

SEVEN RIVERS

— CHURCH —

Sermon Discussion Guide

The Heart of Christ: Rich in Mercy

Ephesians 2:1-9

February 6-7, 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 from the sermon. Keep a focus on key words, repeated phrases, or major themes.

Part 3: Reflect on the Sermon

Introduction

1. Adam said that the journey from Death Valley in California to the summit of Mount Whitney is comparable to our journey from spiritual death to life in Christ. In what ways is this analogy helpful?

Mercy: Need

1. Kevin DeYoung vividly explains our condition apart from Christ:

We were not strugglers in need of a helping hand or sinking swimmers in need of a raft; we were stone-cold dead – spiritually lifeless, without a religious pulse, without anything to please God. But he loves the loveless, gives life to the lifeless, and is merciful to those deserving no mercy.

Have you come to a place in your life where you see this as true of you? Explain how this hits you?

2. Adam stated, "In our sin we dethrone God and put ourselves in His place." Can you give examples of how you do this?
3. Adam also asserted that we are not only dead in sin, we are dead in works. What does he mean by this?
4. John Stott described a person who "is a self-made man who worships his creator." Is this an accurate picture of most humans? Do you think Americans have a particular propensity to practice this type of dead work?

Mercy: Rich

1. Reread Ephesians 2:4-7. What strikes you about this passage? Are you shocked by God's mercy? How so?
2. "But God!" has been called the greatest short phrase in the history of human speech. What "But God!" moments have you had in your life?
3. God's mercy on us flows from his own loving heart, not from anything we have done to deserve it. How does David state this truth in Psalm 51:1? What kind of comfort does this give you?

Mercy: Evidence

1. John Piper tweeted, "God is always doing 10,000 things in your life, and you may be aware of three of them." Can you name three ways God showing "the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness" in your life? Share one with the group.
2. Adam stated that our justification should drive our sanctification. What did he mean by this?
3. Reflect on the following quote from Richard Lovelace that explains how we are to apply the gospel to our lives everyday:

*Only a fraction of the present body of professing Christians are solidly appropriating the justifying work of Christ in their lives. Many have so light an apprehension of God's holiness and of the extent and guilt of their sin that consciously they see little need for justification, although below the surface of their lives they are deeply guilt-ridden and insecure. Many others have a theological commitment to [the doctrine of justification], but in their day-to-day existence they rely on their sanctification for justification... drawing their assurance of acceptance with God from their sincerity, their past experience of conversion, their recent religious performance, or the relative infrequency of their conscious, willful disobedience. Few know how to start each day with a thoroughgoing stand upon Luther's platform: **you are accepted**, looking outward in faith and claiming the wholly alien righteousness of Christ as the only ground for acceptance, relaxing in that quality of trust which will produce increasing sanctification as faith is active in love and gratitude.*

In order for a pure and lasting work of spiritual renewal to take place within the church, multitudes within it must be led to build their lives on this foundation. This means that they must be conducted into the light of a full conscious awareness of God's holiness, the depth of their sin and the sufficiency of the atoning work of Christ for their acceptance with God, not just at the outset of their Christian lives but in every succeeding day.

How can you start each day standing upon Luther's platform: **you are accepted** in Christ?

Part 4: Summarize the Message

How would you summarize the sermon to someone who has not 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?