

From Thorns to a Cypress

Insights on Isaiah 55:1-13

Pastor Dave Nichols, Grace Point Church, April 29, 2018

God's Invitation:

(Isaiah 55:1-9, Matthew 11:28-30, Luke 15:11-32)

1. We are invited _____

2. We come _____

3. Through repentance we receive

How are we invited?

(Isaiah 55:10-11)

- We are invited by...

God's Word...

(Isaiah 55:12-13, John 8:36, Romans 12:1-2)

1. Gives...

2. Gives...

3. Brings...

4. Brings...

This weeks discussion guide:

Welcome to "Week 3" of our small group session!

This small group season for GP will last for 11 weeks with the week of June 24th being our last meeting before our July-August break. May God use our times together to help encourage and support one another and help deepen our spiritual maturity as we seek to apply His Word to our lives.

Looking Back:

Each week we'll look and have an opportunity to share with our group how the week went and also share a few things to help us get to know each other better. What is something encouraging or not so encouraging that happened since our last meeting?

1. Last Sunday, Dave shared how God's Word is like the rain and the snow that waters the earth and nourishes it. Tell of a time in your life when God's Word was especially nourishing. How did it restore or encourage you?

2. This past Sunday we were able to witness public transformation through baptism. We heard stories of how God has changed the stories of their lives. I want us to have the opportunity this week to share our stories. In this looking back section, what was your life like before you came to know Christ as your Savior and Lord?

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged you or needs some clarification?

Looking Up:

1. Last Sunday Dave talked about the power of God's word to bring about fundamental change in our lives. So much so, that it dramatically alters us to the core. The change is compared to turning a thorn into a cypress. As we continue looking at how God has dramatically altered the story of our lives, how did you come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ? Remember, God is the hero of your story, so make sure that your story highlights His redeeming work!

2. God's wisdom and power are so far above our ability to understand or reason. God has chosen to reveal his nature first and foremost in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He then, through faith, gives us his Holy Spirit which testifies to Christ. Yet he also leaves us his Word, the Bible, which the Spirit uses to communicate the truths of Christ to us. Read the following passages about what God's Word says about itself:

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, Isaiah 40:8**

How do these verses confirm or change your view of God's Word? What are practical things we can apply to our lives in light of these verses?

3. We live in a world where moral relativism is the norm. It is increasingly unpopular to call something wrong or sinful. Yet God's Word again and again calls people to repent. What do the following verses teach us about repentance?

- **Proverbs 28:13, Luke 5:27-32, Acts 3:18-20**

How can we live in light of these verses on repentance? A key part of the Gospel is the recognition of sin in our lives. If we don't recognize sin, we will never need to repent. How do we as believers preach the whole truth of the Gospel in a world that is becoming increasingly hostile to a faith where we are called to recognize our sin as sin and turn from it?

Looking Forward:

We have taken time to hear what our lives were like before Christ came into our hearts and fundamentally transformed us, then we heard how the truth of Christ was revealed to us and our response to the invitation to "come" through faith, so now tell of what your life has been like since you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. How has he transformed you from a thorn to a Cypress?

Let's take a few minutes to silently pray and reflect back on this last week's message and what we discussed in our group. As we reflect, let's all pray and ask God for a specific application that He might prompt us to live out this week. If you are willing, share this with the group.

To help us as we reflect, here are some possible applications to get us thinking...

- Begin to read God's Word as a regular pattern in your life, as you know the power it has to change your life.
- Respond to the calling of God to come to Him. Come to God this week by spending quiet time with him in prayer.
- A big part of sharing the Gospel is by knowing your story of transformation. This week you had the opportunity to share your story with your small group. Seek to share your story with someone else this week.

As we look forward to this week, let's pray for one another!