

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Message Title: “Why is it called the New Testament?”

Speaker: Pastor Kevin Myers

Date: March 23, 2008

Icebreaker:

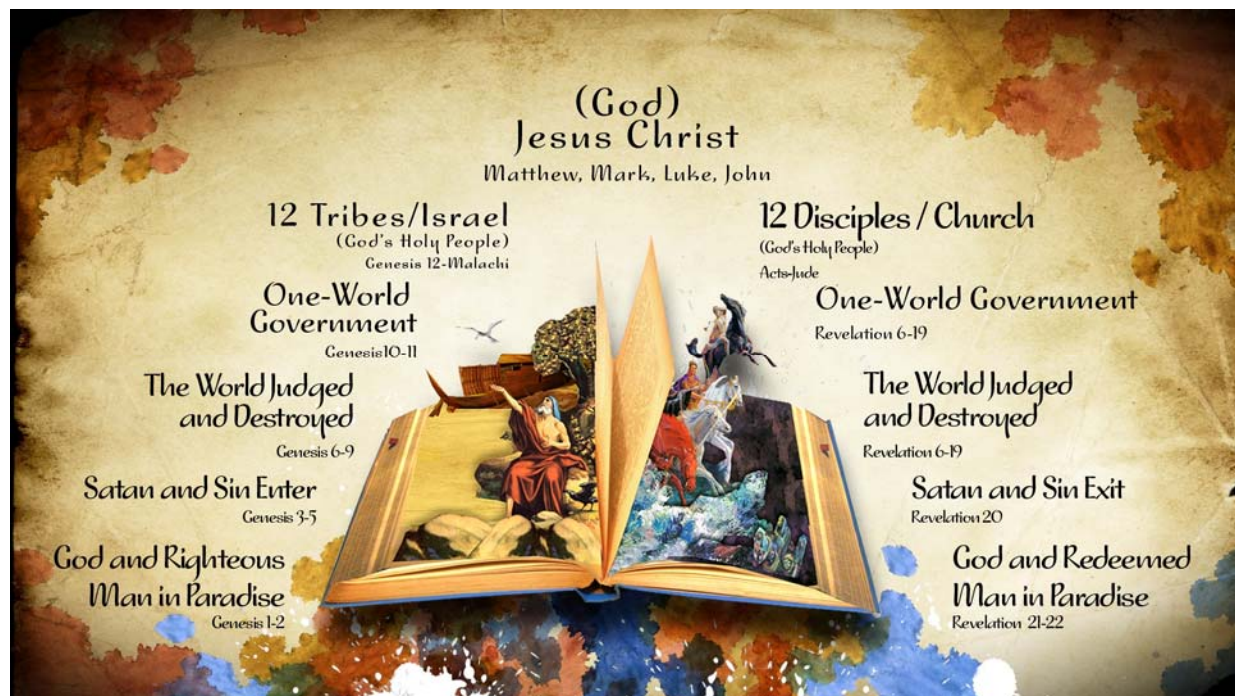
What is the greatest gift you have ever received from someone?

Message Overview:

Easter Sunday is one of those days when a lot of folks just show up to ‘do church’. But, as Pastor Kevin explained, there is a second side to the story, as we can never impress our heavenly father by what we are *doing*. What God is looking for is *relationship*. He simply wants our heart.

On Easter, God made a way for us to restore our relationship with him, which is broken as a result of our sin. Unlike the Israelites in the Old Testament, who had to bring offerings over and over again, through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God has provided the ‘Lamb who takes away the sin of the World’ permanently (John 1:29).

By accepting God’s gift for us, we will receive forgiveness of sins and a living relationship with God.



Discussion:

(Leaders: Do not try to cover every question provided in this study guide, but rather review the complete list, selecting a mix of questions that work best for your group, mixing scripture research/discussion as well as personal application of the teaching principles.

Whatever good works we may do, we can never do enough to impress God or restore our separation from Him caused by our sin.

- If you grew up in a church, what did you learn about how to approach God? Even if you didn't grow up going to church, what was your picture of God in the past? How much different was it from the picture Pastor Kevin (PK) taught on Easter?
- Read Romans 3:10-12, 23. What do these verses teach us about ourselves and sin? Where do you have the tendency to sugar-coat sin to make yourself look better? How much are you aware of your own sinfulness?
- Through the example of his son Jadon, PK illustrated the conflict adults often hold within when it comes to their relationship with God. On the one side we have the desire to rise up, power up, and 'be in charge', and on the other side we long to cuddle up and seek the approval of our Father, admitting that we really can't make it without Him. Where do you stand in this conflict? How do you deal with it when you realize that you are drifting away from Him or blaming Him for consequences of your own behavior?
- Read Titus 3:3-8. What can stand in our way of accepting Jesus as Savior? Looking at your past, what has hindered you more to get close to God, your sin or your striving for good works? What relevance do good works have on your path with God?
- The watchmaker's son in the video reminds us in some ways of the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son. Read Luke 15:28-32. How did the father in the parable react to his son's outburst? In what ways was he different from the younger son (v.21)? Whom do you resemble more, the younger or the older son?
- In the end of the video of the watchmaker's son, the father says, "All I've ever wanted was your time." Where are you exhausting yourself trying to please God, rather than just resting in Him and spending time with him? How do you spend your time with God, trying to *do* something or just *being* with Him?

God has provided a way to save us by sending His Son Jesus to die for our sins. Our sins will be forgiven if we will simply accept, receive and believe what God has done for us.

- With your group, refresh your knowledge of the tabernacle and recall the path the sinner had to take to receive forgiveness (See Appendix 1 and Leviticus 3:27-31).
- Compare Hebrews 10:1-4 with 10:19-23. In what ways is the old covenant described? What were the weaknesses of the old covenant? How does Jesus live out the new covenant? Why is it so much better?

- When John the Baptist saw Jesus he said' "Look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Compare this view with the many other perceptions people have who Jesus was: a good man, the founder of a religion, a prophet, a revolutionist, to name just a few. What is unique in John the Baptist's view? Read also Matthew 16:13-16.
- Who is Jesus for you?
- The temple used to be the place where God dwelled. Through his death, Jesus made a way to the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God (see Matthew 27:50-51). Where does God dwell now (see 1 Corinthians 3:16)? How does knowing this change the way you see yourself and the way you live?
- When the people heard Peter explain how Jesus was the one who made the way to God, the people asked what they should do. Read his reply in Acts 2:38. When in your life did you start your path with Jesus? [If you realize that someone in your group has not accepted Christ, but would like to do so, take time to walk her/him through. See also Appendix 2 for help.]

Wrap-Up:

At the end of the service PK invited everyone to come back the following Sunday because he would be teaching us about God's pattern for living (also known as The Diamond Journey of Faith). Have one or two in your group share with the others how this teaching has helped them in the past. [If now one has heard it yet, share a few insights yourself if you are familiar.]

Throughout the Week: (Optional)

(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

- 1) Memory verse: *Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." (NIV)*
- 2) Study Hebrews 10. Write down what you learn from this chapter about what Jesus has done for you. How does this affect your every day walk with God and others? Take time every day to thank Jesus for what He has done.
- 3) Read the suggested passage for next Sunday (See Appendix 3).

Appendix 1: The Tabernacle

God's Provision for the Tabernacle

Before God brought Israel out of Egypt, He provided through the Egyptians an abundance of material for building the Tabernacle (Ex. 3:21-22, 12:35-36). God had already planned this when he made his covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:14), and He later asked Israel to willingly bring these items as an offering to Him to build the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:4-29).

Names for the Tabernacle

In Exodus 25:8 God told Moses why he wanted him to build the Tabernacle – so God could dwell among the Israelites. The different names used for the Tabernacle reflect some of its attributes.

- Sanctuary (Exodus 25:8) – Literally the Hebrew word means 'a holy place' or 'a place set apart'. This name emphasized God's holiness.
- Tabernacle (Exodus 25:9) – The Hebrew words for Tabernacle and 'to dwell' contain the same root, so Tabernacle literally means 'a dwelling place'.
- Tent of Meeting (Exodus 29:42) – The place where the people presented themselves before God and met with Him.
- Tent of the Testimony (Numbers 17:7-8) – Testimony was the common name for the stone tables bearing the Ten Commandments that were kept in the Ark of the Covenant.

Entering the Tabernacle

- **Court Fence and Gate of the Court (Exodus 27:9-19)** - First a person would enter the Gate of the Court to make an offering (the five offerings are described in Leviticus 1-6), either a sacrifice for sin or thanksgiving. After passing through the gate, the person would come into the court. The court fence was made of long pieces of white linen held up by posts that surrounded the Tabernacle.
- **Bronze Altar (Exodus 27:1-8)** - This altar is the one place where all the sacrifices of the people were to be offered. Most offerings were made for the people's sins (intentional and unintentional sin). Because these sacrifices only temporarily covered the sins of the people, they needed to be offered on a regular basis. God asked them for a perfect, flawless animal (Leviticus 1:3; 4:28) because the animal represented an undeserving recipient of a deserved punishment.
- **Bronze Basin (Leviticus 30:17-21)** – In front of the tent stood the bronze basin for washing. Before making the sacrifice or entering the tent, the priest washed himself at the bronze laver, to purify himself.

- **Tabernacle (Exodus 26)** - The priest entered the Tabernacle through the curtains at the entrance. The Tabernacle was divided into two sections- The Holy Place and The Most Holy Place. Everyday some of the priests entered the Holy Place to serve the Lord. This outer room contained the table of showbread, the lamp stand and the altar of incense.
- **Golden Lampstand (Exodus 25:31-40)** - The lampstand (menorah) provided light in this otherwise dark room. The lampstand was made from a single piece of gold that had a central shaft and six branches, three on each side. Each branch had knobs, flowers, and an almond-shaped bowl to hold pure olive oil. The lamp was never to be extinguished (Leviticus 24:1-4) and was supposed to light the area in front of it where the Table stood (Numbers 8:1-4).
- **Table of the Presence (Exodus 25:23-30)** - On the table of the Presence, the priests placed twelve loaves of bread (probably to represent the 12 tribes of Israel). The priests were to set out fresh bread every Sabbath and were allowed to eat the old bread (Leviticus 24:5-9).
- **The Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1-10)** – This altar was rather small and was used to burn special incense (Exodus 30:34-38). The High Priest burned the incense every morning and evening.
- **Curtain (Exodus 26:31-35)** - The curtain was a divider between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. It was a barrier between God and man. Only the High Priest could enter into the Most Holy Place and even he could enter only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).
- **Ark (Exodus 25:10-22)** - The central focus of the entire Tabernacle was the Ark in the Most Holy Place. The Ark was a chest with a very special cover (atonement cover, also called Mercy Seat) made of pure gold, with two winged cherubim on the top facing each other. Inside the Ark were the Tablets of Stone (Ex. 25:16) with the Ten Commandments engraved in them, the golden jar of manna (Exodus 16:32-33), and Aaron's Rod that budded and bore fruit (Num. 17:10).
- **Cloud and Pillar of Fire** - The Lord manifested His presence with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This cloud or pillar of fire would rest above the Atonement Cover (Exodus 25:21-22). From there, God spoke to Moses (who stood in front of the tent) and gave him His commands (Exodus 25:22, Leviticus 1:1-2). When the cloud or pillar of fire moved, the children of Israel followed it. Wherever it stopped, they camped there until it moved again (Exodus 40:34-38).

Appendix 2: The Plan of Salvation

The "bridge" illustration is an excellent way to explain the plan of salvation.

1. God loves you and created YOU to have a personal relationship with Him.

- **God created you** - *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." Psalm 139: 13-14 (NIV)*
- **God loves you** - *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" John 3:16 (NIV)*
- **God wants you to know him** - *"Now this is eternal life; that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ who you have sent." John 17:3 (NIV)*

Why is it that many people do not have a personal relationship with God?

2. OUR SIN keeps us from having a personal relationship with God.

- **What is sin?** *"Anyone, then, that knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." James 4:17 (NIV)* - God is holy and perfect and we are not. Sin not only means doing wrong or failing to do all that God wants. Sin is also our attitude of ignoring or rejecting God. Because God is Holy, he cannot accept our sin.
- **Who has sinned?** *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23 (NIV)*
- **What Happens when we sin?** *"Your iniquities have separated you from your God your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" Isaiah 59:2 (NIV)* *"For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23 (NIV)* - Sin causes a gap between God and us. Death, which means eternal separation from God, is the penalty for our sin.

What is the solution to our separation from God?

3. Only through Jesus Christ can you have a personal relationship with God.

- **Why Jesus?** *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me." John 14:6 (NIV)* - It is only through Jesus Christ that we can have a relationship with God.
- **Why did Jesus have to die?** *"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the spirit" 1 Peter 3:18 (NIV)* - Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins, so we could be forgiven.
- **Why did Jesus rise from the dead?** *"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time." 1 Cor. 15: 3-6 (NIV)* - Jesus rose from the dead to prove he could give us eternal life.

How can you begin your personal relationship with God?

- 4. You must personally respond by trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.**
 - **You respond with trust in Christ.** *"For it is by Grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) - You must trust in him - you can't earn your salvation by doing good things alone.*
 - **You respond by turning to God from sin.** *"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out." Acts 3:19 (NIV)*

You respond by receiving Christ. *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (NIV)*

Receiving Christ means:

- Turning to God from your own way of living (repentance).
- Inviting Christ to come into your life and trusting him to forgive your sin.
- Allowing God to direct your life.
- Receiving Christ is not just an emotional experience; nor is it just agreeing with your mind that Jesus is the son of God. It means your total trust, an act of your will.

YOU can begin your personal relationship with GOD by receiving Jesus Christ by faith.

You can express your faith and trust through prayer. Prayer is simply talking to God. He knows what you mean even when it is difficult to express yourself. You can use this prayer, or use your own words:

"Dear God, I know that my sin has separated me from you. Thank You that Jesus Christ died in my place. I ask you Jesus to forgive my sin and to come into my life. Please begin to direct my life. Thank you for giving me eternal life. In Jesus' name, Amen. "

Can you say this to God, and mean it? If you can, pray now and trust Jesus to forgive your sin and come into your life, as he promised.

What now?

- 5. Your trust in Jesus Christ begins a lifelong relationship.**
 - **God commits himself to you.** *"You are in me, and I am in you" John 14:20 (NIV)*
 - **God assures you that Jesus Christ has come into your life.** *"Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you" Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)*
 - **God will never leave you.** *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" 1 John 5:13 (NIV)*
 - **God assures you that you have eternal life.** *"Since we live by the spirit, let us keep step with the spirit." Galatians 5:25 (NIV)*
 - **God gives you his Holy Spirit** to enable you to live the Christian life. You commit yourself to God. *"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)*

From: <http://www.gracecovchurch.org/bridge/index.html>

Appendix 3:

Genesis to Revelation Series Calendar

Message Topics:

February 3
Mirror Image

February 10
In the Beginning

February 17
Three Pivotal Promises

February 24
Why is it called the Old Testament?

March 2
Raiders of the Lost Ark?

March 9
The Lord is My Shepherd....

March 16
Christmas Gifts

March 23
Why is it called the New Testament?

March 30
Who Needs the Church?

April 6
In the End

Read Before:

February 3
(No reading – series overview)

February 10
Genesis 1-3 (& 1-11)

February 17
Genesis 12 & 15

February 24
Exodus 1-4 & 20

March 2
Exodus 25-27 & 40

March 9
1Samuel 8, 16-17, Ps. 23

March 16
Luke 2 & 4, John 3, 8 & 10

March 23
Matthew 26-28, Acts 3

March 30
Acts 1-2 & Jude

April 6
Revelation 1, 19-22

Email any questions or feedback about this Study Guide to robin.ritchie@12stone.com.