

Join us in being
on mission with
God!

OUR VISION

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

Core Values

Truth
Love
Community



“Death Row Rescue”

Romans 5:6

Getting Started

After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.

The odds of being injured by space debris re-entering the atmosphere has been estimated at 1 in 1,000,000,000,000. Compare this to the odds of winning the grand prize in Powerball (about 1 in 2 million). I know of no one who is looking for insurance to protect them from falling space junk. We do not get worried about events that seem unlikely.

1. When some people hear that Jesus has come to rescue them from their sins, they react with the same indifference as if we were talking about falling space junk. Why do you think some respond this way?

Thinking about Salvation

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

2. Many in our community believe that the statement, “Jesus died on the cross for our sins.” is true. Is their affirmation of that statement sufficient to reconcile them to God? Why or why not?

Our statement calls Jesus our “representative and substitute.” We live in a culture where most people want to do things themselves. Our work ethic makes us believe that we are to take responsibility for ourselves in all things—including the task of dealing with our personal sin.

3. How would you approach someone who believed that it was their responsibility to make things right between them and God? What is right about their approach? What makes it dangerous?

Romans 5:6
*You see, at just
the right time,
when we were
still powerless,
Christ died for
the ungodly.*

4. The idea of a blood sacrifice seems barbaric to the modern mind. Most Americans don't even like thinking about how the meat they eat made its way to their table. The idea of killing animals for sacrifice seems barbaric. How would you approach someone who was uncomfortable with the idea of a human sacrifice (Jesus or anyone else) for us?

5. How does the blood sacrifice of Christ relate to all that God established and prescribed in the Old Testament? Why is it important to link the sacrifice of Christ at Easter to the Old Testament?

6. How does Hebrews 9:11-14 link Jesus' sacrifice to the plan of God throughout the Old Testament.

7. Some would argue that Jesus sacrificed himself for some of our sins, but we have to do something in this life or the next to pay for others. This could include prayers, acts of piety, or in the Catholic system time in purgatory. Why do you think we as humans have this tendency to feel that we need to make up for our wrong choices with good deeds?

8. Our statement of faith insists that Jesus' death is "the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins." What is the importance of this statement? Why is it dangerous to believe we can or must add anything to what he has done?

9. How does the full sufficiency of Christ's work help you when you know you've really messed up with God and done something sinful and wrong?

10. This cross-work of Christ is referred to as "His atoning death." Look up *atonement* in a Bible dictionary, or on line. (www.biblegateway.com). What does this concept mean?

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the right time,
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11. Look up 1 Peter 1:18-19. This text tells us that Jesus not only redeemed us from eternal damnation, but something else. What is it that Peter mentions? What does that look like?

12. Our statement of faith describes Jesus' resurrection as *victorious*. For both the Jews and the Romans, the crucifixion of anyone was scandalous. They assumed that anyone who died in that manner was detested by God. Some today see Jesus as a hapless martyr who died at the hands of power brokers. How can you communicate to others that Jesus' work on the cross was a victory?

13. Examine Isaiah chapter 53. List below all the ways in which this particular prophecy was fulfilled in the life and death of Christ.

14. In the garden Jesus asked that he might not drink the "cup." What kind of cup is he referring to? How does Isaiah 51:17 add to your understanding of Christ's request?

15. In one sense, the death of Christ is the great reversal. It counteracts the curse of the fall for those who put their trust in God's redemption in Christ. Describe the comparison scripture uses to explain this in Romans 5:18-19.

16. Some today argue that Jesus died to demonstrate the love of God. His death was a drama that God played out so that we would all understand that God loves us and will do anything for us. What is the danger of seeing Jesus' crucifixion only as a symbol of God's love?

17. Romans 3:25-26 tells us that the death of Christ not only shows us the love of God, but another attribute that he possesses. What other quality of God does the crucifixion of Christ demonstrate?



Reaching Up and Reaching Out

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18. Some would argue that all people will attain heaven because of Jesus' death on the cross. They maintain that since God loves all men without exception, that the Father will apply the benefits of Jesus' death to everyone. They might even agree that there is "no other name" by which we must be saved, but go on to insist that all humanity is saved in the name of Christ, whether they recognize Jesus or not. What would you say to someone who held this position?

Three horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 18.

Evangelicals commonly believe that we do not benefit from the death of Christ until we make a personal decision. We must confess our sins, repent of our rebellion and self-sufficiency, and affirm that when Jesus died on the cross, he died as our substitute. And we then yield to him as our savior and Lord.

18. In some Christian circles, there is great emphasis on pressing for people to "pray the prayer" that acknowledges these things. What are the benefits of this approach?

Three horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 18.

19. What are the dangers of the "pray the prayer" approach?

Three horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 19.

20. When you look at the people who were converted in the gospels and in the book of Acts, what kind of changes happened in their lives? Give as many examples as you can.

Five horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 20.

21. What would you list as "reasonable proofs" that someone has truly embraced Jesus as Savior and Lord, and has truly found salvation in his name?

Eight horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 21.

If you have any questions about your status with God regarding your eternal destiny, I'd love to chat with you! —Pastor Jim: (515) 733-5360