

Small Group Guide

More Than a Chair | Part 1

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This guide is designed to help your group go deeper into the themes from Sunday's message. The goal is not just to recap the sermon but to have honest, meaningful conversations about how these truths apply to your everyday lives. There are no wrong answers here. Be open, be real, and be ready to listen well.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The love of Christ is not just a theological concept. It is a compelling, life-reorienting force. Paul describes it in 2 Corinthians 5:14 as something that drives and constrains a person toward a new way of living.
 - The gospel does not only change how we see our own story. It fundamentally changes how we see the people around us. Grace transforms our perspective on others.
 - Every chair represents a name. Every name has a story. Every story matters to God. Therefore, every story matters to us.
 - Someone made room for you before you ever showed up. That act of faith and sacrifice is now your inheritance and your model.
 - The mission of the church is not about attendance, brand, or metrics. It is about real people finding the real Jesus who meets them exactly where they are.
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ICEBREAKER

Start here to warm up the conversation before diving into deeper discussion.

Think about a time someone made room for you, whether literally or figuratively. Maybe someone saved you a seat, included you in a group, or went out of their way to make you feel welcome. Share that memory with the group. What did it mean to you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Up the Passage

1. In 2 Corinthians 5:14, Paul says the love of Christ compels him. In your own words, what do you think it means to be compelled by something? What are some things that currently compel or drive the decisions you make day to day?
2. Paul explains in verses 14 and 15 that Christ died for all so that those who live would no longer live for themselves. What does it look like practically to stop living for yourself? What makes that genuinely difficult?
3. In verse 16, Paul says he no longer views people from a worldly perspective. How do you tend to size people up when you first encounter them? What categories or assumptions do you default to? How might a gospel-shaped perspective challenge those defaults?

Connecting to the Sermon

4. Pastor Mike described a previous generation of CenterPoint buying 600 chairs for a church of 300 people. They were making room for people they had never met. What does that kind of faith look like in your own life? Is there an area where God might be inviting you to prepare something for someone you have not met yet?
5. The sermon highlighted several "I am" statements of Jesus, including the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, and the true vine. Which of those resonates most with you personally right now, and why? Is there someone in your life who needs to hear one of those specific truths?
6. Pastor Mike said, "If you leave today and talk about how great CenterPoint Church was, we failed our mission. This church is not the hero; Jesus is." What do you think he meant by that? How does keeping Jesus as the hero rather than the church change the way we talk about our faith with people outside the church?
7. The sermon closed with this idea: someone made room for you, and now you have the opportunity to make room for someone else. Pastor Mike then challenged us to pray about how we can make room for someone else with the "More Than a Chair" campaign. Do you plan to join this call to prayer?

GOING DEEPER

These questions are for groups that want to push further into the biblical content.

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 together as a group. What words or phrases stand out to you? What questions does the passage raise?
- Paul says in verse 17 that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation, that the old has passed away and the new has come. How have you personally experienced that kind of renewal? Are there areas of your life where you are still waiting to see that newness take hold?

- The sermon referenced Romans 3 and Ephesians 2 in the context of sin, grace, and salvation through faith. If someone in your group is newer to faith, take a few minutes to walk through what the gospel actually is in your own words. Practice explaining it simply and clearly.
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PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Faith grows when it moves from conversation into action. Choose one of the following to put into practice this week.

1. **Pray by name.** Think of one or two people in your life who do not have a relationship with Jesus. Write their names down. Commit to praying for them specifically every day this week, asking God to open a door for a meaningful conversation.
 2. **Change your lens.** Each day this week, before you interact with people at work, school, or in your neighborhood, pause and remind yourself that every person you encounter has a name, a story, and a life that matters to God. Notice how that shift in perspective changes how you treat them.
 3. **Share your story.** One of the most powerful tools you have is your own testimony. Write out in two or three sentences how Jesus has changed your story. Practice saying it out loud so that when the moment comes, you are ready.
 4. **Pray about the mission.** As Pastor Mike asked on Sunday, spend intentional time this week asking God, "How would You have me help prepare a place for someone I have not even met yet?" Come back next week ready to share what you sensed God saying.
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CLOSING PRAYER PROMPTS

Close your group time in prayer. You might pray through one or more of the following:

- Thank God for the people who made room for you before you ever showed up.
 - Ask God to give your group his eyes for the people around you who are still searching.
 - Pray for the specific names that came to mind during your discussion.
 - Ask God to keep Jesus as the center and the hero of everything your group does together.
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MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

2 Corinthians 5:14 -- Reflect on Paul's declaration that the love of Christ is what compels and drives him. Consider writing it out and placing it somewhere you will see it throughout the week.