

New Testament Challenge

March 1 – May 2, 2009

United Baptist Church – Old Town, ME

Small Group Questions – Week #2 – Starting March 8

Ice Breaker Game Idea:

Play "2 Truths and a Lie" – Go around to everyone in the group and let each person share 3 things about themselves with the group... 2 of which are true and one of which is a lie. Then let the rest of the group guess which of the 3 is the lie. It's a great way to learn some interesting facts about people in the group and it's fun to try to guess the lie ☺

Quick Facts about the Book of Romans:

- Paul probably wrote Romans around 58 AD from Corinth. He was about to return to Jerusalem with an offering he had raised from the churches he had planted to give to the church in Jerusalem which was suffering from severe persecution.
- Romans is the only letter Paul wrote to a church that he did not start and which to this point he had never visited. Thus, note how Romans seems impersonal compared to Paul's other letters to churches. There are few details of practical problems in Romans because Paul does not personally know the church.
- Romans is the most theological and least practical of Paul's letters. Another reason (see the first reason above) is that Rome was the center of the known world at this time and a capital of intellect. Romans is laid out more as a theological treatise perhaps in part because Paul wanted to lay out the intellectual validity of the faith to those in Rome.
- Paul desperately wanted to visit Rome (which he would later do in chains and eventually he would die there)... so this letter introduces himself to the church in Rome. Paul's passion was spreading the Good News of Jesus as far as he could. Like California today, what influenced Rome influenced the world. But besides wanting to share in Rome – Paul also may have wanted to establish a base from which to take missionary journeys further west (maybe as far west as Spain).

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20)

1. If you had been one of the first hired workers, how would you have felt when everyone was getting paid?
2. How do you feel about recent converts getting the same benefits as you in the kingdom?
3. Does being gracious to the workers at the eleventh hour equate to being unfair to the workers who were hired early in the morning?

The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25)

1. What were the master's expectations of his servants while he was away?
2. Why do you think the master became angry with the servant with one talent?
3. What are some talents either material or immaterial in your life that Jesus expects you to steward well and multiply?

Paul Sails for Rome (Acts 27)

1. When was a time that God brought you through a storm on your way to a destination that you knew He wanted you to go?
2. What is the danger of equating comfort with God's will for your life?
3. What does it say about God that He would chose to take Paul to Rome as a prisoner on a ship that wrecked?

All Things Working For the Good of Those Who Love Him (Romans 8:28)

1. Looking back, how have you seen things work out for your good even though it did not make sense at the time?
2. What present situation could this verse be applied to in your life?
3. Why is it important that the verse ends with the phrase "who have been called according to his purpose?"

Being a Living Sacrifice (Romans 12)

1. What do you hear when Paul says do not conform to the world? How do we stay engaged with our culture and those around us while remaining faithful to this command?
2. What does it mean to offer your body as a living sacrifice?
3. What are some ways that you have been able to practice the renewing of your mind?