



VINTAGE**CHURCH**

Renovate

Discussion Guides

JULY 31 – AUGUST 28, 2016

RENOVATE INTRO

God wants to change you no matter who you are. God wants to remake your death into life, your brokenness into wholeness, your sinfulness into obedience, your captivity into freedom. This applies to everyone; he wants to bring doubters and seekers from spiritual death into spiritual life, and he wants followers to be “conformed to the image of his Son.” (Romans 8:29)

Through July and into August we'll be looking at six people from scripture that are prime examples of God's transformative work. These folks were transformed *from* one thing and *to* another:

- Esther – from image to risky faith.
- Jonah – from self-righteousness to obedience
- Mary – from sexuality to adoration
- Peter – from cowardice to bold proclamation
- Paul – from anger to love

Throughout this sermon series, group discussion will focus on these six people specifically and the way God shows compassion and mercy towards his children in general. By this compassion God seeks to rid us of the things that lead us away from him and bring us into a joyful desire for him. Some other key elements of these series discussions are:

- God is active in our lives and the lives of those around us because he loves us immensely.
- Everyone has a need for renewal and transformation.
- God's grace is inexhaustible. He responds again and again to our cries of repentance.
- God is powerful enough to conquer anything in your life, and he relentlessly pursues you.
- We can't fix ourselves, but God can and he delights to do so.
- Our sin has been put to death in Christ. We don't have to keep re-earning our right standing with God; it was already won in Jesus and can never be lost.



1. ESTHER 1

JULY 31, 2016

Esther's story is an amazing Old Testament account of God's faithfulness and sovereignty. While folks like Esther are the main characters, God is at work behind the scenes placing specific people in specific places for the sake of his ultimate plan, to protect his people.

As we read, though, it can be hard for us to grasp what it felt like to be in the middle of the story because we know the end. We already know there's a happy ending; in the middle of the story, Esther didn't. In reading Esther we can relate to her as a person who didn't know what her future held, and we can be encouraged by her bravery, initiative, and faith to trust the Lord in our hardest times.

Understanding

- **Read Esther 1:1-22**
- **Can someone summarize the story of Esther for us?**
- **Esther was appointed to be queen of Persia, the largest empire in the world, because of her beauty. How might this have affected her attitude towards herself and her purpose in life?**
- **How did Haman's plot to destroy the Jews help clarify Esther's purpose in life?**

Evaluating

- **How do you think Esther and Mordecai felt while Haman's plot was unfolding?**
- **How do you relate to the individuals in this story?**

Applying

- **Later in the book, Mordecai speculates that Esther became the queen for "such a time as this." What special or coincidental circumstances has the Lord presented you with to glorify him?**
- **Even though God is in control of the situation, Esther and Mordecai still had a role to play and things to do. What kinds of actions might God be calling you to in the circumstances he's placed you?**



2. JONAH 1:1-3

AUGUST 7, 2016

Most of us know the story of Jonah. It's easy to get sidetracked by questions about the whale and miss God's intention for the whole book. Suffice it to say that an all-powerful God who invented the human respiratory system knows how to keep a guy alive in a whale's stomach for a few days.

In summary, God sent the prophet Jonah to Nineveh to preach repentance. Jonah resisted but found his resistance thwarted (swallowed) by God's plan. Eventually Jonah ended up in Nineveh. He preached an eight-word sermon and the whole city repented and believed in God. You might've expected him to be thrilled, "but it displeased Jonah exceedingly." (Jonah 4:1) What follows is an amazing contrast between Jonah's self-righteousness and God's mercy, between Jonah's hardheartedness and God's compassion, which calls us to join God in compassion towards those far from him.

Understanding

- **Read Jonah 1:1-3**
- **Can someone summarize the story of Jonah for us?**
- **Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh?**
- **How would you describe Jonah's actions throughout the story?**
- **How would you describe God's actions throughout the story?**

Evaluating

- **How does God address Jonah's lack of compassion towards the Ninevites?**
- **Who do you have a hard time being compassionate towards?**

Applying

- **How does the gospel change our hearts towards the people around us?**
- **What do we learn from Jonah about playing a part in God's plan to save people?**



3. Luke 7:36-50

AUGUST 14, 2016

In this section Luke sets up a convicting comparison between a "woman of the city" and a local Pharisee reminiscent of the prodigal son parable. On one hand you have a broken person seeking mercy and forgiveness; on the other, a haughty individual disturbed by the forgiveness the broken person receives.

As the audience, we can identify with both people when we realize we're no better than the sinful woman or the haughty Pharisee. In actuality our sin is greater than we could ever measure and more often than not we ignore that sinfulness and grow ungrateful towards God. But Jesus has forgiven us much so that we can love him much.

Understanding

- **Read Luke 7:36-50**
- **What would this moment in the Pharisee's house have been like?**
- **What was Simon's attitude towards this woman?**
- **What is Jesus teaching Simon through his parable?**

Evaluating

- **Who do you identify most with in this story?**
- **What do you find convicting about that?**
- **How does this help us understand the character of Jesus?**

Applying

- **How can we better understand God's forgiveness and extend forgiveness to others?**



4. JOHN 21:15-19

AUGUST 21, 2016

Peter was a bold dude. Throughout his career as a disciple he was bombastic, quick to speak, and headstrong. In John 6 he was the only person to climb out of the boat and walk on water with Jesus. Right before he got scared and started to sink.

We might not all be as headstrong as Peter, but we can relate to his oscillation between bold faith and crippling fear. In John 18 Peter attacks the people trying to arrest Jesus, and within a few hours is denying he ever knew Jesus. It's this denial that Jesus is addressing in John 21, though at the heart of it Jesus is calling Peter out of his fear and back into faith. Jesus is preparing Peter for faithful ministry, and eventually martyrdom (21:18). Instead of casting Peter aside because of his denial, Jesus commissions him for the work of the church. Likewise to the fearful, the downcast, and the traitor, Jesus says, "Follow me."

Understanding

- **Read John 21:15-19**
- **Can someone summarize the story of Peter's denial of Jesus?** (John 18:15-27)
- **Why did Jesus question Peter like this?**
- **How do you think Peter felt while Jesus was questioning him?**
- **Why did Peter deny knowing Jesus in John 18?**

Evaluating

- **What kinds of fear affect you the most?**
- **How do those fears affect your faith in Jesus?**

Applying

- **How does God respond to our fear and faithlessness?**
- **Why does Jesus tell Peter he "will stretch out [his] hands" at the end?**



5. Galatians 1:11-24

AUGUST 28, 2016

Paul is the epitome of a drastic conversion story. He watched while Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death. He drug men and women from their homes and threw them in prison for believing Jesus' words. He made it his mission to stamp out Christianity as it spread throughout the world.

But on his way to Damascus Paul was literally stopped in his tracks by the risen Jesus and converted to the beliefs he'd tried to exterminate. Jesus utterly changed everything about Paul's life, including (but not limited to) his life's purpose. Paul had made it his goal in life to eradicate Christianity, but Jesus instead commissioned him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Galatians 1:16). This is the work of God, to turn enemies into beloved children and to give them a part to play in his plan to redeem the world.

Understanding

- **Read Galatians 1:11-24**
- **What happened to Paul on the road to Damascus?**
- **What was Paul's purpose in life before his conversion?**

Evaluating

- **Read Philippians 3:3-11. What was Paul's attitude about his former life?**
- **What things do you try to find your purpose in aside from Jesus?**
- **How has God changed your motivations in life?**

Applying

- **Why did God choose Paul?**
- **How does your conversion uniquely situate you to make disciples?**

