



“The Beauty of the Cross” - Discussion Guide

This week's Communion service focused on the importance of examining ourselves before coming to the Lord's table. Drawing from 1 Corinthians 11:27-28, Justin emphasized that God doesn't require us to come perfect, but rather with humility and open hands, willing to be examined and cleansed by Him. The service highlighted the need for clean hands and pure hearts, not as something we achieve on our own, but as gifts received through Christ's sacrifice. Justin encouraged believers to start the new year by bringing whatever they're holding onto - attitudes, bitterness, disappointment, or sin - before God with open hands. Through communion, we remember Christ's body broken and blood shed for our forgiveness, allowing us to receive clean hands and pure hearts as gifts of grace. The service concluded with the reminder that our identity and hope rest not in our own righteousness, but in what Christ has done for us on the cross.

Intro Prayer

Father, as we gather together today, we come before You with grateful hearts for the gift of communion and the opportunity to remember what Christ has done for us. We ask that You would open our hearts and minds to receive what You want to teach us through this time together. Help us to approach this discussion with humility and willingness to be examined by You. Give us clean hands and pure hearts as we reflect on Your amazing grace. Guide our conversation and help us to encourage one another as we grow in our faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one new thing you're hoping to try or accomplish in this new year?

Key Verses

1 Corinthians 11:27-28

Psalms 139:23-24

Psalms 24:4

Matthew 5:8

Questions:

What does it mean to examine ourselves before taking communion, and why is this important?

The message mentioned coming to God with 'open hands' rather than trying to be perfect. What might you need to release or stop holding onto in your life?

How does the difference between earning clean hands and pure hearts versus receiving them as gifts from God change your perspective on your relationship with Him?

David prayed 'Search me, O God, and know my heart' in Psalm 139. What makes this kind of vulnerability with God both challenging and necessary?

Justin mentioned that attitudes like bitterness or disappointment can create distance between us and God or others. How have you experienced this in your own life?

What does it mean that Christ was the 'perfect lamb of God' sacrificed once and for all? How does this impact how you view your own sin and forgiveness?



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How can remembering Christ's sacrifice help us approach conflicts or difficult relationships, especially coming out of the holiday season?

In what ways can we maintain the heart posture of humility and examination throughout the year, not just during communion?

Life Application

This week, spend time in prayer asking God to search your heart and reveal any areas where you need His cleansing. Practice coming before Him with 'open hands,' releasing any attitudes, disappointments, or sins you've been holding onto. Consider writing down what you need to surrender and then pray over each item, asking God to give you clean hands and a pure heart in those specific areas.

Key Takeaways

God doesn't require us to come to Him perfect, but with humility and willingness to be examined and cleansed

Clean hands and pure hearts are gifts we receive from God through Christ's sacrifice, not achievements we earn

Communion is a time to remember Christ's body broken and blood shed for our forgiveness and restoration

We should approach God with 'open hands,' releasing whatever we're holding onto that creates distance between us and Him

Our identity and hope rest in what Christ has done for us, not in our own righteousness or efforts

Ending Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for this time of discussion and reflection on Your amazing grace. We are grateful that You don't require us to come to You perfect, but that You meet us where we are and offer us clean hands and pure hearts through Christ's sacrifice. Help us to live this week with open hands, surrendering to You anything that might create distance in our relationship with You or others. May we remember daily the gift of communion - Christ's body broken and blood shed for us - and let that truth transform how we live and love. Give us courage to examine our hearts and humility to receive Your grace. We pray this in the precious name of Jesus, Amen.