

Small Group Discussion points

1. Revelation's main purpose is to encourage the Christian Church on earth in its struggles against Satan, the world and our sinful flesh. Discuss and list some of the struggles you (or others you know of) have faced or may face. (These may include struggles of church, school, synod, etc.) To whom should we always be looking? 2 Thess 3:3 Ps 34:19 1 Cor 1:8
2. We are to be "faithful" Christians.
 - a. What does it mean to be faithful? (for parent, child, spouse, pastor, employee, etc.)
 - b. What can happen when you start comparing your faithfulness to the faithfulness of others?
 - c. What is our motivation to be faithful? (Can you think of Bible verses to back this up? Gospel...Gospel...Gospel) 2 Cor 5:14-15 1 Jn 4:19
3. Thankfully, God's faithfulness does not depend on our faithfulness. 2 Tim 2:13: "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself."
 - a. Can you think of other scripture that confirms God's faithfulness? 1 Jn 1:9 2 Cor 1:20 1 Cor 10:13
 - b. Are there specific times you can share when God demonstrated his faithfulness?
 - c. How can your faithfulness be a positive witness to other believers and the lost? Lk 10:25-37 Phil 2:4 Eph 4:2
4. Society today seems to be more openly hostile to Christianity (although we are not being fed to lions). List ways you notice this to be true. Can you think of negative "labels" you've heard applied to Christians? Jesus' words of comfort for this problem are found in John 16:33: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." What is the peace God provides? Jn 14:27 Col 3:15
5. While Christians are frequently reminded of how rich they are in Christ, they are also warned about the lure of earthly riches (Lk 12:15 Lk 12:16-21). What do we sometimes value more than we should? What particular threats or challenges do we face to our faith? (e.g., materialism) 2 Tim 3:1-5 Col 3:2 Eph 4:19

6. “Here the cross, there the **crown**: A lot of our frustration in life comes from thinking life should be easier or more comfortable than it is. Why is this not the case? On what should we focus? Compare “detachment FROM this life” to “attachment TO this life.” Also see Rom 5:1-5 Heb 12: 3-11 1 Pet 5:4 Phil 4:19 1 Cor 10:13 Jas 1:2-3
7. What are your thoughts regarding what the **crown** of “the life” will be like? What do we know? What are possible misconceptions? Is 25:8 Zech 9:16 Rev-chps 4, 15 & 21
8. Compare the first death to the second death for a believer; for an unbeliever. Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. Also see Rev 21:8. Both groups will be separated from someone or something. What is it for each group?

Another point to ponder:

“In the beginning” man was the “**crown**” of God’s creation. How was the creation of Adam & Eve different from the rest? They were the “**crown**” of God’s creation and already in possession of the **crown** of “the life.” Since sin, it seems like we are born only to die – but actually that is the unnatural state. God did not create us to die, but to live and that we will. What will heaven be like? There are glimpses in scripture, but we can only imagine.

Ended session by playing
“I Can Only Imagine” by Mercy Me
[this song was sung at the funeral of Sarah Fillner]