionary soldier. How might we think of Robo Cop when translating this into today's idiom? But we don't fight against scum bags of crime but the very author of evil himself. How does that make our fight more difficult?

Vs. 12 - Human opponents are not our real enemy. Lashing out at these human partners of the real Opponent is not going to help. Bashing sinners never works to bring them to Christ. Why?

Legalists want power over believers and nonbelievers alike. The issue is not power. The issue is the hidden and mysterious powers over which we have no control (Rom. 8:32ff)

Tomorrow is hidden from today. The issue is life and death itself.

We cannot fight the battle using only human resources
education
economy
religion (religiosity)

Why not? What are these spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms?

Vs. 13 - Stand your ground stand firm. These are military terms for the Legion. How would the Legion only be as a whole as each individual soldier was in his position in the phalanx? Do not run. Think about it! Each individual soldier withstood the invasion. What does it mean to Christ's army for us who are Christ's soldiers to hold our ground?

Vs. 14 - This is Messianic clothing, the Belt of Truth (Is. 11:1-5). Character not brute force wins the battle. In Is. 59:17 the breast plate of righteousness is the Lord's. Character again is stressed. How is it that we get to wear the Messianic clothing?

Vs. 15-17 - These are messenger's feet in Is. 52:7. Hebrews went bare footed. The Roman Soldier had protective foot gear to keep from being handicapped. What makes our feet

ready? Why is it called 'the gospel of peace'? The shield is not some small round thing but the large Roman shield of the Legionary that covered the soldier from top to bottom. What are the fiery darts of the evil one? How does faith shield us totally? The helmet protects your head. (See Is. 59:17. To whom is this verse referring?) What did the helmet also provide for the soldier? Why is there only one offensive weapon here, the sword of the Spirit? How is God's Word an offensive weapon for us?

Vs. 18 - Prayer in the spirit has a lot of meanings for people. What relationship does it have to the sword of the Spirit? We depend on God's word and prayer in our life. We need to stress that in our family. When we leave home it won't be so easy to be a practicing Christian. Why?

Luke 12:16-21 - Previous to this Jesus says that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. Then he tells this parable. Remember parables are earthly stories with a heavenly meaning.

Vs. 16 - Why does Jesus say just that 'the ground produced a good crop'? Does this have something to say about the man's previous reliance on God?

Vs. 17-18 - Is it a sin to plan for the future? What might this rich man have done with the excess that he had? (Acts. 20:35) Is it a sin to build bigger or better buildings? How does the next section (12:27-34) answer that?

Vs. 19 - Jesus states worldly philosophy in the rich man's mouth (Is. 22:13; I Cor. 15:32). How do we see the same philosophy today in our world? Grab all the gusto you can. (Does that imply while you can?) Get high, stay high. It doesn't get any better than this. (In what way is that misleading?)

Vs. 20 - "fool" is a strong word to use for this person who has accumulated so much. What can happen to accumulated wealth (Jer. 17:11; Eccl. 5:10-17; Ps. 49:10)? How does he show he has no understanding of God's purposes for him (Eph. 5:17-18)? It may be that he had no faith in God at all, at which the Psalmist would certainly call him a fool (Ps. 14:1ff). Fool is used here in the sense that he is mostly deficient of intelligence, takes no account of God and his life shows it. How do Christians sometimes act as if they are functional atheists? Death is the leveler (Job 27:8-9). Only God has the real answer to death (Ps. 36:3-12). It stands to reason those who act as if there were no God are indeed fools.

Vs. 21 - What does it mean to store up things for himself and not be rich toward God (Acts. 20:35)? Why do we really have what we have (12:33)?

Read Psalm 24 together.

Prayer Time

Pray for the person on your left.

WE ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE
Family Lenten Bible Study 2010

Week Three - NOURISHED FOR GROWTH

Discussion starters: Who was your best teacher and why? Who was your worst teacher and why (maybe not name that person just grade or subject)? Name two things your family taught you that helps you with life.

Luke 1:39-56

Progress of events:

1. God announced this event Himself through His angel. (1:30-33)
2. Elizabeth knew that all this was so (1:41-45)
3. When it took place the Shepherds were told by the angels (2:10-14).
4. The shepherds believed and saw with their own eyes (2:15-20)
5. Simeon and Anna had waited for Him (2:26 & 36-38)
6. People wanted to hear from Him in His Father's House (2:46-49).

Luke 1:46-55 - The hymn of Mary is one of four songs preserved by Luke in the first two chapters of his Gospel. We know and sing it in our liturgy as the "Magnificat". The title comes from the Latin for the first word in the song, "glorifies". How is this hymn like a Psalm? Compare Mary's hymn of praise to Hannah's (I Sam. 2:1-10). Why was Hannah so happy?

Vs. 46-47 - Mary is spiritual and it is from within that she lets her joy show. What does she call God here? Why do you think she calls Him that? How is this song tied to Lent and Jesus' passion and death?

Vs. 48 - What does this verse say about Mary's view of herself? How has Mary proved to be a prophet?

Vs. 49-50 - What a confession of faith this is! What a statement of reverence for God's name! Contrast that with some other ways God's name is used. How do we reverence God? What do you suppose this has to do with God's Old Testament promises?

Vs. 51 - The long history of Israel is full of stories about God as the hero who rescues them. From what is our final rescue?

Vs. 52 - This sounds downright revolutionary. What do you think Mary means here?

Vs. 53 - This sound revolutionary too. But how does it fit with what Jesus taught (Matt. 5: 6; John 6:35)? The coming of the kingdom of God will change everything that has to do with human life. How?

vss. 54, 55 - What does it mean to you that God is merciful? How can you prove that through history (Gen. 22:16-18)?

Luke 2:21, 40-52

Vs. 21&40 - How can this be understood physically and spiritually? What part did Jesus' earthly parents have in His growth? What part do they have in ours?

vss. 41, 42 - Three Feasts were required to be attended by devout Jews each year. Passover was one of them. Pentecost and Tabernacles were the other two. Jesus is old enough for His Bar Mitzvah. When would be the last time he is in the temple (Luke 20:1)? When would be the last time he celebrated Passover (Luke 22:1)?

Vs. 43 - Why do you think Jesus might have made the choice to stay behind when the others left? There is some trouble with the story in that as an obedient child Jesus could have informed His parents of His decision to stay and study. Since He did not sin, what could have prevented Him from doing this?

Vs. 44-45 - It wasn't unusual for a preteen boy to travel with someone else besides his own parents. How do Mary and Joseph show their love for Jesus in this verse?

Vs. 46 - Is there some significance in 'third day' image? Weren't these same 'teachers' the ones with whom He would have continued disagreement and difficulty? What would their final plan be (20:19-20; 22:2)?

Vs. 47-48 - What do you think was so amazing about Jesus' answers? Why do you think Mary and Joseph were anxious?

Vs. 49 - How did Jesus reassure them? He points to His personal duty to His heavenly Father. Jesus knew His unique relationship to God, His Father. We recognize Jesus to be the true Son of God. How does it make a difference in our understanding of Him as Teacher and Savior?

Vs. 50-51 - Why didn't Joseph and Mary understand what Jesus was talking about? Jesus' obedience to all earthly authority is done vicariously. In what way did He do that for you?

Vs. 52 - See also I Sam. 2:26 about the boy Samuel. Jesus was true God. Many people believe there is no indication that He had all knowledge and wisdom from His birth. He did mature like any other boy His age. But He did understand Himself and His relationship to God that it went beyond what could be considered normal. How do you understand Jesus to be both God and human?

Read Psalm 116 together

Prayer Time

Pray for the person across the table from you.

WE ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE
Family Lenten Bible Study 2010

Week Four - PRESERVED IN FAITH

Discussion starters: Name a time when you were in a worship setting (formal or informal) when you had goose bumps, felt really close to God, didn't want to leave that setting. What has been your severest test? How has that helped your faith to grow?

Matthew 7:24-29 - This is part of Jesus Sermon on the Mount. Most sermons have illustrations. This is one Jesus had in that sermon. What is his picture? How does it apply to our family?

Vs. 24 - Many Christians see worship as a spectator sport. How does Jesus answer that assumption here? What relationship does this have to 7:21 and James 1:22-25? What is the rock? How do we answer those who want to be works righteous or legalists and use this passage? What is the comparison and contrast in this parable?

Vs. 25 - What are the rains, floods, wind and beating that our house takes? Why is this section often used with weddings?

Vs. 26-27- The contrast here is sharp. What is the sand? Why do the same rains, floods, wind and beating happen to this house? Why was the crash great?

Vs. 28 - Other teachers of the Jews never quite got to their points. They always left room for speculation. In fact, they enjoyed arguments that went on and on and on.

Vs. 29 - Jesus speaks with divine authority. His only reference is to the scriptures and not to any other teacher living or dead.

I Corinthians 3:10-11

Vs. 10 - Paul is talking here about his work in Corinth. It wasn't just hard work that brought about the church there but God's grace. The foundation is the preaching of Christ crucified and risen (2:2). The someone else who is building on it is Apollos. How are we building on someone else's foundation? What do we need to be careful of?

Vs. 11 - The foundation is Jesus Christ. He is the same as the rock on which the wise man builds his house.

Read Psalm 16 together

Prayer Time

Pray for the person on your right.

WE ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE
Family Lenten Bible Study 2010

Week Five - KEPT IN GOD'S GRACE

Discussion starters: What is your most precious possession that you have with you? What are two things that you have kept from your childhood that you would not part with?

I Peter 2:9-10

Vs. 9 - God's choosing of us falls under the doctrine of divine election (Eph. 1:4ff). Israel was God's chosen people. They were called for a special service as the ones through whom the Messiah would be born. Grace singled them out. Their belief in God was to distinguish them from all other peoples by their faith and life of service to Him. Thus New Testament believers stand in the same long line of chosen and holy ones as the Old Testament believers did. (See Is. 43:21; 61:6; Duet. 4: 20; 7:6; 14:2; 28:9; Mal. 3:17). Once the Gentiles, now believers, were no people (Hos. 1:6-10) but now are recipients of God's grace (Rom. 9:25-26; 10:19). As such it is our purpose to declare the praises of God whose call brought us out of the darkness of unbelief and death to the marvelous light of resurrected life in Jesus Christ. (Is. 43:20; Acts 2:11). How do we as individuals declare God's praises in our life? How does our family do this?

Vs. 10 - This quote is from Hosea 1:6-10; 2:1 & 22. It states that Israel is not God's people by virtue of their fallen estate into unbelief. Paul quotes this section also in Romans 9:25-26. He applies Hosea's prophecy to the Gentiles. Here Peter talks about both being no people and now they are a people, God's people. Receiving mercy is having sins forgiven. That only comes when people connect with Jesus life, death and resurrection through faith. How do we understand our status in God's family because of Lent?

Matthew 5:13-16 - This section again is part of the Sermon on the Mount. What does Jesus use as an illustration?

Vs. 13 - Salt was a precious commodity in the ancient world. They did not have refrigeration equipment or any means to can or preserve foods like we have. They had to rely solely on salt as the preservative. Not only that, it was also a flavoring. But without preservation properties or flavoring properties it might as well be white sand. How does that apply to the Christian who does not live his/her faith?

Vs. 14 - Light in the ancient world was another precious commodity. Without electricity, light was supplied by fires, torches, candles, or oil burning lamps. None of these gave off bright light. How is the Christian a light to the dark world around him/her? Have you ever seen Las Vegas from a distance at night? A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Real Christians cannot be hidden in this world either. Why?

Vs. 15 - Here the figure is of a small clay lamp that burned olive oil drawn up into a wick. No matter how dimly this wick burned it still provided light for the house. The lamp had to be lit to provide light. It was ridiculous to light it and put it under anything that would hide its light. Why is that an application to the Christian life?

Vs. 16 - Our light that shines should not draw attention to us but have people see our Father in Heaven through us. Jesus was a light to lighten the Gentiles. The people that sat in darkness saw a great light. His light drew attention to His Father. Our Christian life draws attention to our Father. How difficult is that for us to pull off?

Read Psalm 1 together.

Prayer Time

Pray for the person on your left.

WE ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE
Family Lenten Bible Study 2010

Week Six: CHOSEN AND FORGIVEN BY GOD'S LOVE THROUGH JESUS

Who am I? You are special because God loves you! He loves each of us as if there were only one of us and has given us His only Son to die for us and forgive us all our sins. Use one word to describe yourself physically, one word intellectually, one word emotionally and one word spiritually.

John 3:1-2, 14-17

Vs. 1-2 - Nicodemus didn't want his friends to know he was having an encounter with Jesus. The same problem can be part of our lives, especially when we are with friends. How might our friends react to us if they knew we were actively participated in this 'religious stuff'?

Vs. 14-15 – Jesus drew a picture from the Old Testament that would be very familiar to Nicodemus (Num. 21:4-9). What did he mean by the picture concerning what would happen to him?

Vs. 16 - Jesus wanted Nicodemus to know that God loves the **world**. Judaism at this time was much more exclusive than universal. Nicodemus recognized that God loved the covenant people. It can be difficult for us to picture ourselves being loved by God with people far different than we are (race, color, language, culture). How can it be a challenge for us to understand God's love for different kinds of people? Some might want to say there's a vast difference between blue eyed people and brown eyed people, Is there any difference in people with different eye color? How might we apply that same thought to skin pigment color?

Vs. 17 - Imagine the universe if God were not a loving God. Imagine the kind of world would it be if there were no law. Imagine the kind of world would it be if nothing greater than human beings urged them to be good. Use your imaginations to think of the cruelty that would be in a world without a loving God.

The Old Testament picture of what God would actually do is related in the story of Abraham's testing by God to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22). Isaac is a type or picture of Christ. Each was the only son of his father, each carried the wood for the sacrifice, and each would have this happen on a hill. One major way that this was different was the fact that a substitute was found for Isaac and he wasn't sacrificed. Jesus was our substitute and He was sacrificed. How does that show you God's love?

Just how important is it for you that God loves you? Ask the member of your family to respond to the statement: "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us."

Bumper sticker - God is coming back and is He ticked! How wasn't that true the first time He came into the world? GRACE- God's Riches At Christ's Expense

Luke 15:11-32

Vs 11- 12 - The Father showed tough love to the wandering son by giving him his freedom. The wandering son took advantage of the Father's tough love. There are many ways we take advantage of the Father's patience in our own lives. Think of ways you take advantage of each other's love? How do we take advantage of our parents? How do we do that with God?

Vs. 20 - Theologian Helmut Thelicke titled this section of scripture: "The Waiting Father." The title is very descriptive and brings a different emphasis on this parable than calling it "The Prodigal Son." How might a father treat a child if they did what the Prodigal did? Do you know a real life parallel life to this story? Would you want your father to treat you the way this Father treated his child? Why?

Parables are earthly stories with a heavenly meaning. The Father really shows what forgiveness is in the way he interacts with his wandering son. Without this reality there is no hope for us. What is the sequence of parables leading up to this one in Luke? Relate an instance when you were happy you found something you lost. Or if you were lost somewhere once and what it felt like to be found again.

Vs. 25-30 - Explore the feelings of the older brother in this story and how they reflect the natural way human beings respond when a terrible sinner has been forgiven and is freely accepted back into the family. How difficult would be for us? How difficult would it be for our church?

If Nicodemus in John 3 heard this parable how do you think he would have responded to it? There are all kinds and manner of family relationships, some are dysfunctional. How could this parable open people up to speak about it?

Read Psalm 51 together

Prayer Time

Pray for the person across the table from you...