

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: February 22nd 2015

Speaker: David Lawrence

Title: Freed by Love

Introduction: This is the first of a series of talks on The Cross. In the New Testament the cross is described through a range of images and metaphors each of which gives a distinct perspective to the achievement and significance of Jesus' death. This first talk picked up on two of these images: that of the Old Testament sacrificial system, and especially the Day of Atonement act of sprinkling blood on the mercy seat, and the law-court imagery which provides the context for the word 'justification'.

Review: Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review of what they considered to be the main points being made. Allow others to add anything they feel has been missed out.

Read: Romans 3:21-26 & Romans 5:6-9

Reaction:

How did people in the group find themselves reacting to the talk?

Was there anything:

- New they felt they learned?
- Confusing that they'd like to discuss further?
- **Specific that they wanted to respond to in some way?**

Reflect:

- What does the group think of commentator Leon Morris' claim that Rom 3:21-26 is "possibly the most important single paragraph ever written"?
- What evidence is there in these readings that the cross was God's initiative? What is the significance of that truth for people in the group?
- What evidence is there in these readings (or in other Scriptures that people can think of) that Jesus and the Father were working *in unison* through the cross?
- The cross is the result of God's love (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10). How does this truth sit with the insight that the cross was the place where God's 'wrath' was satisfied?
- If, as a result of the cross, "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1), on what basis had we been under condemnation beforehand? How do people react to this idea?
- How does John Stott's definition of the wrath of God help us understand the work of the cross in turning away God's wrath (i.e. propitiation)? ("God's wrath is not

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uncontrolled bad temper: rather it is his righteous reaction to evil, his implacable hostility to it, his refusal to condone it, and his judgment upon it").

- How do people react to hearing God's 'innocent' verdict announced to them through the cross (justification)?
- Do you think this particular view of the Cross, with its images of wrath being turned away and guilt being forgiven is an easy or a difficult one to communicate in today's culture? How might we explain these truths in everyday language that connects with ordinary people? (Imagine a non-Christian friend in a coffee shop asked us what Good Friday was all about - could any of the imagery of propitiation or justification help - even if the words themselves did not!)?
- What exactly do people think is required of them if the work of the cross is to be 'received through faith'?

Respond:

- What is the main thought you are taking away from this discussion?
- Is there anything that you want to do as a result of this discussion?

And finally:

- **Love for God:** how does this theme enhance your love for God?
- **Love for one another:** how does this theme affect our relationships with one another?
- **Love for the world:** how might we translate the truth of this theme into love for our neighbour this week?

Pray for one another in the light of what has been shared.