



Sermon Discussion Guide

The Heart of Christ: *Hesed*

Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 103:2-5; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Psalm 51:1; Lamentations 3:21-23;
Micah 6:8

January 30 & 31, 2021

Part 1: Pray

The primary goal for our Life Group meetings is to experience Jesus in our midst in his presence and power. We want him to be at work by His Spirit ministering to us and through us to one another so that people are cared for and encouraged to lead God-pleasing lives. Ask God to reveal his truth in this passage to transform you through your discussion time.

Part 2: Read the Text

Read the passage(s) from the sermon. Keep a focus on key words, repeated phrases or major themes.

Part 3: Reflect on the Sermon

Introduction

1. Many people think of the God the Father in the Old Testament as harsh and unloving, especially when compared to Jesus in the New Testament. Have you encountered this type of thinking before? What do you think causes it?
2. *Hesed* is one of the richest words in the whole Bible, translated over 169 different ways. *Hesed* brings together the idea of love and commitment. Based on the sermon, how would you define *hesed*?

Hesed: The Emphasis (Exodus 34:6-7; Isaiah 55:8-9; Psalm 103:2-5).

1. Exodus 34:6-7 is one of the most important passages in the whole Bible, for here, God defines for us who he is, revealing his essential character and heart. Who does God reveal himself to be in these passages? How does this compare or contrast to how you normally think of who God is?
2. While God is certainly not devoid of wrath (Exodus 34:7), it is mercy and blessing that leap most freely from his heart. When you sin and mess up, what reaction do you expect from God? Do you fear his anger and disappointment? Or do you know that his compassion flows towards you in your sin?
3. Even if we know that God loves us and is for us, difficult circumstances can make us doubt his loving-kindness. Have your circumstances ever led you to doubt God's loving-kindness towards you? What were some things that helped remind you of God's disposition towards you?

Hesed: The Extent (Lamentations 3:22-23; Hebrews 13:8).

1. How does our culture typically define love? How does this definition differ from *hesed*?
2. How does Jesus fulfill *hesed*?
3. If we belong to Jesus, there will never come a time when God says to us, "I'm done with you," because he has covenantally committed himself to us. How would truly believing this change the way we live?

Hesed: The Exercise (Psalm 51:1; Hebrews 4:16; Micah 6:8).

1. Dane Ortlund writes, “The Christian life, from one angle, is the long journey of letting our natural assumptions about who God is, over many decades, fall away, being slowly replaced with God’s own insistence of who he is. This is hard work. It takes lots of sermons and a lot of suffering to believe that God’s deepest heart is ‘merciful and gracious, slow to anger.’ The fall in Genesis 3 not only sent us into condemnation and exile. The fall also entrenched in our minds dark thoughts of God, thoughts that are only dug out over multiple exposures to the gospel over many years. Perhaps Satan’s greatest victory in your life today is not the sin in which you regularly indulge but the dark thoughts of God’s heart that cause you to go there in the first place and keep you cool toward him in the wake of it.”

Thinking about your own story, what are some of the assumptions you’ve had about God that you’ve had to replace?

2. As those who have been the recipients of undeserved *hesed*, we are called to give it away. In your own life, who might God be calling you to love stubbornly—to love, even when they don’t make it easy or enjoyable?

Part 4: Summarize the Message

How would you summarize the sermon to someone who has never heard it? What are your two or three key takeaways from the message and your discussion?

How does this sermon change your perspective on God? Your own heart? And/or, how to follow Jesus?