

Group Notes 12th February 2012

Ice Breaker

Think back to when you were much much younger and share with group your childhood heroes. Who from say TV, or film or stories did you most want to meet or be?

Word 1 - Matthew 12:28-34

Read the passage out loud in the group.

The Jewish scribe asked Jesus "Which is the first commandment?", and Jesus replies 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength' (paraphrased).

Question 1 If you were able to ask God one question -what would it be. Break up into groups of twos or threes, and reflect on this question. Come back to the main group and share your answers, and why you would ask your particular question.

Word 2

It was suggested in the 10.00 am service that there are three steps that we can take in devoting all of our hearts to God: examine, surrender and protect.

First Step Examine - We need to take the time and make the effort to truly, honestly, and openly examine what is going on in our hearts at this very moment! When we examine our own hearts, we want to be able to see what Almighty God sees, even if it disturbs us or makes us uncomfortable! Until we see our own hearts as God sees them, we won't be able to do anything about our heart's condition!

Question 2 - Look up Psalm 44 :20-21. Share your reactions with the group

Word 3

A quote from Christian author, monk, Franciscan priest, contemplative and speaker, Richard Francis Xavier Manning "To ascertain where you really are with the Lord, recall what saddened you the past month. Was it the realization that you do not love Jesus enough? That you did not seek His face in prayer often enough? That you did not care for His people enough? Or, did you get depressed over a lack of respect, criticism from an authority figure, your finances, a lack of friends, fears about the future, or your bulging waistline? Conversely, what gladdened you the past month? The joy of saying slowly, "Abba, Father?" The afternoon you stole away for two hours with only the gospel as your companion? A small victory over selfishness? Or, were the sources of your joy a new car, a clothes, a pay rise, or a loss of four inches from your waistline?"

Question 3 - What has brought you us sadness or joy recently? Can you identify a mixture of sadness and joy?

Word 4

The second step suggested surrender our hearts! When we give our own hearts an honest examination, we all come to the same conclusion - our hearts are not in the best of health! We have all fallen short of what God really wants us to be like. We give our hearts to him, as they are. You don't need to wait until they are perfect before you had them to God. If you do that you will never be in a position to hand them over – give them to him now, with all the flaws and bumps and lumps

Question 4 – Look up Psalm 51:10. Share your reflections on this.

Word 5

The last step was protecting our hearts, once we've looked closely, surrendered them, the last thing we want to do is clutter them up with all the stuff that we've just cleared out again. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 4:23 (NLT): "Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do." If we want to guard our own hearts, we have to let God not only take over initially; but every single day! One of the best ways to ensure that happens is to stay right with him every single day

Question 5 – Break into pairs again and share how you protect your heart each day, come back to the one group and share your thoughts.

Worship

Ask someone to play, or play a CD of 'I'm giving you my heart', use this time to ask God to come close to you to help you examine, surrender and protect your heart. The words are below for you;

I'm giving You my heart, and all that is within,
I lay it all down for the sake of You my King.
I'm giving You my dreams, I'm laying down my rights,
I'm giving up my pride for the promise of new life.
And I surrender all to You, all to You.
And I surrender all to You, all to You.

I'm singing You this song; I'm waiting at the cross.
And all the world holds dear, I count it all as loss.
For the sake of knowing You, the glory of Your name,
to know the lasting joy, even sharing in Your pain.
And I surrender all to You . . .

Witness

During this week try to identify the times when you are joyful for the Lord, share this with people you meet.