

life group study guide

Life Groups Sermon Discussion Guide:
The King: The Stain – February 1, 2015

“What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

Nothing But the Blood by Robert Lowery

Name that Cleaner

Down through the years there have been great slogans to describe some incredible cleaning products. See if you can fill in the blanks of these cleaning product slogans. (Answers are located at the bottom of the page.)

1. Don't get mad. Get _____.
2. If it's gotta be clean, it's gotta be _____.
3. _____ will clean your whole house and everything that's in it.
4. Please don't squeeze the _____.
5. Pure clean, pure _____.

These and a plethora of other cleaning products have made claims and had catchy slogans to get us to purchase them to rid our homes, clothes, and bodies of dirt and waste, but do they work?

Most do a decent job of cleaning up the messes we make, but some like air fragrances only mask some deeper issues.

We can practice the same.

What's That Smell

The roots of our rebellion against God go far deeper than we realize. It's true for all of us. We have a far deeper stain in our hearts and lives than most of us care to or want to admit. What Jesus did was foretold long ago through the Day of Atonement, and the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Jesus came to show us our stain, to show us just how profoundly dirty we really are, and then cleanse our stain, forever.

The problem is we have a tendency to act like a Pharisee. We look good on the outside, but inwardly we have not gotten rid of the stench of a dead and stained heart.

Read: Matthew 23: 25-28

Q: Explain what this word picture depicts: a clean outside, a white-washed tomb?

Q: What is missing? What is the goal?

Getting to the Root

My family and I have been looking for a new home. We have walked through several homes that are for sale. One of my most unpleasant experiences is walking into a home that has owned a cat or dog. You walk into this immaculate and well-staged home, but there is something amiss. Through the staging, cleaned carpet, and even fresh paint a whiff of something contradicts. You just know these are pet owners and somewhere hidden under their shampooed carpet lie areas saturated with pet urine. Oh, how I shudder.

But the simple fact is we do the same in our spiritual lives. We try to clean up our house and leave a heart that left wanting. I am not advocating that self-discipline is not important. The language of Mark 9:43-48 would state so, but there is a deeper cleansing needed by all. You see self-discipline creates distance, but it does not bring spiritual deliverance. You see to be free from sin, we need to look at the internal cause rather than focus on the actions.

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Read Jeremiah 17:9

Discuss the idea that the heart is exponentially wicked. Give examples? Is this true of your heart?

Putting an End to All of This or The Best Carpet Cleaning Product on the Market

I believe two things are needed:

Read Zechariah 3:3-4, 8-9, Ezekiel 36:26, and John 1:29

Q: Who is the Branch and the Lamb?

Q: What do the new set of clothes represent?

Q: What is the significance of the heart?

Q: From these passages what is the first thing we all need?

The second thing we need is what Gary Thomas refers to in his book, *"A Glorious Pursuit"* as *detachment*. Detachment is the spiritual discipline of learning to desire God more than the things of this world. It is a hunger for the things of God more than the things of this world. Pursuing the presence of God will trump our worldly appetites. This is here and when Jesus is King in our hearts.

Read Philippians 4:8-9

Q: How do Paul's words mirror the idea of detachment?

Q: What are the most difficult things for you to detach yourself from?

The beauty of community and Life Groups is that this should be a safe place to discuss and confess our worldly attachments and allow our spiritual family to join with us to pray for us and encourage us to fight. Spend the remainder of your Life Group time in a time of confession and prayer.

Please allow Jesus to come in to cleanse you from your sin and create in you a new heart. Seek to detach from the desires of this world. Invite others to join you in this endeavor. Then and only then will your house be clean and in order.

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