

Sermon Study Guide - 3.28.2010

ACCESS – Week 6



ACCESS

WEEK OF MARCH 28, 2010

DISCUSSION: TOGETHER AS A GROUP

1. Think of a time you laughed, and talked, and stayed up really late talking with someone? *What was it about the person or the conversation that made you spend such a large amount of time—time when you normally would have been asleep?* Share the story with your group.
 - It's great to have good friends in your life—memories like this are a lot of fun to recall.
 - Of course, we also have memories of people with whom we were *not as excited* to spend time – a boss, an arrogant teacher, an irritating co-worker, or a family member. Imagine having to take a long road trip with that person. A root canal might be more appealing.
 - In our teaching time this week Shane talked about Jesus' relationship with God the Father, how He went to great lengths to find time to spend talking with Him—even (especially) when He was surrounded by people and issues calling for His attention.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Mark 1:35, Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Luke 5:15-16, ...the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 6:12-13, One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:

FOR DISCUSSION

2. Let's do an exercise together. Make sure you have a pen or pencil handy.
 - a. Listed below are several descriptive words and phrases that we might use to describe various people we know.

Cold	Passionate	Tyrannical	Demanding
Arrogant	Beautiful	Manipulating	Deceitful
Intimidating	Oppressive	Gracious	Aloof
Generous	Good Listener	Egotistical	Dependable
Mean	Protective	Angry	Other:_____

- b. This is going to require some reflection and honesty! Which of the above descriptive terms describes your basic view of God? Feel free to add your own if another description is needed (by the way—God already knows and loves you anyhow, so be honest!). You do not have to share your answer with the group if you do not wish to reveal it.
 - c. Now, think of a person in your life (past or present) in whom you see similar qualities. Someone will probably come to mind; whether we realize it or not many of us base our mental image of God on a person who has had a profound effect on our lives. Ask yourself: *How excited would I be to spend hours in a car with this person? Would I be likely to go out of my way to spend time with them?*
3. As a group, spend some time discussing the words you picked to describe God, and the person that came to mind. How does this affect your desire to spend time with God? Share as honestly as you are comfortable.
4. How is the God you perceive different than the One Jesus knew? The One He would get up early in the morning, stay up all night or cancel a days' worth of appointments to spend time with?
 - Lack of prayer is not a matter of lacking access—Hebrews 4:14-16 shows us that the door is wide open. Nor is it an issue of a lack of time or opportunity. Maybe we simply need to know God like Jesus knew Him.
5. Let's spend a bit of time getting to know the God Jesus knew:
 - Matt 11:25-27; John 17:1; Matt 6:9 How did Jesus address God? Can we do the same? Does this title help or hinder your picture of God? Explain.

- Matt 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28 What kind of feedback does God give Jesus? When we accept Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, God sees us as He sees Jesus. Can you believe God says the same of you? Why or why not?
 - Matt 7:7-11 What is God's heart toward you? Generous? Stingy?
6. Close your time in prayer. Some may need to confess to God the ways that they have distanced themselves from Him. Ask Him to guide you to a deeper level of trust and intimacy with Him. Commit to start spending even small amounts of time getting to know Him and reflecting on the miracle that is our access to and relationship with Him.

REFLECTION: RESOURCES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- King David is one of the most pivotal men in the Bible. His life was an epic journey from insignificant sheep-herder to King over God's people. He experienced it all—great, victorious highs and deep, depressing lows. He killed Goliath by trusting in God and killed Uriah—a valiant member of his own army, in an attempt to conceal his affair with Uriah's wife. He is very human, yet he is also described in Scripture as a man after God's own heart. Some of his writings in the Psalms have been the primary examples of a real, personal, and authentic relationship with God for thousands of years.
- As you read these Psalms this week, personalize them by writing them back out in your own words and inserting yourself as the author. If David's words cause you to recall some of your own experiences, then substitute your words for his. Use them as a starting point to express your own heart to God—the gratitude, the disappointment, the hurts, the fears, the confessions, and as you think about the God who has invited you into a relationship with Him and has placed His Spirit in you, offer praises to Him as well.

Day 1: Psalm 23—I have a constant and dependable companion no matter what my situation.

Day 2: Psalm 51—He still wants me to come to Him, even when I've blown it (this psalm is David's expression of confession and repentance after his scandalous behavior with Uriah and his wife, Bathsheba as found in 2 Samuel 11-12).

Day 3: Psalm 42—Those who enter into a deep, intimate relationship with God find that they can't live without Him.

Day 4: Psalm 5—I have a counselor Who listens and cares about the circumstances of my life.

Day 5: Psalm 88—When life is at its darkest and I am inconsolable, even when I don't understand how and why God does what He does, I can pour it out to Him.