

PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF

Paul Tripp

HAPPY
NEW YEAR



Psalm 42

Small Group Discussion Questions

Ice Breaker: Preaching is a vital part of the church. In fact, it is one of our church's four pillars - Preaching the Authority of God's Word without Apology. As you look back at your life in Christ, who have been some of the most influential preachers in your life? Ask your Small Group Members to share what preachers (whether in the local church or radio or internet or reading) have most influenced their lives and how.

1. The most influential preacher in your life is not Pastor James or a radio preacher. Rather, it is you. No one is more influential to you than yourself because you are in a constant conversation with yourself. What kind of things are you constantly saying to yourself, whether mentally or verbally? If talking to yourself is so important, why is it often viewed as the act of a mentally unstable person? If you are to preach to yourself, how can you apply the Harvest Pillar of preaching the authority of God's Word without apology to yourself?
2. We are constantly analyzing our circumstances. Like a child that always asks why, we are continually attempting to make sense of our situation. But, as we come to conclusions, often our conclusions are different than those around us. Despite experiencing identical circumstances, our neighbor can interpret things differently. When have you experienced the same situation with someone and yet had a completely different interpretation? What causes the differing conclusion? What typically informs the way you interpret your circumstances?
3. Read Psalm 42:1-2. Things don't always work according to our plans. You may have experienced that truth this month or this week or today. We would never have planned these things for our lives and, like the psalmist, we wonder "when shall I come?" Even our best made plans fall apart. Looking back over the Christmas season, how did your plans work out? Where did your plans fall apart? How did you react when your plans didn't work out?
4. Read Psalm 42:3. When we encounter plans that fall apart, we often experience great inner turmoil. We look at life and we consider the "If only..." If only that person would have responded differently. If only this situation would have been better. If only I would have known that fact. If only... What are some of the big "If only's" in your life? How can "if-only-thinking" cause your spiritual life to stagger? What is the danger of focusing on the "If only's"?
5. Read Psalm 42:5. As Dr. Tripp pointed out, the turning point of preaching the Gospel to ourselves is hope. Everyone is searching for hope. Hope is the belief that the object of our desire can and will fix our problem. How does our "If only..." reflect the object of our hope? What are some of the things that people put their hope in? How can false hopes influence a person's life? Where have you been tempted to put your hope in things or people that ultimately won't fix your problems?
6. Read Psalm 42:11. Hope is not a location or a principle or a lesson. Hope is a person - Jesus Christ. The psalmist found this so important he said it twice - "Hope in God!" It is important that we understand the reality of our hope in Christ. He knows us, He is in control, and His rule is for our benefit. What causes us to think that Christ is distant and unconcerned about our circumstances? What causes us to doubt that God might not be able to do anything about our circumstances? What does it look like practically to put your hope in Christ?
7. There are two things we must continue to preach to ourselves. First we must remind ourselves of our identity as sinners. Though sin's power is broken, its presence still remains. Personally, we don't want to believe that we are really sinners (although we are okay believing it about others). Despite this, we must regularly tell ourselves that we are sinners. How does our culture and even some religions try to make us feel good about what God says is wrong? How do we try to convince ourselves that we aren't really sinful? Why do we have an easier time seeing other's sinfulness and not our own sin?
8. 2 Peter 1:3. Secondly, we must preach to ourselves a theology of grace. Though sin is still present, we are freed by God's grace. We must continually battle the lies of Satan when he tells us we don't have enough. Christ has supplied everything we need for victory. What happens when we believe that we can't have victory? What causes you to doubt that Christ's grace is enough for your victory? How would preaching the Gospel of sin and grace to yourself every day change this next year in your life?