

THE WAY GROUPS – LEADER GUIDE

Heroes of Faith: Moses – June 20th, 2021

Dear Leaders,

Open with prayer! Then get going! This one has 6 questions!

Summary

It doesn't get much better than this: being adopted into the royal family. Are you kidding me? How amazing! You're set for life. And adoption into the royals is exactly what happened to Moses. And he would have been so blessed. He would have been somebody. He would have had pleasures, treasures, power, honor, prestige, security, and more. Except he turned it down—all of it, because for Moses, there was a better identity. And there is a better identity for each and every one of us, too.

BIG IDEA

This Group will encourage us to see our identity in Christ... really!

1. **What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's sermon or the sermon text did you find to be most helpful, encouraging, surprising, challenging, or troubling? Explain!**
2. **Read Hebrews 11:24-28. What do you think is the craziest part of these words?**

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

The truth we want to highlight is this: Moses could've had an identity crisis because of the way he grew up. However, he was clear on what he had in Christ – his identity in Christ - EVEN THOUGH CHRIST HADN'T COME! That's crazy!

3. **From where do you primarily get you sense of identity or value:** family (current), family of origin, race, personality, physical attributes, aspirations/goals, abilities, gender, religion/spirituality, nationality, career, job title, and socioeconomic status.

Leaders... After people share, and you will need to encourage them to do so... Say, Can I read a part from the sermon this past week? It's a quote from a book called "'Vocation | the setting for human flourishing" by Professor Pastor Michael Berg. As I read it, listen, and tell me what you think.

“You are valuable not because of your last name, your salary, or position but because of Christ: first in your [baptismal] identity as one redeemed by Christ crucified and second as a coworker with God in his economy of love.”

Say: What do you think?

Then summarize this way: Say, “You’re valuable not because of what you do or who you are—but because Jesus Christ loved and loves you. You are someone Jesus has washed clean of sin. Who am I? Not merely me. I’m what God has made me. His forgiven child. This is exactly what we heard in Colossians 3 which we will look at next”

4. Read Colossians 3:1-15 below. As you do answer the following:

Martin Luther once said, *God doesn’t need your good works, but your neighbor does*. What does that mean based on the passage below? Where do you see that quote proved true in the passage above?

Answer: Because we are raised with Christ, we are hidden with Christ in God (1) we need not do anything to try to “get right” with God. Rather, he is already pleased with us for “Christ is all, and is in all” (11). We are already “God’s chosen people, holy and dearly love!” (12)

God doesn’t need our Good Works. He’s God! BUT our neighbor needs us to love them! Look at all the commands in this passage that direct us to care for others and forgive others. Not lie to others... not be angry or speak ill to others... on and on the list goes!

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹²Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

5. List as many, but at least 4, reasons as your Group can think of for this question: Why is this such a difficult distinction (that *God doesn’t need your good works, but your neighbor does*) to keep straight in our daily lives?

Answers will vary

In what ways is this distinction comforting?

Because of Christ and what he did FOR YOU, God is already pleased with me for “Christ is all, and is in all” (11). We are already “God’s chosen people, holy and dearly love!” (12)

Therefore, “¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.” (15)

6. A store manager has a fairly clear *vocation* (also known as a *calling*). A plumber has a fairly clear *vocation*. A medical doctor has a fairly clear *vocation*. Does GROUP member have a fairly clear *vocation*? Why or why not? What questions does this discussion bring up for you to think about more or maybe to ask your pastor about?

Answers will vary

“Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile.” — So said the most powerful man in the world. And that is why Moses should not have existed. But Moses’ mother devised a plan and God blessed it—floated him on top of the Nile River, then got paid to nurse him, and then he was adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter and he grew up Egyptian royalty. And then... some would say he had an identity crisis. I would say that’s a good thing. Hebrews 11 says this—try to nail down what you think is the craziest part of these words:

²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. ²⁵He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. ²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. So what’s the craziest part?

- Chose to be mistreated rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin
 - Who chooses to be mistreated?
 - Answer: **with the people of God**
- Regarded disgrace as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt.
 - What?! Who thinks that being disgraced is anything but the worst?
 - Disgrace means **“having fallen from favor or a position of power or honor; discredited.**
- If you’re disgraced for a crime (A few years ago the gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar. The Hollywood guy... Harvey Weinstein.” If I did something horrible and couldn’t be a pastor because I had disqualified myself... that’d be disgraceful and bad. That would be the worst.
 - But what if you’re disgraced at your workplace **for the sake of Christ?**
 - For sharing what Christianity says about heaven and hell?
 - For loving your friend enough to clearly proclaim what God says about sex?
 - That disgrace is more valuable than any treasure you’ll get— because trust me, Moses could have had more treasures than you.
 - Not saying don’t be tactful. And caring. Not saying be a jerk. I heard in a sermon this week that Jesus was both tough and tender. You see it on almost every page of his ministry.
- **It wasn’t that he looked to the reward of heaven as more valuable than the treasures of Egypt.** That’d be understandable. Disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value.
 - The people in Egypt saying, “Wow... Moses. Like they pitied him.” He could have been royal. He could have had it all. And what did he do? He went out into the desert for 40 years and now he’s the self-proclaimed leader of slaves, and he’s trying to leave Egypt? Doing little magic tricks? Moses, Moses.”

All that’s crazy—How could he do it—how could he persevere? Simple. **“He saw him who is invisible.”** You could say this happened at the burning bush in Exodus 3, when God, still invisible, spoke to Moses from the bush that wouldn’t burn up. But more generally, Moses saw through the eyes of faith what he had never seen. All God’s promises, as good as gold, even though they hadn’t all come true yet.

And: **²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.**

It was the 10th of 10 plagues—the one that would finally get the Israelites out of Egypt. Death was going to rule. Wailing in every house in the whole land. But God gave a way out. The blood of a sacrificial lamb—paint it on your doorframe, and the destroyer will passover your house. He won’t drop death in your household.

Jesus kept the Passover and application of his blood to the doorframe of your life. Jesus himself painted his own blood over the doorframe of your life, and that is what defines you. That is what is your better identity. Your greatest identity!

So: get rid of your identity. Which ones? Every identity that you find value in besides your value in Christ.

Now I was tempted to tell you, “That’s kind’ve an overstatement.” But it’s not. If I get my sense of identity or my value from being a good father, what happens when I’m not a good one? Or what would happen if God took away our kids? Or what would happen if he doesn’t let me have kids in the first place? Or what if his plan was for me not to be married at all? I’d be no less valuable.

Over the past couple weeks I’ve read this book, and re-read a lot of it—it’s called “Vocation | the setting for human flourishing. **“You are valuable not because of your last name, your salary, or position but because of Christ: first in your [baptismal] identity as one redeemed by Christ crucified and second as a coworker with God in his economy of love.”** You’re valuable not because of what you do or who you are—but because Jesus Christ loved and loves you. You are someone Jesus has washed clean of sin. Who am I? Not merely me. I’m what God has made me. His forgiven child. This is exactly what we heard in Colossians 3 earlier—listen to the strength of this.

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. You died. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, no father or mother, nurse or patient, success or failure, popular or loser, friend or family member, single or married, but Christ is all, and is in all.

So: quit thinking about yourself. Asking **“who am I”** is not inherently selfish, but it so easily can be. And—most of your worry and stress and anger and frustration comes from thinking about yourself—how can I take care of myself, not “how can I serve them.” When you’re thinking about how you look, comparing yourselves with other people. And that is so pervasive—it’s something we do *all the time*.

It is laughable—in a bad way—how we try to find value in ourselves. Here’s an example: I was at the plasma center this week—and I was reading this book while I was there!—and there I was, comparing how quickly I can finish my sale to the other people around me, because I’m better hydrated, and it goes faster, the more you’re hydrated. And I recognize this in the moment and I’m repenting and forgiven and then 15 minutes later I’m doing it again! What? Our sense of self-identity and value is SO powerful.

In the biggest act of love in human history, Jesus gave up his identity. He refused to be known as the God who stayed away from the people of this world. He regarded disgrace on the cross for the sake of you as of greater value than everything. Jesus assumed the identity of sinner. So that you would have the identity of saint. You don’t have to please God—you can’t. He’s already pleased with you because Jesus gave you the identity of “holy.”

“We work for God’s glory when we are so free from pleasing him that we get lost in loving our neighbors.” — Berg

“you are a coworker with God in his economy of love.” In other words—he loves people through you. **What’s your identity? First: the one God loves. And second: God’s mask.** You’re the mask God wears in the world. You are God’s front. You are how God serves people. God didn’t just cause Pharaoh to say, “Get out of here, Israelites,” he used Moses to make that happen.

He provides for children through you.

He keeps people safe on airports and the community through you.

He brightens people’s day when you smile at them or say hi.

He makes the grass look nice.

He gets the clothes folded.

He tucks little children into bed.

He gives people handwritten cards in the mail.

He makes people know that there’s someone thinking of them when they get a text or phone call. He feeds people at restaurants and at home through you.

He gets people their groceries through you.

He makes companies run correctly through your analysis.

He cleans floors, teaches kids how to drive.

Teaches teachers how to teach.

Makes equipment.

Gives people beautiful music.

Solves people’s internet problems.

Gets them insurance or rental equipment.

Martin Luther said, “Angels smile when a father changes a dirty diaper.” It might seem insignificant. But it is God loving people *through you*.

So, no matter what disgrace or mistreatment it might bring, refuse to be known as anything but this: someone God loves. And someone through whom God loves the people around you. Amen.