2026-11-15 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide
Based on: The Word of God, Baptism, and the Call to Authentic Faith
Overview

This sermon challenges believers to examine whether they are holding human tradition above the Word of God. Drawing from John 1, Matthew 3, and Romans 6, the pastor calls the church to rediscover a hunger for Scripture, an honest understanding of baptism, and a genuine, Spirit-called faith rooted in what the Bible actually says rather than what has simply been assumed or inherited.

Key Takeaways
Jesus is identified in John 1 as the Word made flesh, meaning when we read Scripture, we are encountering Christ himself.
Jesus submitted to baptism not because he needed to be saved, but because he said it was "proper" to "fulfill all righteousness" -- signaling that obedience to God's design matters.
The word translated "baptize" comes from the Greek word "baptizo," meaning to plunge or immerse. The New Testament never argues against baptism -- it assumes it.
Salvation is a calling of God to a searching or convicted heart, not simply a repeated prayer or a group event done out of social pressure.
Human tradition, even well-meaning religious tradition, can quietly displace the authority of Scripture in our lives without us realizing it.
A disciple is not just someone who follows, but someone who learns in order to pass on what they have learned to others.
Discussion Questions
Opening

When was the last time you got genuinely excited about something you discovered in the Bible? What was it, and did you share it with anyone?

The pastor described the tendency to "endure" church rather than engage with it. Have you ever experienced that? What made the difference in

seasons when the Word felt alive to you versus seasons when it felt routine?

Going Deeper

The pastor said, "The Lord will never tell me or you anything that disagrees with his word." How does that statement shape the way you evaluate your own feelings, impressions, or spiritual experiences?

John 1 describes Jesus as the Word who was with God from the beginning and through whom all things were made. How does thinking of Scripture as a direct encounter with Jesus -- rather than just a religious text -- change the way you approach reading it?

The pastor challenged the idea that we hold our traditions higher than the Word of God, even in church settings. Can you think of a belief or practice you have held simply because of tradition, without ever checking it against Scripture? What happened when you did examine it?

In Matthew 3, Jesus tells John that baptism is "proper" and necessary "to fulfill all righteousness." What does it say about Jesus that he submitted to something he did not personally need, simply because it was the right thing to do? What does that model for us?

The pastor made a distinction between someone who responds to God's genuine call and conviction versus someone who goes through religious motions because of social or family pressure. How would you describe your own experience of coming to faith? Was there a moment of genuine conviction?

The pastor said, "Every single thing that you've told us is a key that unlocks the door of our soul to set us free." What is one area of your life where you sense God's Word is still working to set you free, even after years of following Christ?

Reflection and Application

The pastor said a disciple follows in order to learn, and then goes to make other disciples. Who in your life could you share something with this week -- not preaching at them, but simply telling them what God has been doing in you?

He also said, "God's will done God's way will have God's blessing. Man's will done man's way won't necessarily have God's blessing." Is there an area of your life where you have been doing things your own way and calling it good enough? What would it look like to bring that into alignment with what Scripture says?

Practical Applications

Read with intention this week. Choose one chapter from the Gospels and read it slowly, asking: What does this show me about Jesus? What is he asking of me? Write down one discovery and share it with someone before the week is out.

Examine your assumptions. Pick one belief or church practice you have always accepted without question. Look it up in Scripture. Does the Bible support it directly, or is it rooted in tradition? Bring what you find back to the group next week.

Pray for conviction, not just comfort. Ask God to show you where you may be spiritually comfortable in a way that has stopped your growth. Invite his Word to penetrate those areas.

Be accountable. If there is a habitual sin or spiritual struggle you have been managing alone, consider asking one trusted person in this group to pray with you and check in with you regularly. The pastor pointed to the value of having someone walk alongside you.

Consider your story. If you have never been able to clearly describe a moment when God genuinely called you and you responded, take time this week to pray honestly about where you stand. Talk to your pastor or a trusted believer if you have questions.

Closing Prayer Prompt

Close your time together by praying specifically for:

A renewed hunger for the Word of God in each group member's life
Courage to share what God is doing with the people around you
Honesty about areas where tradition has replaced truth
Anyone in the group who is still wrestling with questions about their own faith and salvation

"Heaven and earth will disappear, but my word will last forever." -- Matthew 24:35 (paraphrased)