

2022 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

January 30

This week we continue to discover new insights from Pastor Aaron's sermon series, Fight with Faith. We will look over Revelation chapters 15 through 18. For the purpose of this study, we will focus on the themes from the sermon. You may want to prayerfully read through all four chapters for further study.

Community Prayer:

Lord, prepare our hearts to learn from the word you have given us in Revelation. We acknowledge that there is so much imagery and symbolism in these chapters that it can be hard to understand, but we ask you to enlighten our hearts and our minds as we read and share together. In Jesus' name, Amen

Opening Questions:

1. Have you ever heard a kid say, "that's not fair," when they didn't get their way and it made you chuckle? Share that with the group.
2. Have you ever read a passage in the bible and thought, "that doesn't seem fair?" If so, share it with the group.

Exploration: Judgement is a consistent theme throughout the bible. It is tempting to focus only on the love, grace and mercy of God while neglecting biblical themes like wrath and judgement. The same could be said for some people who seem to focus on wrath and judgement to the exclusion of love, grace and mercy. This is one of the key reasons why our study of the book of Revelation is so important. It reminds us that God is both merciful and powerful, loving and just.

Revelation 15:1-4

We see here in verse 3 a reference back to the song of "God's servant Moses...." This refers to a song God's people sang after they passed through the Red Sea and found safety and deliverance on the other side. (Deuteronomy 34) This amazing act of deliverance for God's people was also an act of judgement on those who opposed God. While one group sang joyful songs, the other group faced judgement from God.

"When the Bible speaks about God judging or putting into effect his judgments, it is just as much a cause for celebration as for anxiety."
-N.T.Wright



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3. What comes to mind when you think about the idea of judgement?
4. Share about a time when you experienced judgement that you didn't think was fair. How did you respond?
5. Share about a time when you experienced judgement that was deserved. How did you respond?

Revelation 15:5

When we think back about the temple throughout the bible, we know that it is a place of reverence and awe. This shows us that what is about to be revealed is solemn and holy.

"The wrath which the angels are about to pour out upon the earth is a pure and sinless wrath, priestly in its function and golden in its integrity. No bestial passion, no spite, no hate, no anger of sin at all in it."
-TF Torrance

God's response to the work of Satan isn't reactionary.

6. What would the world look like if there were no consequences for actions?

Chapter 16 takes us to the third in a series of judgments. We see the number 7 referenced here again just like in previous chapters (7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, 7 Bowls) Each of these represents judgment from a different perspective:

- 7 Seals - from the perspective of the suffering church
- 7 Trumpets - from the perspective of the world as it is being called to repentance
- 7 Bowls - from the perspective of the throne of God

There is a sense of finality as we reach the end of chapter 16. As we move into chapters 17 and 18 there is a review of who and what is being judged before looking to Jesus' triumphant return in chapter 19.

The final great image in the book is the marriage of the Lamb (Jesus) and his bride (the church) in a garden city, echoing but far transcending the union of Adam and Eve in the original garden. But here in Revelation 17 and 18 we see the revolting image of worship that has gone terribly wrong.



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Revelation 17:4-6

John is saying that outwardly she looks beautiful, but inwardly she is vile and disgusting. She is outwardly delightful but inwardly deceitful. It is no great mystery why it is so difficult to be a faithful follower of Jesus when there is so much attractive opposition.

7. Share about a time when you were impressed by the outward appearance or charisma of a person but discovered later that they were not a person of character. What impact did that experience have on you?

Revelation 17:13-14

It is here where we see God turning wickedness back on itself. We also see the collapse of what looked like it was so strong and reliable. It is the ultimate ruin that comes through vain hopes and empty promises.

8. What would you say are some of the main reasons people may have a hard time trusting God?
9. Has there been a situation where you had a difficult time trusting God? If so, what was it and how did you handle it? What have you learned since then about God's faithfulness?

Revelation 18:14-17

All the luxuries, everything money can buy is here judged to be an empty substitute for the provision of God to his faithful people. Everything the people thought would bring them security is turned to rubbish. This is a sobering reality that will help us stay strong and follow God faithfully.

10. What are some of the things that people tend to rely on today for safety and security, rather than trusting in God?
11. Can you think of anything that you are tempted to rely on for safety and security rather than trusting in God? If so, what are they and why?

This would be a good place to stop and take some time for prayer, surrendering those things to God. You might even invite one another to help provide accountability in the weeks ahead as you continue to put your trust in God.



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So, in light of all we have read, how do we remain faithful? What does it look like to fight with faith?

Live With Godly Fear

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Hebrews 10:30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people."³¹ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

12. What comes to mind for you when you hear the concept of Godly fear?

Godly fear causes us to evaluate our priorities and to keep them aligned with God's word. Godly fear keeps us humble in times of success and hopeful in times of struggle. Worldly fear is a fear of missing out, it's called FOMO! Worldly fear is being afraid of what's not really there, it's called paranoia. But Godly fear keeps us focused on what really matters!

Embrace God's Judgment Before You Face God's Judgement

1 Peter 4: 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?¹⁸ And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"¹⁹ So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

John 9: 39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

Judgment is a reality of our world and a reality of the future, and truthfully we all long for that deep in our souls. We want a fair court system that protects the innocent and prosecutes the guilty. However, we may not want it the way God has planned and that's why we need His help.

Do What's Right, Even When it Hurts

Romans 12: 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends,

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but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

13. Share about a time when doing the "right thing" was difficult or painful for you.

We can make all kinds of good excuses, for who gets grace and who doesn't. We say, "they deserve what they got" or "they don't deserve it, it's not fair." If we are not careful, we will believe the lie that says, "If I don't watch out for myself, who will watch out for me?" The truth is, God! God is watching out for us and we can hold on to our faith, believing that God is trustworthy.

The Takeaway:

- Live with Godly fear
- Embrace God's judgment before you face God's judgement
- Do what's right, even when it hurts