

## **Ways to Live**

### **Week 5 – *Jesus: the risen ruler***

#### **Pray**

#### **Class Overview / Review**

The goal of this class is for us to know how to faithfully share the gospel in a clear and concise manner. The presentation that we are using – Two Ways to Live – is definitely not the only presentation of the gospel; however, we do feel it is one of the simplest, and most Biblically faithful presentations we've seen.

This class is split into 6 weeks with each week focusing on a different stage of the gospel presentation. This week is the 5th week.

And because this is a core seminar designed to train each of you to share the Gospel with others, it is fitting that in reviewing the first four weeks, I should have you guys be the focal point to tell me what you learned. But, before we do a more interactive review, like the last few weeks, let us look at a passage in Scripture that demonstrates to us the truth that there are only 2 ways to live.

#### **2 Ways to Live Example – Matthew 25:31-46**

Please turn to the first Gospel in your Bibles, the Gospel of Matthew. We will be looking at Matthew 25:31-46. [Have somebody read]

In this passage, Jesus teaches us what will happen when He returns for His second coming. When He comes again, He will not come as a human, veiling His glory. When He comes again, He will not come in a humble stable as a helpless baby. When He comes again, He will not come in peace and mercy. Rather, in verse 31, we see that Jesus Christ, the Son of Man will come in GLORY. He will come as the King, reigning on His throne in heavenly glory. And He will come to judge the living and the dead. And at that time, the option, the opportunity to choose between the first and second way to live will be closed. There will no longer be a second chance. He will separate all the nations into two groups according to the way of life they chose to live here on earth.

And given the finality and seriousness of this judgment, praise God that He revealed and described to us in His Word the characteristics of the 2 ways to live TODAY that will affect and determine how we will be separated on THAT DAY of judgment.

So in this passage, briefly describe the first way to live, those separated to His left, the goats?

- Gave nothing to those hungry
- Gave nothing to those thirsty
- Gave no hospitality to strangers
- Gave no clothes to those without clothes
- Gave no care to those sick and in prison
- Seeking to justify themselves in their response

- Will hear Jesus say, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
- They will go away to eternal punishment

1. How can we summarize this first way to live?

A way committed to oneself, serving oneself as God. Not caring for the concerns for others, especially those who cannot care for themselves. No compassion.

What does this passage say about the second way to live, the sheep separated to His right?

- Gave food to hungry
- Gave drink to thirsty
- Gave housing to stranger
- Gave clothes to those without clothes
- Cared for sick
- Visited those in prison
- Humble in their response
- Will hear Jesus say, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”
- They will go away to eternal life

2. How can we summarize this second way to live?

A way committed to loving others as an overflow of a commitment of love to Christ. This way demonstrates the truth of Scripture, as in 1 John chapters 4 and 5 that says, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves His child as well. For if anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.”

Lessons we can learn regarding the gospel, and evangelism:

We learn a couple things regarding the gospel, and thus evangelism, in this passage.

**First**, we see how there is suddenness and an unpredictable nature to Christ’s second coming. And when He comes, He comes to judge the living and the dead. Then, all opportunities to respond to the Gospel message ends. Non-Christians do not have infinite chances to hear and respond to the Gospel. There is urgency in the Gospel message. Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 6:2 and says, “I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.” So when God calls people to repent and believe, He means for them to do so now.

As it relates to evangelism, we need to remember this urgency in our interactions with people. It is easy to get caught up in the things of the world and not to be diligent in praying for others and initiating conversations with them. Our friends and family will not know this urgency unless we communicate it with them. So we should look to remember this and act on Christ’s call for us to be witnesses of Him.

The **second** thing to note is that true faith will lead to fruit. Our actions will demonstrate our true beliefs.

And as this relates to evangelism, we must communicate that faith will involve following God and producing fruit. We should make it clear that it is faith alone that saves, but that such faith will only be shown to be true if we continue to believe and follow God. This may be a sticky issue, so if you have questions about this particular issue, I highly recommend Michael's third sermon in James when he talked about what it means that faith without works is dead.

So, are there any questions?

### **Review Cells 1-4, and Context of Cell 5**

Let's move to the second page of the handout.

And let us now review what we have learned these past few weeks. Who remembers what we discussed regarding the first box? etc. [Ask class to help review, and draw diagrams on the whiteboard.]

1. God is the loving ruler and creator. He made the world and us rulers of the world under Him. Revelation 4:11- you are worthy our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being."
2. Man is in rebellion against God, seeking to live one's own way not God's way. Romans 3:10-12- "There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. They have all turned away."
3. God won't let us rebel forever. He will punish rebellion with death and judgment. Hebrews 9:27- "just as man is destined to die once, then to face judgment..."
4. Because of His love, God send Son Jesus into world to be sinless man who died in our place and took our punishment and brought forgiveness. 1 Peter 3:18- "For Christ died for sins, once for all, the righteous, for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the spirit."

This week, we look at Jesus, the risen ruler. And then next week, we focus on people's reactions to the gospel and that there are really only two ways that we can live. We can either reject God's rule, in which case we face death and judgment from God, or we can submit to Jesus as our ruler, and so be forgiven by God and have eternal life [Don't draw box 5 but do box 6].

Before we move on to the lesson for this week, let's think about why the truth for this week is so important. Think about what is missing from the gospel if we do not have box 5. Talk to your neighbor briefly about this question and then we'll talk about some ideas.

Given what we have discussed, what should we look to communicate and make clear through this 5<sup>th</sup> box? (write on board)

### **Cell 5 Demonstration**

Great! Let's now focus on this fifth box – Jesus, the risen Ruler.

In this box, we seek to convey the truth that three days after the crucifixion, God raised Jesus to life again as the ruler of the world. Jesus has conquered death, now gives new life, and will return to judge.

1 Peter 1:3 “In his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

So we put an exclamation mark on this wonderful act of grace. That exclamation mark is the resurrection of Christ! How can we know Jesus is the author of life and the source of forgiveness? Because God raised Him from the dead. Jesus walked again.

### **Jesus—the risen ruler (Cell 5)**

And in this fifth cell, there are two main truths we want to learn. First, we see **God's actions towards Jesus, especially in exalting Him**. Second, we see **God's actions towards us**. Let's look at each of those more closely. Once again, we aren't going to cover in depth these verses, so make it a point to look up these verses

#### 1) God's actions towards Jesus – Exaltation

We know that in Christ's earthly ministry- God's plan was for Christ to face death, but not to stay dead but to be raised from it. In passages like Mark 8:31/ 9:31/ 10:34 Christ tells people what will happen- that he would rise 3 days after his crucifixion.

##### Jesus raised from the dead.

- Matthew 28:1-20, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-53, John 20:1-21:25; The Gospel accounts record the event of Christ's resurrection- showing all that he had mastery over death.
- Acts 17:31, Not only do we read of the resurrection account, but we also read of how men like Paul are testifying about Christ's resurrection in Acts. Acts 17:31. “For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given us proof of this to all men, by raising him from the dead.”
- John 10:18, Christ has authority to take His life up again.

##### Jesus is the ruler of the world.

- Philippians 2:9-11, God exalted Christ to the highest place and everyone's knee will bow before Him.
- Revelation 1:5, Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth.
- Revelation 5:12, Christ is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.

*We are now moving to the third page of our handout.*

##### Jesus will judge the world.

- 2 Timothy 4:1, Jesus is the judge of the living and dead.
- John 5:26-27, God has given Jesus the authority to execute judgment.
- 2 Corinthians 5:10, We will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Note here that although God raised Christ from the dead, we also understand that, just as Christ laid His life down for us, so also He had the authority to take it up again.

#### 2) God's actions towards us who believe

### We are given new birth

- 1 Peter 1:3; We have new birth through Christ's resurrection.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17, We are new creations.
- James 1:18, God has given us birth through His word of truth.
- Colossians 3:1, The resurrection demands our allegiance to follow God exclusively, since we have been risen with Christ.
- Romans 6:4-11, The resurrection means we should live a new life and should not sin.
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 (in context of 1 Corinthians 15), The resurrection means we should live boldly and give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord.

### The Holy Spirit lives in us.

- Ephesians 1:13-14, The Holy Spirit living in us is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.
- John 3:8, The Holy Spirit creates new birth.
- Galatians 5:22-23, The Holy Spirit creates fruit within us.

### We will be found acceptable to Christ.

- Romans 8:1, There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.
- John 5:24, Those who have eternal life will not come into judgment, but pass from death to life.
- Revelation 11:18, God will reward those who believe in Him.

### Our security is in Christ.

- Philippians 3:10-12, The resurrection ensures our resurrection.
- 1 Peter 1:3, We have new birth into a living hope through Christ's resurrection.
- Ephesians 2:4, The resurrection ensures our future is secure.
- Ephesians 1:18, The resurrection shows the kind of power God works in the believer.
- We can count it joy to suffer for the sake of Christ because we know we are people bound for another land.
- That we someday will receive a new body, and live eternally with Christ, the first fruits of the dead.

When explaining this box, these are some points to try to get across.

On a side note, while preparing for this class, and thinking about evangelism, I wondered, "You know I believe all this, I can say all this, but does my life testify to it?" Although I may talk about the resurrection, does my life show to others that Christ is my king, and the ultimate ruler? Do people know from my life that Christ sits in the judgment seat of the whole world?

By my life, do those who look at me see that because of Christ's resurrection, I now have hope in things that last far beyond this life? Do I live like my life is secure in Christ and what He has prepared for me? As we strive to know how to tell of the truths in Scripture that God has revealed to us, strive also to live lives that reflect the truth about our Lord and Savior.

And remember the comforting truth of God's actions towards us who believe. We will be acceptable to Christ and God will reward those who believe in Him. We can

place all our hope in Christ. We can also know and experience God through Him dwelling within us. All this we know and have assurance about because of the resurrection.

Any questions? How do you think an emphasis on the resurrection will help your evangelism?

Let's now turn to the last page of our handout.

### **Counterarguments/Misconceptions**

A couple notes on this box. **First**, it may be a contentious one for some people, particularly since Christ's resurrection is so incredible. Perhaps they have heard about the "Jesus Seminar," a group of skeptics that basically denies anything supernatural about the gospels. But this is not new. From the earliest days of Christianity, people have sought to disprove the resurrection, simply because it is such a crucial fact. If it is false, Christianity is a sham and Paul says, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Corinthians 15:32). But if it is true, then people must come to grips with a sovereign God who not only exists but also interacts in the world and calls us to serve Him—and thus we must obey Him.

**Second**, one of the things we have talked about is looking to tailor this presentation, depending on our personality and the audience to which we're explaining it to. So how would this work? As an example, let's say you had a friend who was Catholic, and believed that we needed somehow to live good lives in order to get into heaven. You could help address this in box 5 and say: [describe box 5, and emphasize that Christ will accept us based solely on what He has done, e.g. forgiveness of all our sins, Christ deems us acceptable because of what He has done].

[If time: What other counterarguments do you think people might have here? What difficulties do you think people might encounter through this box? How can we address these? Or, do you see some other misconceptions we could help address through this box?]

### **Conclusion**

So to summarize, not only did Christ die for our sins, but God also raised Him from the dead. Christ rules over the world and will one day judge the world. In addition, God's work extends to us. He gives those who believe in Him new life—one in which our sins are forgiven and one where He lives in us and changes us. Christ's resurrection also helps to guarantee the gospel. On the Day of Judgment, we can know that He will accept us because He died in our place.

Some helpful tips when communicating this...

1. We will not be able to prove this. The resurrection generates much discussion and debate, and it is certainly worthwhile to investigate it and learn more about it. However, we should not think that there is some sort of magic formula that is to be had there, and that we can somehow prove it. I think we can definitely show that it is plausible and makes more sense than alternative explanations. However, if you were dealing with someone who absolutely refuses to believe in the resurrection and just does not seem to approach it fairly, I would recommend trying to figure out if there is another reason. Sometimes there may be. For example, maybe they are reluctant to follow the will of someone other than themselves and

are using this as a smokescreen. If so, it probably doesn't matter too much to debate the resurrection. This is not to say it's not worthwhile to discuss and debate the resurrection; it's only to say be wise in those situations and try to discern carefully from where they're coming. And ultimately, it is good to remember to pray for others. We ourselves can't argue someone into the Kingdom of God. It will take the Holy Spirit to bring them in.

2. Second, consider how you are living your new life. God has given us new birth and His Spirit lives in us. We also can be sure that when Christ judges the world, He will find us acceptable—because of His work on the cross. Are you bearing fruit? Last week, we thought about how our lives should have joy, and that should commend the gospel. This week, think about what kind of fruit you are bearing. If Christ were to write you a letter, what would He say? We had seen before that Paul, if the resurrection never happened, would “eat and drink for tomorrow [he would] die.” A few verses before that, he spoke of how he did live, recognizing that Christ has been raised. He said, “I die every day—I mean that brothers—just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:30). In light of the truth that the resurrection of Christ did happen and Jesus is the Risen Ruler, let's live lives with the same fervor as Paul's.

## **Assignment**

Next week we'll look at various situations and see how we should respond to people depending on their reaction to our Gospel presentation. In preparation, please memorize cells 1-6.

As has been mentioned before, while it is important to memorize the text of Two Ways to Live, ultimately, you should be able to use the text of an individual box as a jumping off point. I want to encourage each of you to spend this next week memorizing the Two Ways to Live outline. At the very least, you will end up with a clearer understanding of the Gospel; at the most you will be better equipped to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those around you.

Next week, we'll take some time for everyone who is able to go through the whole Gospel presentation in a padded version. In other words, between now and next Sunday, you should learn whatever boxes you have remaining and be prepared to come back and share the Gospel putting your own words to Two Ways to Live.

Are there a few of you who would volunteer now to go through the whole Gospel presentation next Sunday morning? Afterwards, we will spend just a couple of minutes pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of your presentation.