



Community Group Discussion Guide

The Story: Restoration –April 28, 2019

I. Getting Started: (fifteen to thirty minutes, depending on your setting)

The Bible speaks of God’s people as pilgrims, journeying to a different land, each experiencing their own personal journey, but all in a Story far greater than their individual narratives. Called the “body of Christ” in Scripture, the church points to a Story that extends from eternity past, across all of time and into eternity future—far beyond the boundaries of our individual lives. Last week we celebrated Easter by looking at “The Story: Rescue” where we saw God initiate and carry out a rescue plan that would crush the head of the enemy and deliver God’s people from the chains of sin. This week we are looking at “The Story: Restoration”, the final plot move in our Story. We will see a glimpse of what we are being rescued *to*, and our prayer is that you long for this eternity. This longing for eternity, this “hope laid up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:4-5), is what should power your sacrificial love and service *today*.

Starter Questions:

- What is the best restoration you’ve seen in your life? Think about physical restoration, a relationship that’s been restored, or even a restoration project.
- Has anyone had an opportunity over Easter to share their story with their “one”, or with someone the Lord has placed before them in the last two weeks?

II. Discussion of Scripture: (thirty to forty-five minutes)

A. The Story: Rescue — Recap

Context: Let’s recap what we learned last week when we celebrated Easter together as a church. We reveled in the Story of God’s love for us as demonstrated through His divine rescue of us. We were dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), yet God initiates the rescue plan! It is foretold even in the earliest chapters of the Bible.

Genesis 3:8-15 (ESV)

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

For Discussion:

1. Just before this passage, Adam and Eve commit mankind's very first sin. What, then, is the significance of verse 9?
(God could have just left Adam and Eve in their sin and consequences, but He instead initiates the rescue and comes after them!)
2. The “offspring” mentioned in verse 15 can also mean “seed”. What seed is this referring to?
(It refers to a Savior from the woman, someone who will defeat Satan fully and finally.)
3. What does it mean when God says to the serpent in verse 15, “he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel”?
(Jesus, the Savior, will be injured, but it's not a fatal blow — similar to a bruised heel. Satan, on the other hand, will have his head irrecoverably crushed. (See also Romans 16:20.))

John 3:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

For Discussion:

1. Why do you think verse 16 is the most well-known summary of the Gospel?
2. What is the scope of the word “whoever” in verse 16?
3. If we trust in Jesus, what are we being rescued *from*? What are we being rescued *to*?

B. The Story: Restoration

Context: Our Redeemer has offered *rescue* to us, to anyone who trusts in Him! We know now that we are rescued *from* brokenness, sin, death, perishing — an eternity separated from God. Let us now look to what we are being rescued *to* — a restoration, “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17). We will experience a new heaven and a new earth *and* restored bodies, complete with full emotional, social, moral, and spiritual restoration. Best of all, we will be with God, and *we will see His face!* Praise God!

Revelation 21:1-6 (ESV)

The New Heaven and the New Earth

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.”

For Discussion:

1. We see in verse 1 that there will be “a new heaven and a new earth”. Why might there need to be restored heaven and earth? See also Romans 8:21.
2. Let’s look at the ways God will restore His children.
 - a. In verse 4, we see that we will be restored **physically**. What are some problems we grapple with today that we will no longer struggle with in our restored bodies?
 - b. Verse 4 also indicates **emotional** restoration — what are some examples?
 - c. Read further down in chapter 21, verse 24. What types of **social** restoration will we see?
 - d. What about **moral** restoration, as we’re pointed to in verse 27?
 - e. Finally, we see that we will be restored **spiritually**, in verse 3. What are the huge implications here?

For Thinking On: If you could have all that heaven had to offer, but Jesus wasn’t there, would you still take it? Check yourself on this, because your answer might reveal a selfish heart. Heaven is ultimately about the glory of God, about Jesus — and, because He loves us, He *also* gives good gifts to us (James 1:17) — both now, and unimaginably so in heaven.

Revelation 22:3-5 (ESV)

The River of Life

³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the LORD God

will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

For Discussion:

1. Imagine for a moment what it will be like to see His face! What do you imagine it will be like to hear His voice and to see His face?
2. What does it mean in verse 4, when it says “his name will be on their foreheads”?

III. Role Playing

The Goal: To equip the members of your community group to steer everyday conversations into Gospel conversations. *Note: These might appear “cheesy” to your group and that’s okay! Laugh at the cheesiness, but be quick to point out that it’s important that as believers we know how to create opportunities to share the Gospel.*

Instructions: Below we have provided three different scenarios for you to use in your group. These scenarios can be used however best fits your group. Not sure what to do? Here are a couple ideas:

- Pick one scenario and read the part that is in red. Then, ask your group for ideas of what could be said to steer the conversation toward the Gospel. Then read the rest in order to illustrate one example of what they could say in that scenario.
- Pick two people to come up and act one or more scenarios out in front of the group. They can read straight from the script, however if you could give it to them a few days early so they can be more prepared that would most likely help them feel more comfortable. After they act out each scenario, have a brief discussion with the group about it.
- Split your group into three smaller groups. Give each group a different scenario, and have them pick two people to act them out to their smaller group. Then at the end, have each group share a little about their scenario and what they thought.

Rescue/Restoration

Role Play #1—

For an entire year, Joe made it a point to visit the same sports store regularly in order to try and get to know one of the employees named Chris. Chris and Joe’s families have now become friends and they all have dinner together often. One night they are sitting on the back porch after dinner catching up.

Joe: Did I ever tell you the story about when I was a kid and I got lost in the woods?

Chris: No, I mean, I’m not surprised knowing your sense of direction.

Joe: Haha...true! Oh man I was only eight years old and I was riding a four-wheeler and got separated from my family. I tried to find them, but I drove around so much I ran out of gas. It was scary.

Chris: Ya that’s not good. What did you do?

Joe: Well at first I tried to walk around and find them, but that didn’t work. So then I went back to the four wheeler and just waited...hoping they would find me. When I realized that there was

nothing I could do and that someone was going to have to rescue me I felt so helpless. Have you ever had anything like that?

Chris: Not me personally, but I lost my son once in the mall and couldn't find him. It wasn't until a complete stranger found him and brought him to me that he was found. It was awful. I am so thankful that person stepped in!

Joe: Oh ya I will never forget that feeling when I saw the flashlights of my parents coming to find me.

Chris: I bet that was a really great feeling.

Joe: Chris, can I tell you something though? We've been friends for a while now, and I haven't told you about the time when I was rescued and it changed my life forever. Can I tell you about that?

Chris: Sure, Joe. Of course!

Joe: Well, I believe there is one God who made everything. Everything was perfect, but we disobeyed God. This is called sin and when it entered the world it changed everything. This sin separates us from God. And the reality? We all have it...and it's impossible to make it go away by doing good things. No matter what we do, the good will never outweigh the bad. You remember how helpless I said I felt when I was lost on the four-wheeler and couldn't do anything to rescue myself?

Chris: Yeah.

Joe: This is worse. There is nothing I could do to rescue myself from sin. But God had a plan the entire time to send a rescuer...Jesus! Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross and rose again so that through turning from our sin and believing in him we can go live with God forever in heaven one day...and one day He will restore the world back to what it should be.

Chris: Ya know I've heard some of this before and I'm just not sure...

Joe: And that's ok! I just want you to know that about me because it is the most important thing in my life. It has changed my life forever, and I want you to know that that same God loves you too. If you have any questions or ever want to talk about any of that stuff I'm here for you. Plus, you and your family are welcome to come to church with us anytime.

Chris: Thanks Joe. That means a lot.

Role Play #2

Rachel is at the gym when she notices a woman sitting by herself looking distressed. She decides to walk over and check on her. She introduces herself and learns that the woman's name is Kendall.

Kendall: It's nice to meet you Rachel, sorry I'm such a mess.

Rachel: It's okay! I just saw you over here and wanted to make sure you are okay?

Kendall: I'm just having a rough time with some family right now.

Rachel: I am so sorry to hear that. This world can be full of heartaches and I'm so sorry. It can be hard to remember what the point of it all is.

Kendall: Ya for sure.

Rachel: Kendall, I know I don't know you, but I would love to pray for you and encourage you that there is a point to all of this. That even when we go through hard things there is still hope. I believe that there is one God who created everything and it wasn't like this. There was no

sickness, no death, no family struggles. That's what He wanted for us. But when we disobeyed God sin came into the world and with it came so much suffering. And you know what? God could have just left us to deal with it, but he didn't! He sent a rescuer...Jesus. Jesus came, lived a sinless life and died on a cross. He conquered sin and three days later he conquered death by raising from the grave. When we turn from our sin and trust in Jesus we can have a relationship with God. And guess what? One day we will go be with Him and there won't be sin or suffering or sadness or anything like that anymore.

Kendall: Whoa. That's a lot to take in.

Rachel: I know, I didn't mean to bombard you...but I just really felt like you needed to hear that today. Be encouraged that you have a God that loves you and has a plan for your life. That this world isn't all there is and that one day He will restore everything back to the way it should be. Can I give you my phone number? I would love for you to call me if you ever have any questions about what it means to trust in Jesus. Or if I can help you in any way I would love to be here for you.

Kendall: Thanks Rachel. It was nice to meet you. I'll definitely think about what you said.

Role Play #3

Greg joined a basketball group at his gym so that he could get to know some new people. He quickly becomes friends with a lot of the guys and intentionally tries to have their families over to hang out. One day one of the guys, Sam, calls and asks Greg to come help him with his car.

Sam: Thanks for your help today man, I don't know what I would have done without you.

Greg: Hey man, when I say call if you ever need something I mean it!

Sam: That means a lot. Thanks.

Greg: I just wish cars last forever. But I guess nothing does does it?

Sam: You got that right.

Greg: I mean you look at the news and it seems like even our world is falling apart.

Sam: Ya no kidding.

Greg: What do you think happens when everything ends? Like when the world really does fall apart?

Sam: Oh man, I don't know. I guess I don't really think about it.

Greg: I don't know if I had told you this before, but I'm a Christian and so I believe what the Bible says about all of that... and I gotta admit it's pretty amazing.

Sam: Oh you never said, but I kind of figured the way you talked about church and Bible studies all the time.

Greg: Oh ya, I guess I can't help it! It's the most important thing in my life! Well the Bible says that one day this world will end, but that Jesus will come back and restore everything to the way it was originally created to be: without any evil. Can you imagine what that would be like? No more sadness, pains, sickness... even no more broken down cars.

Sam: Sounds to good to be true.

Greg: But it is true! Oh and we don't deserve it but God had a plan the entire time. See He created everything and it was perfect, but we disobeyed God and evil entered the world. It infected everything, even us. And because of that we couldn't have a relationship with God...because He is completely without evil...we call it sin. But God had a plan and He sent a

rescuer... Jesus. Through asking forgiveness from our sin and trusting in Jesus we can have a relationship with God.

Sam: Oh ya because He rose from the dead right?

Greg: Yes, but also so much more. I'd love to tell you more about it if that would be okay?

Sam: Sure, I think we are finished here anyway. Wanna come inside for some coffee?

IV. Responding in Prayer:

1. "Pray for your one." In the Worship Center for this entire series, we will be writing the names of "our one". We are asking every person in our church to be praying for one person who lives in the Edmond, OKC, or Guthrie area who needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yes, we pray for family members or friends to come to Christ. For this six week study, we are asking each person to think of a co-worker, a neighbor or family member who lives locally. As a CG, share initials (JM or WM) or share first names (John or Mary). Collect these names and pray for these by name as a CG over the next six weeks. We will have opportunities to write these names on the wall on the back of the Worship Center, as well.

It is critical for you to take time to pray for your "one". Thank you for seeking unity as the body of Henderson Hills to be part of this "all church" study.

2. Pray for our church! Pray that, through our response to the Gospel, that many would call on the name of the Lord!