

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE
WEEK OF NOVEMBER 23, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

A Contented Heart

"But we never can prove the delights of His love until all on the altar we lay;
For the favor He shows, for the joy He bestows, are for them who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet, or we'll walk by His side in the way;
What He says we will do, where He sends we will go;
Never fear, only trust and obey"

- **John H. Sammis, Hymn Writer**

"For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

-**John 3**

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Psalm 23

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

Ezekiel 34:14; John 10; Luke 15; Proverbs 4:11, 8:20; Micah 7:14; Exodus 3:12; Is 43:2; 2 Corinthians 1

STUDY GUIDE

- **What observations can be made about:**
 - The imagery David uses in this Psalm and the cultural understanding original readers would have had
 - God's motivation for being this kind of "shepherd"
 - The various effects related to the cause of God being David's "shepherd"
 - The table set before enemies. What scenario or scene would be expected if David were before enemies?
 - The statements in v6 in relationship to what we know of David's lifelong circumstances following his moral failure with Bathsheba
 - The tone of this Psalm

- **What does each of these things mean? What did they mean for the church at Corinth then, what do they mean for us now?**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- What has God spoken to you about this week regarding the sermon or passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does this passage enhance our understanding of the Gospel?
- What does this text mean for us as a community? Individually? How does it free us to be the people God intends for us to be?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?
- In what ways do you seek contentment in things you do not have? Has there ever been a time where you found contentment in gaining something you didn't have? A time when contentment has alluded you upon gaining something you were looking to for contentment?
- In what sense should Jesus be enough for contentment? What does that mean?
- Pastor JR said that it is in the "valleys" that we often go from dealing with God in the 3rd person to dealing with him in the 2nd person. Does your experience reflect that?
- Why is it important to God that we trust him and lean into him? How does that inform your understanding of who God is and how you relate to him?

"The shepherd always tries to persuade the sheep that their interests and his own are the same."
–Stendahl

MEMORY VERSES

Last Week: 2 Samuel 9:3

This Week: Psalm 23

PRAYER FOCUS

For the Vision and Direction of the church (November):

Apostles Church will be a people who experience life-change together. We will seek to become more like Jesus as we experience the transforming grace and power of His Spirit.

In Response to the Text:

- Praising God for being a good and faithful shepherd
- Praising God for his gracious leading, even during very difficult times in life
- Confessing our persistent unbelief and disbelief in his very goodness
- Confessing our frequent wanderings into the valley of death
- Thanking Jesus for his perfect example of strong and humble leading
- Thanking Jesus for procuring everlasting life for us who are wayward and disobedient
- Asking God to give us great contentment in the treasuring of Jesus above all things
- Asking God to make us a people who trust and obey

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *Darkness and Light* – Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones
- *A Heart Like His* – Beth More (*for women*)
- *David: Man of Prayer, Man of War* – Walter Chantry
- *David: A Man of Passion & Destiny* – Chuck Swindoll
- *After God's Own Heart: The Gospel According to David* – Mark Boda

NEXT WEEK'S TEXT

Isaiah 9, John 1 & 3