



REDISCOVERING THE CROSS

SMALL
GROUP
GUIDE

March 7, 2021

A PORTRAIT OF THE UNSEEN GOD

HOW DID IT GO? (10 MINUTES)

REACHING UPWARD: GROWING IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- Spend time this week considering your active faithfulness to God by examining some of the recent choices you have had to make.
 - Begin by identifying some recent choices to examine, both big and small (every choice is an opportunity for worship).
 - Now think back through your decision-making processes: What did you consider when making your choices? How did your desire to be faithful to God impact how you considered your choices and, ultimately, the choices you made?
- Join your FPC family and commit to praying ten minutes a day from now until Easter. Consider using the resources FPC is providing by listening to the “FPC Houston Sermons” Podcast, which will lead you through a different prayer practice each week. You can find more information about this at our FPC Houston Lenten Discipleship Page: fpchouston.org/lent-discipleship-series
- Our next FPC Alpha will launch April 6 and continue until May 25. Begin praying the Lord would show you someone you could invite to join this spring’s Alpha experience. For more information, email Emmanuel Paulpeter (epaulpeter@fpchouston.org).

REACHING OUTWARD: INVESTING IN YOUR NEIGHBORS

- Spend time this week considering your active faithfulness to those God has placed in your life. Begin by identifying particular relationships to consider.
 - Think through what has been happening in the lives of each of those people.
 - What are their needs?
 - What are their fears?
 - What choices are they facing?
 - How might you support them in their choices?
- Is there a “Reaching Outward” practice from our previous weeks regarding advocacy and justice that you are going to continue participating in for the next few weeks/months? How can your group encourage you to this end?
- Spiritual Conversations Training:** Does sharing your faith with someone feel daunting? Do you feel guilty about not sharing your faith enough? Do you want to know how you can share your faith in ways that are simple, winsome and authentic? Join us for a two-week webinar (March 7 and March 21: 2–3:30 PM) to discuss the ways to have Spiritual Conversations within our circles of influence (even during a pandemic). The webinar will provide

practical ways to have spiritual conversations that lead people to the love of Jesus. To register visit, fpchouston.org/gospel-conversations.

REACHING BEYOND

- ❑ How is God stirring you to learn and grow from this passage?

HEAD (15-20 MINUTES)

Read aloud the passages for this week: **Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-25.**

1. How does Colossians 1:15-20 *link who Jesus is with what He does*? For example, how does Christ's status as the firstborn of all creation (v.15) and the firstborn from the dead (v.18) empower Him to reconcile all things to God (v.20)?
2. What does 1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-25 *tell us about God* by stating that "Christ crucified" is properly understood as "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (v.23-24)?

HEART (15-20 MINUTES)

1. We who have begun to grasp Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God may—consciously or unconsciously—may attribute that insight to our own intelligence and effort. But 1 Corinthians 1:24 reminds us that it is God's calling that enables our ability to understand who Christ truly is. *How does this reminder shape how you view your ability to know Christ? What should be your response?*
2. It is easy to fall into a narrow view of Christ as our personal Savior and to conceive of Him primarily by reference to our day-to-day experience of Him. This is valid and true but incomplete. Colossians 1:15-20 expands this narrow view by employing superlative, universe-encompassing language to describe this same Christ as the image of the invisible God (v.15)—the impetus, sustainer, and end-goal of every object, creature, and human being that ever has been, is now, or ever will be (vv.16-20). *How would your perspective and behavior change if you truly came to believe that the Christ of Colossians 1:15-20 is the same Christ of your day-to-day experience?*

HANDS (10 MINUTES)

REACHING UPWARD: GROWING IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- ❑ Commit to meditating on Colossians 1:15-20 over multiple days this week with the goal of seeking to understand the Christ who shows us the God we cannot see.
- ❑ Commit to meditating on Colossians 1:15-20 over multiple days this week with the goal of producing awe-struck, heartfelt praise to the colossal Christ who originates, sustains, and encompasses all things.
- ❑ Commit to meditating on 1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-25 over multiple days this week, asking God to reveal to you ways in which you value the wisdom and power of this world over the wisdom and power of God.
- ❑ Join your FPC family and commit to praying ten minutes a day from now until Easter. Consider using the resources FPC is providing by listening to the "FPC Houston Sermons" Podcast, which will lead you through a different prayer practice each week. You can find more information about this at our FPC Houston Lenten Discipleship Page: fpchouston.org/lent-discipleship-series

HEAD

Observe the text and the author's main points.

HEART

Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

HANDS

Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for practical ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others.

- ❑ Our next FPC Alpha will launch April 6 and continue until May 25. Begin praying the Lord would show you someone you could invite to join this spring's Alpha experience. For more information, email Emmanuel Paulpeter (epaulpeter@fpchouston.org).

REACHING OUTWARD: INVESTING IN YOUR NEIGHBORS

- ❑ 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 indicates that God's call is the predicate to someone coming to recognize Christ as the power and wisdom of God. Commit to praying over multiple days this week that God would call someone you know who doesn't know Jesus to a recognition that He is the power and wisdom of God.
- ❑ 1 Corinthians 1:23 indicates the fundamental message of Christians is Christ crucified—that is, the sacrificial love of God. Seek to convey the sacrificial love of God, whether in word or in deed, to someone this week as an action taken in faith to follow in the steps of Christ.
- ❑ Colossians 1:19-20 indicates that two of the fundamental works of Christ are reconciliation and peace. If it is within your power to reconcile with another or bring peace to a situation this week, seek to do so as an action taken in faith to follow in the steps of Christ.
- ❑ **Spiritual Conversations Training:** Does sharing your faith with someone feel daunting? Do you feel guilty about not sharing your faith enough? Do you want to know how you can share your faith in ways that are simple, winsome and authentic? Join us for a two-week webinar (March 7 and March 21: 2–3:30 PM) to discuss ways to have Spiritual Conversations within our circles of influence (even during a pandemic). The webinar will provide practical ways to have spiritual conversations that lead people to the love of Jesus. To register visit fpchouston.org/gospel-conversations. If you missed the first week, no problem. Email Reverend Emmanuel Paulpeter (epaulpeter@fpchouston.org) for information on the first week and then join us for the second week.

NEIGHBOR

Anyone in your life—whether a friend, colleague, family member, classmate, or literal neighbor—to whom you can show God's love.

OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

- ❑ **Main Street Ministries, Operation ID (OPID) Volunteers Needed**
OPID is building capacity to serve more clients. Sign up for one shift a week and be a part of a caring community that is helping our under-resourced community remove barriers and make steps to stability. For more information about each role and available dates, please email Carrie Sadler at csadler@msmhouston.org.
- ❑ **Houston Welcomes Refugees Online Volunteer Orientation**
Thur | Mar 11 | 7–8 PM
At orientation, we will go over some basic information on the refugee resettlement process, why we exist as an organization, and how you can partner. To RSVP visit fpchouston.org/ongoing-mission-opportunities.

REACHING BEYOND

- ❑ How is God stirring you to put this passage into practice?

