

Right Side Up in an Upside Down World: Week Two

Connect Group Guide - 10.28.26

Opening Prayer

Key Scripture

• **John 7:37-38; John 7:53 - 8:11**

Message Recap

This week's message challenged us to move beyond surface-level Bible reading and become true students of the Word. Using the story of the woman caught in adultery, Pastor Mike walked us through the historical and cultural context of the passage and called us to honestly examine whether we have truly left our life of sin - not just received forgiveness, but surrendered fully to Jesus.

Key Takeaways

- **Become a student of the Word.** Approach Scripture through observation, interpretation, and application, rather than casual reading.
- **Context helps us understand Scripture.** Pastor Mike connected John 7:53 with the Festival of Booths and Jesus' living water declaration in John 7:37.
- **Jesus followed the Law perfectly.** The religious leaders tried to trap Him with the Mosaic Law, but He honored it.
- **Recognize what remains unknown.** We do not know what Jesus wrote in the dirt. Scripture and historical context offer possibilities.
- **Grace calls us to leave sin behind.** Jesus did not condemn the woman, but He did not ignore her sin. He called her to leave her life of sin.
- **Forgiveness calls for surrender.** Receiving grace should lead to a changed life. Forgiveness without change calls us to examine our hearts.
- **A changed life bears fruit.** Look for love, joy, patience, self-control, kindness, and a desire to gather with God's people.

Discussion Questions

Opening Questions

Think about a time when you learned something new about a Bible passage you thought you already understood. What changed in how you saw that story or teaching?

Going Deeper:

1. Pastor Mike introduced three steps for studying Scripture: observation, interpretation, and application. Which comes most naturally to you, and which do you tend to skip? Why?
2. Read John 7:37-38 and Isaiah 55:1. At the Festival of Booths, what was Jesus declaring about Himself through His invitation to living water? How does this context change the way you read His words?
3. Read John 7:53 - 8:11. How do the Festival of Booths, the Sabbath, and the Mosaic Law help you see this story differently? What does Jesus reveal by honoring the law used to trap Him?
4. We do not know what Jesus wrote in the dirt. Read Leviticus 20:10 and Jeremiah 17:13, which Pastor Mike offered as possibilities. What might the accusers have been thinking? Why might the oldest have left first?
5. Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you" and "Go and leave your life of sin." Why are both statements necessary? What is missing when we hold on to only one?
6. Pastor Mike said, "We wanted forgiveness without the change. We wanted grace without surrender." Where have you seen this tendency in your own life or in church culture?
7. Pastor Mike asked whether we love what God loves: His church, His people, giving, sharing, and telling others about Jesus. How would you honestly assess your heart in those areas?
8. Pastor Mike expressed concern for people familiar with the Gospel who may hear, "depart from me, I never knew you." How can we make sure our faith is genuine, rather than merely familiar?
9. What does full surrender to Jesus look like in everyday life? Without requiring anyone to share specifics, discuss how we can recognize and release sin we are still holding onto.

10. Pastor Mike challenged us to close the gap between claiming to love God and living it out. What is one specific step your group could take together to help close that gap?

Practical Applications

This week, choose at least one of the following:

- **Study one passage deeply.** Pick one passage of Scripture and walk through all three steps - observation, interpretation, and application - before you read it again. Write down what you discover that you had not noticed before.
- **Reflect on living water.** Read Jeremiah 17:13 and Isaiah 55:1 in their full context. Sit with the image of Jesus as the spring of living water and write down what that means for an area of your life where you feel dry or stuck.
- **Name an area to surrender.** Identify one area where you have been seeking forgiveness without fully surrendering. Bring it honestly before God in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to convict and strengthen you.
- **Reconnect with someone.** Reach out to someone who has drifted from the church or from their faith. Not to lecture them, but simply to reconnect and let them know they are missed and loved.
- **Pray for your local area.** If your group meets in person, pray together specifically for your local area - that churches would be full not because of programs or facilities, but because believers are genuinely transformed and others can see it.

Prayer Requests & Closing

Close your time together by praying through these specific areas Pastor Mike lifted up:

- Gratitude for a Jesus who does not condemn us but paid for our sin with His own blood
- Honest conviction for any areas of sin not yet surrendered
- A renewed love for the church and for gathering together with God's people
- Burden for those who have never heard the Gospel
- A desire to live visibly and genuinely right side up in an upside down world

John 8:11 - "Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."