

September 18, 2011

Willow Park South Small Group Questions

"Rescued"

Acts 2:42-47

- Please read Acts 2:42-47 together at the beginning of your small group meeting.

In the book of Acts we see how Jesus, after His ascension, starts to establish His purpose for His church through the apostles. But before we can take a look at what God's purpose for the church is, we first have to look to God's Word in order find out what He is trying to accomplish in the bigger picture.

- **Exodus 14:4** (ESV) *"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.' And they did so."*
- **1 Samuel 12:22** (ESV) *"For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself."*
- **Psalm 23:3** (ESV) *"He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake."*
- **Isaiah 43:7** (ESV) *"everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*
- **Romans 1:5** (ESV) *"through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations"*
- **1 John 2:12** (ESV) *"I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake."*

By taking a look at these verses, what can you conclude about what God's purpose is in all that He does?

- God seeks to glorify Himself in all that He chooses to do.

Why do you think we struggle with the idea that God is ultimately first and foremost for Himself?

Why is it good for God to seek His own glory when it is sinful for us to seek our own glory?

- If God were to esteem anything higher than Himself, then the person or thing which He esteems would be greater and more significant than God Himself.

Why is it good for us that God is utmost for Himself?

In what way is life more free when our life's focus is on Jesus rather than ourselves?

- We are free to allow others in our lives to make mistakes.
- We are free to give grace to those who do us wrong.

As God seeks His own glory in all that He does, His purpose for the church is rooted in this reality. Acts 1:8 states that the church's ultimate purpose is to bear witness to the glory of Christ Jesus. But how do we accomplish this in our daily lives? Acts 2:42-47 sheds light into how we as the church needs to conduct ourselves in order to fulfill God's purpose.

Grow

Acts 2:42 (ESV) *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”*

- How does it give glory (or prominence) to God when we devote ourselves to reading our Bibles (aka the apostles teachings)?
- Do you struggle to read and study your Bibles daily?
 - How can you reschedule your day in order to have time to read your Bible?

Connect

Acts 2:44 (ESV) *“And all who believed were together and had all things in common.”*

- How do you think we as a church can connect with each other more effectively?
- Is there a demographic within the church which you have not connected with yet?

Worship

Worship is bearing witness to God's glory by sincerely praising Him with a joyful heart. Notice how the early church worshipped inside the church and out.

- What does it look like to worship God in your workplace or in your home?
- How is the heart with which you worship in church a reflection of how you worship outside of church?

Missional

Acts 2:46-47 (ESV) *“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*

- If Jesus is the focus of your life, how will He bubble over into your daily conversations?
- Why is it ineffective to tell people about Jesus when you are not passionate about Him yourself?

Evangelism starts by becoming passionate about God's glory and allowing that to flow into your every day conversations.