

**LIFE Group Preparation***God's Great Invitation*Week 3 of 3 of the Sermon Series: *What's So Great About the Gospel?**Philippians 3:20-4:1*Please look over these questions *before* your LIFE Group meeting.**Getting Started**

1. The past three weeks' sermons have dealt with the life-giving, energizing, and wonderful news God has given us in Jesus. Do any illustrations, points, or images stand out in your memory from these sermons or group discussions?
2. We are surrounded by advertising slogans, all competing to persuade us of the truth of their message.
  - a. Can you identify these slogans with their advertisers?
    - Be all that you can be
    - The Real Thing
    - You deserve a break today
    - Let's Make Things Better
    - We'll leave the lights on for you
    - We bring good things to life
  - b. What themes do all these slogans have in common?
  - c. What effects do these and similar types of slogans have on you?
3. What type of "pressure" is usually required (internal or external) for you to make a change in your life? This could be something simple like changing your cable service or more difficult like committing to daily times of solitude and reflection.

**Into the Bible**

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah wrote about a time of restoration, conveying to the Jewish people God's plan for things to be made right. Things were not as God desired, and the people were helpless to reconcile their situation.

*Read Isaiah 61:1-2a***The Year of the LORD's Favor**

<sup>1</sup>The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
<sup>2a</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor. (NIV)

4. Who were those to benefit from God's intervention? Going beyond a literal reading of this passage to a poetic interpretation, who are promised help and how are their lives affected?

"The year of the Lord's favor" refers to the Jubilee year, which occurred every 50 years according to biblical regulations and affected the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Jubilee dealt with land, property, and property rights; the result being that debts were cancelled, land was returned to its original owners, and slaves were freed. It was a time of restoration to original order.

The message of restoration lies at the heart of God's word. It is the thread that ties the Old and New Testaments together, seamlessly revealing God's consistent, coherent, complete plan to bring about his intended order for all creation.

*Read Luke 4:14-19***Jesus Rejected at Nazareth**

<sup>14</sup>Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. <sup>15</sup>He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

<sup>16</sup>He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind,

to set the oppressed free,

<sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (NIV)

The promise of restoration (and the heart of Jubilee) extends through Christ to all people groups, Jews and non-Jews alike. In the passage we just read from Luke, we find Jesus initiating his teaching ministry.

5. Considering when this took place in Jesus' public ministry, what do you think is significant about the Hebrew passage of scripture that he read and where he read it?
  
6. From time to time, distorted versions of the gospel message gain momentum. Would you be able to identify an incomplete or false version of Christ's truth? What would it lack?

### **Digging Deeper**

*Read the sermon text: Philippians 3:20-4:1*

**3:20**But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21**who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. **4:1**Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! (NIV)

7. As you answer the following questions, reflect on this week's sermon text and Jesus' mission statement, found in Luke 4:14-19.
  - a. The message of healing and restoration implies that something needs to be fixed. What might this look like for you and in the lives of those around you?
  
  - b. By what means does God choose to accomplish this feat?
  
8. *Shalom*: the integrity of being, the state of all things being as they ought to be, the state of being restored to true self, to our God, to all of creation. In which of these areas do you struggle to realize God's intended shalom for your life?

### **Group Prayer**

## **Sermon Notes**

*God's Great Invitation*

Week 3 of 3 of the Sermon Series: *What's So Great About the Gospel?*

*Philippians 3:20-4:1*