

DISCUSSION IDEAS
RESCUED AND RENEWED

April 16th, 2017

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Key Truth:

GOD, THROUGH HIS DEEP LOVE, BOTH RESCUES AND RENEWS US.

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT ONE: WHY DID GOD CREATE US WITH THE POWER TO REBEL AGAINST HIM?**

OK. That is a "Why" question. We obviously could answer it in many ways ... including many incorrect ways.

What does Ephesians 1:3-4a tell us about God's plans?

Did God know ahead of time that we would rebel?

Did he have to PLAN, ahead of time, to experience torture and death for us?

If so, what does that tell us about His deep love?

Discuss 1 John 4:7-9. What does it mean that "God IS love"?

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT TWO: A RESCUE IS NEEDED.**

Sacrifices for sin were set up clear back in the time of Adam and Eve.

What can you see from Genesis 3:21 about an animal sacrifice?

Had Adam or Eve ever experienced the death of anything?

Imagine how this would have affected them.

Yet, what does Hebrews 10:4 tell us?

What was the purpose of an animal sacrifice, if it could not take away the consequences of sin?

Think about the meaning of "Faith" (Trust) here.

In what did the Old Testament Believers have faith?

Since we needed a substitute, what would that person be like?

Look at 1 Cor. 5:21-22.

Discuss Colossians 2:8-15.

How is Jesus described here?

What is our relationship with Him?

What has happened to our sin?

How does vv. 12-13 clarify our status before God?

Look for the ideas of 1. we were dead (already), 2. we were buried, and 3. we were made alive together with Him.

Expand these thoughts.

Now look at 2 Cor. 5:14-21. What is our new outlook on life to be like?

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♦ **DISCUSSION POINT THREE: A RENEWAL PROVIDED.**

In the time available, pick a few of these amazing provisions from God and discuss them.

Spend time this week pondering all of them.

NEW SECURITY

No Condemnation – Romans 8:1.

Not even a record of our sins – Col. 2:14, Rev. 20:11-15.

No separation from the love of God – Rom. 8:31-39.

NEW IDENTITY

New creation – 2 Cor. 5:17.

Sons, Heirs! – Gal. 4:4-7.

The Holy Spirit living IN US! – Rom. 8:9.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity to understand God's Word – 1 Cor. 2:11-16.

Opportunity to become really good people – The fruit of God's Holy Spirit – Gal 5:16-24.

Opportunity to deeply impact others for Jesus – our grace gifts – 1 Cor. 12 to 14.

NEW FAMILY

Our local church family.

The "universal" church throughout the world.

NEW PURPOSE

Love God – experience intimate relationship with God through worship, prayer and the Word.

Love others – serving and doing good to

Make Disciples – help others become rescued and renewed by God's Love.

NEW DESTINY

Absent from the body but present with the Lord.

The Rapture.

The Judgment Seat of Christ – both accountability and reward.

Jesus' Future Millennial Kingdom here in earth – and our part in that.

The New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem (our new place to live!) in the ages to come.

♦ **FOR PRAYER:**

Our Grace Church Elders: Pray for our elders as they continue to guide Grace Church, always seeking God's will.

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Shelter Valley: Continue to uphold the Shelter Valley believers, and the GCC team that serves there.

Pray for Scott and Leslie Stevens as Scott heads up this ministry.

Pray for the developing local leaders and for continued growth in understanding among those who attend about God's Plan and what it really means to follow Him.

Home Groups: Pray for our home groups.

Pray for the leaders to grow in understanding and skill so that those in each group will truly grow in their walk in the Spirit and in true agape love.

Pray that more folks will take part in a home group and be encouraged as a result.

Pray that each one of us would seek to learn how to use our individual spiritual gift(s) to build up the Body of Christ.

Gettises: Pray for the Gettis family as they continue to get settled in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Cindy writes: "Please pray the Lord provides us with a vehicle that is reliable and affordable."

Pearsons: Continue to pray for John and Bobbie Pearson. Their son, John Caleb is on hospice care with advanced cancer. He and his wife Cheri are now staying at a rental condo near John and Bobbie in Forest, VA. He is bedridden and on two meds for pain control. John and Bobbie take a turn in the around the clock family schedule for sitting with him. Thanks for prayers during this stressful time.

Barangonan Island: Let's continue to pray for the Lord's love and power to be seen in Barangonan Island.

Pray for wisdom and encouragement as the Ingvoldstads get settled here in Ramona and adjust to a new stage in their life.

Pray for wisdom and encouragement as Binders make decisions about their new life in Germany.

Pray for wisdom, clear understanding of God's Word and continued obedience to the Holy Spirit on the part of the island church leaders.

Pray the Elders in Training: Eddie and Ted, the teacher geeks, Jeremy who has the gift of discernment to protect the flock, and Sid who leads in outreach to other islands. Pray that the evil one will not attack them.

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Continue to uphold the Tagbanwa believers who go to a neighboring island every Friday to teach about God. Pray too for the hearers to respond.

Continue to pray for strength and endurance for those who go, as well as understanding for those who hear.

Thank God and uphold in prayer the "TFG" (Time For God) group of children and young folks who meet every day!

Pray with the strong, self-motivated women's group as they study God's Word and grow to be mature believers.

Persecuted Believers:

Let's not forget to uphold our fellow believers around the world who are experiencing real and intense persecution for following Jesus.

THIS WEEK:

1. Damascus: Pray for "Rasima" and "Fadia" as they are discipling young women in Damascus.

Rasima and her sister, Fadia, began to search for a church in Damascus after the Lord appeared to both of them in a dream.

Although the Muslim sisters initially looked for a traditional Christian church — a big building with a cross on top — during their search they came across a nondescript building with a table full of Bibles in front; it was a VOM partner church.

They asked a person at the table if they could have a Bible, which led to a deeper discussion, and the person manning the table full of Bibles ultimately presented the gospel to the young women. Before leaving, both had placed their faith in Christ.

Since that day, the spiritual wounds caused by their harsh Shiite Muslim upbringing have begun to heal.

Over the past year, they've become very involved in serving in the church.

Even though heavy bombing has occurred in their area, they have chosen to stay in Damascus to disciple other young women at the church.

Pray for their safety and boldness as they teach other Syrian women about Christ.

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2. **China:** Pastor Yang Hua is facing a serious illness in prison.
A Chinese pastor who has been in prison for the past 16 months was admitted to the hospital last month with a serious medical condition. In mid-March, dark, painful lesions appeared on Yang Hua's legs and continued to spread. Prison doctors gave him painkillers but offered no treatment. A week later, his lawyers managed to have him admitted to a private hospital, where he was diagnosed with anaphylactoid purpura, a condition that causes inflammation of blood vessels and can affect the kidneys, intestines, joints and skin. Yang Hua's lawyers have filed a request for medical bail so that he can be released from prison during treatment and recovery.
Yang Hua is co-pastor of a 700-member church in Guiyang, China. He has been detained since December 2015 on charges of "divulging state secrets".

3. **Sudan:** Pray for the family of Younan Abdullah, who was killed while defending Christian protesters.
On April 3, a group of Christians gathered at the Evangelical School in Omdurman, near Khartoum, to protest the government's proposed appropriation of property owned by the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church.
After police arrested the men involved in the protest, a group of about 20 people armed with knives and other weapons entered the school grounds and began to beat the women still at the school.
When men from the nearby Bahri Evangelical Church rushed over to protect the women, two of them were stabbed by the attackers. Younan Abdullah, an elder at the church, died from his injuries, while church member Ayoub Kumama was treated at a hospital and released. Younan is survived by his wife and two children.

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4. Mexico: Pray for tribal Christians building bridges of peace.

Name pronunciations:

Wixáritari: "Wee khar ee taree";

Huichol: "Wee choh!".

Today, in a community dominated by members of the Wixáritari (or Huichol) tribe, many of whom still partake in pagan rituals (involving the use of a hallucinogenic drug) and sacrifices offered to their gods, there remains a group of about 25 evangelical Christian converts.

Many other converted followers of Christ have faced alienation, eviction from their communities, and separation from their families for refusing to take part in the ancient tribal rituals.

Omar Rodriguez, who presides over a church in the Jalisco state capital of Guadalajara, supports persecuted Christians residing in the Tuxpan and Bolaño communities. "We are convicted that God gave us the Great Commission," he explains. "When He said to go out to the whole world, that includes our indigenous friends and compatriots who also have a need to fill the emptiness in their hearts."

The Christians are already taking proactive steps in order to build bridges. Newly elected tribal officials were recently invited to a believer's home where food was graciously provided. They are hoping this kind gesture was received well and will help to build good relations with the new officials.

Following this, another meeting had taken place on April 8th, giving the Christians an opportunity to discuss ways to ensure a more harmonious existence.

Mr. Rodriguez says the meeting was a "very important" step and "could be the start of something."

There are signs of hope that, in time, Christian Wixáritaris will be able to live peacefully amongst their fellow tribal people, especially those who are in desperate need of deliverance from spiritual bondage through the power of Jesus who is risen indeed!