



VINTAGE**CHURCH**

Know 2016

Discussion Guides

JUNE 26 - JULY 24, 2016

INTRO

Know 2016 Introduction

Here at Vintage Church we regularly go through sermon series that are based in books of the Bible or large passages found in the Bible. For example, this past spring we went through the book of Nehemiah together. Apart from these book or passage-based series, we have 8-10 “stand-alone sermons” where the topics typically vary depending on the scripture chosen by the pastor preaching.

However, this year the elders of Vintage Church decided that each stand-alone sermon will fall under the same topic: know the gospel. You see, the vision of Vintage Church is to make much of Jesus, and we do this by making disciples who know the gospel, live the gospel, and advance the gospel. For this year we as a church are going to turn our efforts towards the first action, knowing the gospel. **We’re calling this Know 2016, and throughout the month of July all sermons will fall under this banner of knowing the gospel.**

We are, together as one church family, choosing to lean in with everything to know the gospel deeper and more fully. Not just on Sundays; we want Know 2016 to be at the forefront of our minds and hearts, every day of this year. **Similarly, throughout July we want our community group discussions to focus in on this crucial aspect of discipleship.**

In addition to these 10 sermons dedicated to this topic, the plan for Know 2016 involves memorizing scripture together as a church, reading two books together and attending events where the authors of those books will teach us, and more. You can find more information about the full Know 2016 plan on vintagenc.com or the Vintage app, or you can stop by our Info Room/Bar and volunteers would love to help you.



Stories of God's Grace

At the core of the gospel is God's grace towards us. **Knowing the gospel isn't just about hearing the news; it's learning the grace God has for you.** As our pastors preach through what it means to know the gospel this month, we want to take time in our community group gatherings to tell one another stories of how we have encountered God's grace in our life, or how we have seen it in the lives of others.

Experiencing God's grace is part of the connective tissue between cognitively knowing the truth of the gospel and experiencing the life-changing depths of the gospel in our lives. **Practically, we need to move from the information of the gospel into the experience of the gospel.** By recounting stories of God's goodness, kindness, and mercy towards others, and us, we can stir up our hearts together in worship towards our gracious God and be thankful for some of the many ways God acts graciously towards us.

Stories of God's grace aren't limited to dramatic conversion stories. They can be simple encounters with the God who cares about the details of your life. Some of these stories might have a beginning and end, but many might be just starting. Here are some examples of stories of God's grace:

- "I've been applying for jobs and praying that God would provide, and he did!"
- "One of my coworkers keeps starting conversations about Jesus. I've been nervous, but what we've been able to talk about has gone really well. I feel like God is in this; he's giving me peace and these opportunities to share the gospel."
- "My relationship with my mom has always been tough, but we had a really good conversation on the phone the other day. I feel like God might be moving in this."



1. ROMANS 4:3-8, 16-25

JUNE 26, 2016

Getting Started

- **Begin by sharing stories of God's grace.**

Invite folks from group to share their stories (see Intro for why we're sharing stories of God's grace throughout this sermon series). Take as much time as you like.

- **Read Romans 4:3-8 & 16-25**

Understanding

Abraham's story is a picture of God's boundless grace towards us, even though we don't deserve it.

- **Can someone summarize Abraham's story for us?**

If your group needs help, refer to Genesis 12-25.

- **What stands out to you most about Abraham's story?**
- **How was God gracious towards Abraham?**
- **What promise is Paul referring to in Romans 4:19-20?**

Evaluating

Like Abraham and Sarah, we all doubt the promises of God but can hope in the midst of our doubt.

- **If you remember in Abraham's story, Abraham and Sarah laughed when God said he would give them a son. What are some ways God's promises seem too good to be true in your life?**
- **God provided Abraham and Sarah with a promised child, even when it seemed impossible. What hopes do you have that seem impossible for God to manage?**

Applying

The grace God extends us through Jesus Christ changes everything about us, including our deepest hopes.

- **How does God's grace and love towards you change the way you view your deepest hopes and longings?**
- **What would it look like for you to take the next step in trusting God's grace towards you?**



2. ROMANS 5:1-11

JULY 3, 2016

Getting Started

- **Begin by sharing stories of God's grace.**

Invite folks from group to share their stories (see Intro for why we're sharing stories of God's grace throughout this sermon series). Take as much time as you like.

- **Read Romans 5:1-11**

Understanding

God loved us when we were his enemies. This core truth of the gospel eliminates everything we think we can do to earn God's favor, but because all attempts at earning God's favor are doomed to failure it also gives us an enduring hope in Christ.

- **What is Paul referencing back to when he says, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith..."?**
- **What reasons are there for the hope Paul mentions in Romans 5:4-5?**
- **What does Paul mean when he says we were "enemies" of God?**
- **How does being an enemy (or former enemy) of God help define his love for you?**

Evaluating

In Jesus we have an enduring hope and an assurance of peace with God, but often times we struggle to grasp this reality. At the root of these struggles are fears we have of God, or lies about him that we believe.

- **When do you struggle to feel peace with God?**
- **What are the fears or false beliefs that rob you of the hope we have in Jesus?**

Applying

By assessing the fears and lies that rob us of feeling the peace we have with God, we can begin to put these things away in favor of lasting hope and assurance.

- **What are some ways you would like peace with God and hope in Jesus to be more prominent in your life?**



3. JOHN 15:1-11

JULY 10, 2016

Getting Started

- **Please take some time during your gathering to pray for our nation and our communities regarding recent police shootings and racial violence. Pray that we would be peacemakers (Matt. 5:9), that we would mourn with those who mourn (Rom. 12:15), and that we would be compassionate towards our neighbors (Luke 10:25-37). See Appendix for alternate discussion questions about racial reconciliation.**
- **Begin by sharing stories of God's grace.**
Invite folks from group to share their stories (see Intro for why we're sharing stories of God's grace throughout this sermon series). Take as much time as you like.
- **Read John 15:1-11**

Understanding

Jesus Christ is the only true source of life. In this passage, Jesus uses the illustration of a vine and its branches to illustrate how the root, Jesus himself, sustains us.

- **How does the vine metaphor help explain Jesus' relationship to believers?**
- **What does it mean to "abide" in Christ?**

Evaluating

Just like Adam and Eve, we reflexively hide from God because of sin. Our sin produces guilt and shame that make us run from him, either because we fear him or because we feel unworthy (or both). But the love of God and the sufficiency of Jesus' death on our behalf blot out any reason we have to fear God.

- **When do you pull away from God and avoid intimacy with him?**
- **What scares you most about intimacy with God?**
- **What are the false beliefs that make you scared of intimacy with God?**

Applying

John 15:5 says we can't do anything on our own, including producing intimacy with God in our lives. But we can find hope in the fact that God, our Creator and our Father, produces it for us.

- **What effects might abiding in Christ have on your life?**
- **What are some ways verses 3-5 can give us hope in our pursuit of intimacy with God?**



4. PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

JULY 17, 2016

If you didn't get a chance last week, consider using the alternate questions we created to begin a conversation about racial reconciliation (see Appendix).

Getting Started

- **Begin by sharing stories of God's grace.**

Invite folks from group to share their stories (see Intro for why we're sharing stories of God's grace throughout this sermon series). Take as much time as you like.

- **Read Philippians 3:1-11**

Understanding

At first glance it seems like Paul is bragging about himself. In fact, Paul is making a bold claim to Jews who would read his letter: observing Mosaic Law (or any other method) doesn't make you right with God.

- **Why does Paul list out his qualifications here?**
- **What is Paul renouncing when he says "whatever gain I had I count it as loss"?**
- **What does it mean to be righteous?**

Evaluating

Everyone strives for self-worth in something. Often we direct this towards God and try to earn his approval. Other times we wallow in self-pity because we know we can't ever be worthy on our own. In both cases we need to trust the finished work of Christ on our behalf.

- **What need do you feel to be righteous or right with God?**
- **When do you feel dirty before God or feel like he's angry with you?**
- **What are some things you do to try to be right with God that don't work?**

Applying

Better than a "righteousness" of our own devising is the righteousness God offers us in Jesus. Resting in his finished work can help us be obedient; when we see his great love for us, we can respond in obedience.

- **How is "the righteousness from God that depends on faith" better than a righteousness of your own? How does that give you hope?**
- **How does knowing you are righteous only through Christ help you be obedient to God?**



5. 1 Peter 1:3-12

JULY 24, 2016

If you didn't get a chance two weeks ago, consider using the alternate questions we created to begin a conversation about racial reconciliation (see Appendix).

Getting Started

- **Begin by sharing stories of God's grace.**

Invite folks from group to share their stories (see Intro for why we're sharing stories of God's grace throughout this sermon series). Take as much time as you like.

- **Read 1 Peter 1:3-12**

Understanding

Peter starts off by encouraging persecuted believers to hope in eternity with God, and he reminds them that their eternity is secured by the mercy of God through the work of Jesus. This hope isn't a hope that fades or runs out, it's a "living hope" that stands with us when we face adversity. (1:3)

- **Take a look at verse 4. What inheritance is Peter talking about?**
- **What does Peter mean by "living hope" in verse 3?**

Evaluating

We all hope in something, but most often our hopes are weak. Either we hope in weak things that will fail us (like money or success or acceptance), or we have a lackluster or cynical hope in Christ. Peter here encourages us to a hope that never fails, that stands up to speculation, and is worth our whole life.

- **What role does hope play in your every-day life?**
- **What things do you typically hope for or find hope in?**
- **When does the hope of eternity with God seem most dear to you?**
- **When does eternity feel irrelevant to your life?**

Applying

Peter wrote this to encourage persecuted believers that eternity with God can get us through "various trials" that, in the view of cosmic eternity, last only "a little while." (1:6) Not only does this hope help us endure, it helps us prepare for faithful action in being obedient to God and proclaiming the gospel.

- **Look at verse 6. How does eternity with God give you hope when you're in the middle of "various trials"?**
- **Look at verse 13. How does the hope of eternity with God prepare us for action?**



APPENDIX – ALTERNATE QUESTIONS ON RACIAL RECONCILIATION

COLOSSIANS 3:11-17

Before you start

Many of us are hurting following recent shootings. Many of us are angry over the deaths of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, and the five Dallas police officers: Sergeant Michael Smith, Senior Corporal Lorne Ahrens, Officer Michael Krol, Officer Patrick Zamarripa, and Officer Brent Thompson. Many of us don't know what to feel or how to act. As you discuss this, please encourage your group members to be honest and caring towards one another. Community group is a safe place to bring your anger, sadness, or apathy into discussion. As the leader, please set a tone of respect for your members' feelings and patience when members fumble with difficult subjects. Pray for your meeting that "the peace of Christ [would] rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body." (Colossians 3:15)

Discussion Questions

- **How are you feeling after the shootings this month?**
- **Read Colossians 3:11-17.**
- **What about this passage is challenging to you in light of recent events?**
- **Paul says to put on love above all. How do we love our neighbors well during this time?**
- **How does the gospel address the divisions that exist in our society?**
- **What steps can we take to address our own racial assumptions or biases?**
- **Read Revelation 7:9-12 and 21:3-5.**
- **How do these passages give you hope?**

