



March 21, 2024

Social Time

Thanks to those who brought Treats!

Bible Study Business

Topic ideas for our Bible Study starting in May, after current book study concludes.

Reminder - There is no Women's Bible Study next week during Holy Week. We next meet on April 4.

Music – by Lisa Scholterback

- ELW 737 - *There Is a Balm in Gilead*
- ELW 598 - *For by Grace You Have Been Saved*
- ELW 595 - *Jesus Loves Me* (as referenced in our reading for this week!)

Prayer Requests and Update Prayer List

Opening Prayer

Bible Study – Romans 3:21-24

²¹But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

This is a pivotal passage. It changed Martin Luther's life and forms the basis of the Lutheran theology of "Justification by Grace through Faith."

1. What differentiation is made in this passage regarding types or degrees of sin?
2. What has been granted to us through Jesus Christ?
3. Are there any conditions on God's gift of redemption?
4. How do you understand "Justification by grace through faith"?

Book Discussion – Chapter 12 & 13

5. Yancy recounts the story of Peter's vision in Acts 10 that it is okay to eat things that had been considered "unclean" under Jewish law (as outlined in Leviticus 11). Peter concludes, "But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean." (p. 150).
What difference does this change make?
6. What moral issues can you think of that are particularly divisive among Christians today?
7. We all have people with whom we disagree. What types of people are most challenging for you as you consider extending grace?

8. Paul had been a Pharisee who strictly adhered to the Jewish Law who “had daily thanked God he was not a Gentile, slave or woman,” (p. 154). Yet he made it his mission to reach out to the Gentiles, and in Galatians 3:28-29 he wrote, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.” How big a change was that for Paul?
9. Are there areas where you have changed or been challenged to change your understanding to include people you previously might have excluded?
10. Yancy writes, “Jesus never countenanced evil, but he did stand ready to forgive it.” (p. 157) What is the difference between hating the sin and loving the sinner? How does that show itself in daily life?
11. Chapter 13 tells the story of Philip Yancy’s friendship with Mel White, a married pastor who concludes he is gay. What about this unfolding journey of friendship through change made the biggest impact on you? Why?
12. Yancy writes, “Grace dies when it becomes us versus them.” (p. 171) How do we keep from splintering into opposing groups and continue to practice grace?
13. Yancy quotes German theologian Helmut Thielicke, “Jesus did not identify the person with his sin, but rather saw in this sin something alien, something that really did not belong to him, something that merely chained and mastered him from which he would agree him and bring him back to his real self. Jesus was able to love men because he loved them right through the layer of mud.” (p. 174) What does it take to see people through the mud or look at people through “grace-healed eyes”? (p. 175)

For Next Time (April 4) – Read Chapter 14

Birthdays

Closing Prayer

Loving God, when I come across someone I truly disagree with, help me not to judge them or think of them only for their faults, but to recognize them as fellow human beings, loved by you. Help me to respond to them as Jesus would with love and grace. Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

Revised Schedule

Date	Chapter(s)	Title(s)
March 28	None	Holy Week Break
April 4	14	Loopholes
April 11	15 & 16	Grace Avoidance Big Harold: A Story
April 18	17 & 18	Mixed Aroma Serpent Wisdom
April 25	19 & 20	Patches of Green Gravity and Grace