

Living the Story

A Study through Scripture

Introduction:

Today's group time is going to be a little different in that our focus will be more on praying, rather than a discussion time. We are looking at the life of David and certainly there is much that could be said, but I continue to be drawn to the response David (and other writers) has to God as we see it in the Psalms.

All of us have moments of great joy and times of sorrow. This is the result of events that happen in our life and it often affects more than just our feelings and emotions. It also affects how we view our walk with God. At times, we will say we have a close walk, but in other seasons, God seems distant. How do we respond in both ends of that continuum?

One of the lessons we can take from the Psalms is the understanding that many of them are simply an expression of the different emotions and feelings described in the above continuum. They are an overflow of exuberant praise and they are the heart-wrenching lament of someone who knows they have sinned before God. As we go through those emotions, the Psalms serve to give us words to speak in those moments. No, they are not our words, but they are God's words, having stood the test of time because of their inclusion in the Biblical canon.

Summary of the Text:

Because the entire Psalter is open to possible selection in our group time today, there is no way to give you further ideas regarding specific texts. However, since our group time is adopting the words of the psalmists as our own, we do not need to speak a lot about the words—we need to speak the words.

Preparing for the Group Time:

Take some time to read through the Psalms this week. Pick out some that are important to you or express thoughts you may have had in times past or currently have. Open each day this week with some time reading a psalm or two.

LESSON #12

Date: 11/25/2012

Text: Psalms

The Story: Chapter 12

The Big Picture: How do you put into words the range of emotions and feelings present to you as you go through a life of following Jesus? The Psalms provide a great place to start.

Materials Needed: Paper, Pens, Bibles

Living the Story

Lesson #12

Text: The Psalms

Lesson Outline:

Begin your group time by asking everyone to write a six word story about their life. (Six word stories are a literary genre where you use, well, six words, to tell a full story. For instance, here is one such memoir: "Born. Founded thriving pigment empire. Dyed." You get the idea.) Allow people some time to think about their lives and write a story.

After having people share their six word stories, ask them what they would write if they were to write a six word story about their spiritual life. Let anyone who wants to share do so.

Work through discussion questions.

Close with prayer exercise, as listed below.

Discussion Questions:

If we only had six words to describe the highs and lows of our spiritual walk, we would have a tough time communicating what was really going on with us. How do express the highs and lows you feel about your spiritual walk?

When your spiritual life is going well, how do you share that with others?

When it is going poorly, how do you share it?

What are ways you can do a better job articulating and expressing your feelings and emotions when it comes to your spiritual life?

For the Children:

You will have to determine the ability of the children in your group to follow along with your prayer time. Obviously, if they are not of reading age, this may be a struggle for them. On the other hand, I think their experiencing this exercise can be a growing time for them.

Living the Story:

Spend some time this week reading through the Psalms, allowing them to articulate your own thoughts and emotions to God.

Prayer Time:

The Psalms are in one way simply the thoughts, emotions, and feelings of the writer. The fact that these 150 Palms are written down allows us to read and take on those emotions as our own. What we discover often times is that the psalmist has articulated our thoughts in ways that we never would have been able to do. I believe that God has given us these writings, in part, to give us words to speak to him of our joys and our laments.

This evening, we are going to spend some time praying the Psalms. Before we start, take a few minutes to look through the psalms, perhaps you already have a psalm or two chosen that are meaningful to you. Then, open up a time of prayer simply reading the words of those psalms, letting the words of the Biblical writer become your own words in prayer.

What's Next:

Next week we will look at 1 Kings 1-11 or *The Story* chapter 13.