

In Light of Easter: Now What?

St. Luke Lutheran Church
Spring, 2009
Home Group Discussion #4

Lessons from the Apostle John: For the Dear Children of God

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:1

Our spring home group sessions examine a short but powerful “book” of the Bible: the “letter” known as I John. This letter focuses on the themes of life, light and love. It instructs Christians, dear children of God, in righteous living and brotherly love. Passages of I John are appointed to be read in the Church during the Easter season. Such passages help believers sort out how to live in the light of Easter.

A second feature of our spring home group sessions will reinforce our purposes as a congregation:

Worship: live to please God
Fellowship: be connected into God’s family
Discipleship: become like Jesus
Ministry: serve others
Evangelism: share Jesus

In each of our four sessions participants will evaluate our progress individually and corporately in fulfilling these purposes.

OPENING:

Share with one another something good that God gave or did for you this past week.

Have someone lead the group in a prayer. Make sure to ask God to grant his blessing on the entire home group ministry. Also ask him to bless the *evangelism life* of the congregation.

EVANGELISM: Share Jesus

The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one way to be saved: faith in Jesus. Acts 4:12 reads, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Whether this sounds disrespectful or not to other religions, it is true. More than anything else, people need to know Jesus as Lord and Savior or they will spend eternity in hell.

The work of the Church and its people is to connect people to Jesus.

- Who are the people in your life that you are seeking to connect to Jesus? How is it going?
- What are you doing to develop a stronger witness for Jesus?
- What more can our congregation do to help you?

STUDY OF I John 5:1-8

Tonight we conclude our study on I John. John's letter to early Christians was meant to encourage the believers to remain *faithful to* and *confident in* God. They were to live out their Easter faith in love toward God. This love was to be expressed by *believing the truth* about Jesus and *loving one another*.

The accent of this passage is confidence. "Believing right" includes both *believing right things* and *believing in the right way*. What is the right way for us to believe? Confidently!

Spend some time talking about what helps you to believe God confidently. In what ways are you confident about faith in God? What shakes your confidence? What strengthens it? **Read James 1:7**. What does this passage have to say about confidence?

Read I John 5:1-8. There are four "aspects of confidence" in this passage.

CONFIDENT OF RELATIONSHIP

John writes, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." *As a believer in Jesus you are a child of God*. Discuss what that means. What are you confident about because God is your Father?

CONFIDENT OF CALLING

"What in the world am I here for?" Ever wonder what the answer to that question is? How often do you wonder what the answer to that question is!! Finding place and purpose in life, clarifying our Calling, is an ever present challenge. Share with one another how clear you are about whether or not you have found your calling, purpose and place in life.

Read I John 5:1-3 again. At least part of every Christian's call is to love God and love others. We can be confident of that! Discuss how this "calling" intersects with life's other callings. How does this help you be more confident that you are where God wants you to be?

CONFIDENT OF VICTORY

These are anxious times. What is giving you hope and peace?

Read I John 5:4-5 and Romans 8:31-39. How do these passages give you greater confidence?

CONFIDENT OF CONFIDENCE

All Christian confidence depends on the truth of God. John uses as proof of the Christian message three things: the Spirit, the water and the blood (I John 5:6-8). These refer to the Spirit's proclamation in the Old Testament, the Baptism of Jesus and the Death of Jesus.

How does the Old Testament make you more confident believing in Jesus? How does what happened at Jesus' Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17) make you more confident that Jesus is the right one to trust? How does Jesus' death make you more confident that the God of the Scriptures can be trusted?

AND SO...

To "believe right" includes "believing confidently." What will you take home from tonight's conversation? What do you need to pray and think about? What do you need to put into practice?

ONE MORE THING

Well? How did it go? Were you able to memorize I John 4:7-11? Share your experience. Talk about other passages that would be good to learn by heart?

CLOSING:

Talk about what you can do together as a group during the summer.

Have the group spend some time in prayer. Pray for a stronger spirit of evangelism our congregation.