

Outline_Applying the Gospel in Your Community Group

Sunday, October 21, 2012
10:00 AM

Keywords: Gospel, Community Groups, Church health, confession of sin, suffering, growth in the gospel
Key Text: Acts 2:42, Gen. 3:16-18; Matt. 22:37-39; 2 Cor. 12:9-10, Other misc. Scripture

Blurb for Sermon Audio: The goal of the Community Groups of Missio Dei Fellowship is for group members to grow in the gospel. In this sermon P. Bruce discusses the effects of the fall, the confession of sin and suffering and how these aspects of group life can spur personal growth in the gospel.

Introduction

- A. Intentionally Shallow Small Groups
- B. The Vision for MDF Community Groups is Personal and Corporate Gospel Growth
- C. The Apostle's Teaching in summary form is the Gospel and the Application of the Gospel in Every area of life.
 - 1. What the disciples learned from Jesus when they were with him
 - 2. What they learned from him after the Resurrection
 - 3. All the Scriptures that testified to Jesus
- I. Applying the Gospel to the Effects of the Fall (in your CG)
 - A. Gen. 3:16-19
 - 1. Sin distorts everything
 - a. Physical pain
 - b. Relational conflict
 - c. Struggle to eat
 - d. Difficult work
 - 2. Occupations that seek to reverse the effects of the fall
 - a. Health care
 - b. Law enforcement
 - c. Fixers
 - d. People helping professions
 - B. The consequence of disobedience (Gen. 2:16-17)
 - 1. Spiritual and physical death
 - 2. Suffering, life is not easy
 - 3. Vanity-vapor-applied to the darker realities of living in a fallen world (Ecc. 1:2)
 - a. [vanity] indicates that "the present form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:31)
 - C. Moving the Group toward Gospel-centered hope

1. How religious man sees things
 - a. The purpose of religion is moral goodness.
 - b. The problem then is moral failure
 - c. The solution is to work harder to have better morals (and so do others)
 - d. (moralisms serve as gospel substitutes, most obvious in works based religious systems)

2. How natural man sees things
 - a. To the natural man the purpose of life is survival (of the fittest)
 - b. The problem as natural man sees it is an inability to adapt to the environment or circumstances
 - c. The solution is more knowledge, more knowledge about self- leads to self-improvement and better survivability
 - d. Knowledge serves as the gospel substitute

3. How the gospel-centered Christian sees things
 - a. The Gospel-Centered Christian recognizes the purpose of life is to know God and enjoy Him forever,
 - b. problem is sin which disrupts the relationship between man and God
 - c. Solution is Christ, the Cross and His grace
 - d. Ultimate Hope resides in a risen Savior who will one day come back and make things right.

4. The gospel is for real life

II. Applying the Gospel to the Confession of Sin (in your CG)

- A. Utilitarianism is a theory in normative ethics holding that the proper course of action is the one that maximizes overall happiness.
 1. Is what you get out of the group the reason you are there?
 - a. Do you come to be served?
 - b. Do you come to serve?

 2. Many churches promote personal happiness as the reason to attend

 3. Exp: At "ABC" Church:
 - a. You will meet new friends and neighbors
 - b. You will hear only positive messages that are guaranteed to uplift you every week.
 - c. How to feel good about yourself
 - d. Learn how to handle money before it handles you
 - e. The secrets of successful family living
 - f. How to overcome depression, stress.

- B. Connected to the Gospel but not the Gospel

1. No real need for Christ, the gospel of self-improvement
2. Is Jesus dying on the cross a statement of your self-worth or amazing grace that saves wretches? (John Piper)
 - a. Did Jesus die so that you could meet new friends and neighbors?
 - b. Did Jesus die so that you would hear only positive messages (you know, none of that sin stuff, that's pretty negative)
 - c. Did Jesus die so that you could feel good about yourself?
 - d. Did Jesus die so that you could handle money better or have a successful family life?
 - e. Did Jesus die so that you could cope with the stresses and discouragement that come as a result of the fall?
3. Applying the gospel of first importance (1 Cor. 15:3)
 - a. Born under a cloud (Rom. 5:18-19)
 - b. We aggravate our own condition by our own individual sins (Rom. 7:7)
 - c. Our sin is a further effect of the fall
 - 1) We tolerate our own sin
 - 2) We tolerate sin in others because we tolerate it in ourselves

C. It's Worse than we Think (Matt. 22:37-40)

1. Jesus' summation of the law
2. Applying what Jesus said (The Gospel for Real Life, Jerry Bridges)
 - a. Does my love for God transcend all other desires? (Ex. 20:3)
 - b. Like David, do I long to gaze upon His beauty and seek fellowship with him? (Psa. 27:4)
 - c. Do I rejoice in meditating upon his Word, and like Jesus, rise early to pray? (Psa. 119:97, Mark 1:35)
 - d. Do I always delight to do His will, regardless of how difficult it will be? (Psa. 40:8)
 - e. Does a regard for his glory govern and motivate everything I do, my eating and drinking, my working and playing, my buying and selling, my reading and speaking, how about my driving? (1 Cor. 10:31)
 - f. How often am I frustrated or discouraged or confident that God is working all things together for my good? (Rom. 8:28)
 - g. How often do I recognize God's sovereignty in every event in my life, understanding that I receive success or failure from his hand? (1 Sam. 2:7; Psa. 75:6-7)
 - h. Am I always content because I know He will never leave me nor forsake me? (Heb. 13:5)
 - i. Is the most important prayer in my life "hallowed be his name" from the Lord's prayer? (Matt. 6:9)

Apply: (never, seldom, occasionally, frequently, always)

3. It gets worse

- a. Do I cherish my neighbors with the very same love that I bear toward towards

me?

- b. In my dealings with my neighbors I never show them selfishness, irritability, peevishness, or indifference.
- c. I take a genuine interest in my neighbor's welfare and seek to promote their interests, their honor and well-being.
- d. I never regard my neighbor with a feeling of prideful superiority, nor do I speak of their failings.
- e. I never resent the wrongs done to me by my neighbors and I am always ready to forgive.
- f. I always treat others like I would have them treat me.
- g. I am a walking-talking example of 1 Cor. 13:4-5

Apply: (never, seldom, occasionally, frequently, always)

4. If your group lacks transparency try using these lists.

5. But end with hope...(The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent)

- a. When I sin, God's grace abounds to me all the more as He graciously maintains my justified status. (Rom. 5:1)
- b. When I sin, God feels no wrath in His heart against me. (Rom. 5:18)
- c. His heart is filled with nothing but love for me, and He longs for me to repent and confess my sins to Him, so that he might show me the gracious and forgiving love that has been in his heart all along. (1 Jn. 2:2)
- d. God does not require my confession before he desires to forgive me. (Rom. 8:28)
- e. In his heart He has already forgiven me; and when I come to Him to confess my sins to him, He runs to me (as it were) and is repeatedly embracing me and kissing me even before I get the words of my confession out of my mouth. (Luke 15)

III. Applying the Gospel to Suffering (in your CG)

A. The Gospel is Counter-Intuitive (1 Corinthians 1:18, 23-25)

1. Effects of the fall on our Savior
2. Effects of the fall not understood
3. Isa. 55:8-9

B. The Sufficiency of God's Grace (2 Cor. 12:9-12)

1. Paul's thorn in the flesh
 - a. Most common interpretation is a disease of the eyes
 - b. Other possibilities are interesting and intriguing to consider
 - c. Ambiguity as to what Paul's thorn was is a good thing
2. Why the thorn was sent
 - a. 2 Cor. 12:7
 - b. Thorns counteract conceit
 - c. Real benefit from suffering-a counter intuitive thought

3. The paradox of who sent the thorn

- a. A messenger of Satan
 - 1) Why would a messenger of Satan help to prevent Paul from becoming conceited?
 - 2) Paul knows it is God using Satan for His own purposes
- b. A reminder to Paul of the effects of the fall?
 - 1) Satan's intent to weaken Paul's faith, God's intent to strengthen Paul's faith
 - 2) Trusting God in suffering
 - 3) The temptation to doubt God
- c. The limits of Satan's power (Job 2:9-10)
 - 1) The "why" behind Romans 8:28
 - 2) It is fine to pray for a thorn's removal
 - 3) Consider that God may have other plans

C. Power made strong in weakness

- 1. Grace is Christ's omnipotent love working to save and sanctify his people.
- 2. The sufficiency of present and future grace works to enable us to respond to the heat of a thorn in a Christ-like manner
 - a. The alternative is to respond to the heat in anger and bitterness that is ultimately directed at God.
 - b. More than endurance, but real power (2 Cor. 12:9b-10)
 - 1) Learning contentment with Christ, for His sake
 - 2) When I am weak then I am strong
 - c. Thorns force us to dependency on God (and usually other people)
 - 1) We have to acknowledge our weakness in the first place and in the second place pray for God's present and all sufficient grace.
 - 2) Examples of Gospel-centered prayer requests
 - a) Pray that I not become embittered that I dwell in a fallen body
 - b) Pray that I would give thanks in the midst of this time to a God who has been overwhelmingly gracious
 - 3) Turning a desire into a demand
 - 4) Remembering past grace, future grace and asking for present grace

Questions for Community Groups

- 1. In what way do the effects of the fall affect your community group?
- 2. Are you satisfied with the depth of your community group? Why or why not? (When answering this question consider how transparent your group is.)

3. Do you admit your limits, mistakes, sins, and weaknesses to God, others, yourself?
 - a. (never, seldom, occasionally, frequently, always)
4. Is God's grace sufficient for you during your time of suffering? Why or why not?