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SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE LEADER NOTES

Suggestions for This Week's Study

- **Icebreaker:** Without considering your salvation, what is the most extravagant gift you have ever received?
- **Goal:** There is nothing you can personally do to get into heaven. You only need to accept what God has done for you by Christ's death on the cross.
- **Prayer:** *Father in heaven, thank you that your grace, freely given, is always accessible through Jesus Christ. Help me to fully accept to the depth of my soul that all I need do is receive your gift of grace in order to be forgiven. Let me live my life obeying your laws content in the knowledge that your love will always be mine. Amen.*

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We've designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as "I need to spend more time in prayer." It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.



Sermon Discussion Guide

THE WORD OF VICTORY

The Seven Greatest Words of Love-Part 6

Rick Warren

September 12-13, 2015

"Knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty'... After Jesus was given a drink he said, 'It is finished!' And with that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

John 19:28-30

Jesus became a man, lived and died for one purpose – to do the work the Father had given him to complete. While he was dying on the cross Jesus shouted out "It is finished" because that work was completed. Jesus accomplished these five things: 1) Jesus fulfilled what God had promised in His Word, 2) he satisfied what God's justice required, 3) he paid off the debt I owed God, 4) he defeated the fear of death, and 5) he destroyed Satan's power to control us. Now let's talk it over.

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

"After Jesus had finished his work, he became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him." Hebrews 5:9 (GW)

1. Since God's justice demands that lawbreakers be punished and none of us can keep every law, do you believe God can forgive your worst sin? Why or why not? What steps of faith do you need to take to become more obedient to God?

"We owed a debt because we've broken God's laws. That debt listed all the rules we've failed to follow. But God forgave our debt, and he cancelled our debt by nailing it to the cross." Colossians 2:14 (GW)

2. How did we become indebted to God? If Christ cancelled our debt by his death on the cross, are there any places where you are paying your own debt?

"Jesus became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying." Hebrews 2:14-15 (NLT)

3. What are your fears about death or dying? Where do your fears come from? What does Christ's death and resurrection say about death? How does knowing Christ defeated death help you believe death is only a transfer and free you from the fear of dying?

"God took away Satan's power to accuse you of sin, and He openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph at the cross where your sins were all taken away." Colossians 2:15 (LB)

4. When we give our lives to Christ, Satan's power over us is broken. Yet, we can still struggle when he gets a foothold in our lives. Talk about an issue you may still struggle with that you need God's power to gain victory over. Pray and ask God to redeem this part of your life.

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. Think of the last time you gave into a temptation. How did you encounter God in the midst of it? How did that experience help you develop strategies to keep your eyes fixed on God in order to overcome temptations?
2. In your life, how does the devil try to convince you that because of your sins, God could never love you? How does Romans 8:1 *"There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,"* remind you that God delights in you as his precious child even with all your faults and failings?

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.