

DEEPLY DEFINED

Opening Engagement

MAIN IDEA:

Victory is found in Christ through salvation. After we accept Christ, we must hear and obey his will so that we can be steadfast in our lives.

PRE-READING:

Members should read chapters 16-20 before group time

OPENING ENGAGEMENT:

What is the definition of the word gospel?

What is its etymology, and why is that important? How does it change the idea of the word gospel for you?

The word gospel originated with *bisar*, a Hebrew term where someone sent back a word of victory from a battle. Once Rome took over the world, the Greek word *euangelizesthai* meant the same thing. It changed over time to simply mean “to proclaim”. The English godspell replaced the former word, and came to mean “a story about a god”, which was then replaced by the term gospel, which is associated with Jesus Christ.

It is important we remember that the gospel is associated with victory, Victory over sin, death, and evil. It is the victory in our lives on a personal level when we ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior. The gospel isn't just news about Christ, it is news about our victory in Christ (1 Cor. 15:57)!

Discuss

Read Acts 4:11-12. The Greek used here for salvation is *soteria*, meaning deliverance or salvation. It also can be used to refer to someone's welfare, preservation, prosperity, and safety. Replace the word salvation in these verses with each of its meanings (if you'd like put them on a white board to have a visual) and discuss how the sentence is still true using each definition. Discuss how we can see each meaning both now and after death.

Once we accept the gift of salvation, we need to continue to hear and obey God's will for our lives. Have someone read Deut. 11:13, and remind the group that in Biblical times the people could have read it “And if by hearing you will hear...”.

Ask what two words here are interchangeable, and discuss why this is true (Hear and obey, they both are to *Shema*).

Read James 1:22-25, then ask how only listening to God's word “deceive yourselves”? (You must live it out for it to make an impact on your life). Have the group list off a few commands we are to live out every day. Discuss why obedience is so important for a believer.

How are we to live obediently? By faith! Do you remember the first time the word *emunah* (faith) is used in the Bible? It's Ex. 17:8-13, have your group turn there now. (Held steady = *emunah*).



Session 4
The Gospel, Salvation,
Obedience, & Faith

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Discuss, How does this story show a picture of personal faith? How does it show the importance of communal faith?

The Greek word for faith is found in Hebrews 11:1, and the word is Pistis. Discuss the example of how a piston moves a car (end of chapter 19 if you need it), and then compare how faith moves us in our lives.

Hebrews 11:1-32 lists a number of Biblical examples of people who lives "by faith". Point out and discuss a few of these examples in how they lived by faith. Point out their negative qualities didn't remove them from the ability for God to use them in mighty ways. Remind the class that God can use us in mighty ways when we submit to him.

Wraps It Up

Wrap up your time by summing up how when we accept the salvation offered from God through Jesus it is just the beginning of our spiritual journey. We are called to hear God's word, and obey it (this is not optional!). Discuss what it means for Jesus to be both our Lord and our Savior, and why it is important that we understand these are two distinct yet complementary attributes of Christ.

After we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we then are to be obedient to his ways which also helps us grow in our faith.

God can use each of us for him when we walk by faith. Ask the group, How can you be obedient this week to what the Lord is calling each of you to do? How are you planning to live out your faith?

Closing Prayer

Thank the Lord for offering us salvation found only in Jesus Christ. Ask him to help you hear and obey his words and his will for your life. Ask him to grow your faith as you walk in obedience, and that your faith will make a difference to others as you live your life completely for Christ.

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