

ELEVATE: Your Vision of God

Session #2: From Surfer to Saviour

Session Objective: The objective of this session is to help the students to understand the importance of their need for a Saviour. Juxtapose the concept of “surfer dude” – easy going, all accepting – with the concept of Jesus as Saviour. There is the common assumption out there that says “God’s okay with my sin”. We have made God’s grace into a flippant acceptance of our sinfulness. But that is not what we discover to be reality of our sin and our need for salvation. Christ’s sacrifice on the cross was a costly and all encompassing sacrifice. God sent His Son to earth to pay a price none of us could pay. The consequence of not being able to pay the price required of God’s holiness is eternal separation from God – hell. There is not found within Biblical scriptures any sense that God is okay with our sin. This session is meant to assist the student in the discovery that God is not a surfer, “dude, that’s cool” but is in fact our Saviour who radically forgives us.

Minimum Prep: Read through the entire session outline. Prepare an environment where discussion can occur.

- Produce enough copies of Genesis 3:1-7 on paper so that every student can have a copy. Provide pens, or crayons for them to use.

Extended Prep:

- Communion would be an excellent follow up to this session, either this week, or planned as a special exercise next meeting. The reality that Jesus is our Saviour who saves us from the deadly consequences of sin is really overwhelming, and communion is such a strong way to bring that reality to life through symbolism.
- Shawshank Redemption (it is R rated) Red, a 40 year inmate stands before the parole board and talks about his regret over his lost years. (2:05:30-2:07:32). The session does not integrate this clip, but you could use it to talk about the consequences of sin, and regret.

Session Outline

Leader Preamble:

We've all seen the TV show "The Simpsons". I don't know much about Matt Groening (the creator and primary writer for the show), but he has a habit of addressing some pretty important topics, often dealing with Christianity. Most people think that the only way the Simpsons deal with Christianity is to make fun of Ned Flanders – the annoying evangelical Christian who lives next door. But in fact, we often can learn some important things from the Simpsons. A few years ago there was an episode where Homer injures himself on church property and sues the church. The church doesn't have the money to pay him so they are ordered to hand over the deed to the church. Homer turns the church into a swinging men's club. All of his cronies come over and have a huge party. Homer plays air guitar with the cross, drinks beer out of the communion chalice and breaks up all the pews for firewood. As the smoke from his unholy barbeque rises to the heavens, Marg asks in a worried voice: "Aren't you worried that you might be tempting the wrath of the Almighty?" Homer replies nonchalantly: "No. I think God's cool with it." "I don't think He is" replies Marg. At that moment, dark clouds gather over Springfield and it begins to rain heavily. "See, Marge! God is blessing us with a beautiful rain shower of heavenly goodness!" Just then a giant lightening bolt streaks out of the clouds and zaps Homer in the mouth. The rain continues on for days and the whole town is flooded until the few remaining survivors are huddled up on the Church roof. The town decides that the flood has been caused by Homer's sin and they offer to drown him to appease God and spare the town. Do you remember what happened then? God sent Rev. Lovejoy to spare Homer and to repent on behalf of the town. It turned out that God wasn't cool with their sin and that in the end a Saviour was required to set things right.

Sometimes I wonder whether we think "God's cool with it" when it comes to sin. The Bible says He isn't. The Bible says that sin concerned Him so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross to deal with things once and for all.

Today's session is titled "From Surfer to Saviour" because it seems that many people think that God is more like a Surfer, "Dude, that's cool", than He is a Saviour who has provided a very costly, and very amazing gift.

Small Group Questions:

- 1. Has anyone ever done something to you that was really wrong?
While you may not want to share what they did...how did it make you feel?**

Read Genesis 3:1-7

2. Each person take a moment and circle the words that the serpent used to plant doubt in the woman's mind about the reason behind God's command. As a group share which words you circled and why.
3. Satan planted doubt in the mind of Eve regarding God's character. What did the serpent say that was doubt giving and was it true?

Leader's Note: vs. 5 – Satan is basically saying “God is holding out on you” and that when you eat of the fruit, you will be like God.

Read Romans 7:11

4. What is it that “sin” does to us according to this verse? What is the end result?

Read Genesis 3:8-13

5. Not much has changed since Adam and Eve. The devil still tries to get us to doubt God's commands, His person, and His motivation. We still suffer unhappy consequences from wrong choices and then try to excuse our wrong choices. What are some of the excuses we give for our sinful actions?

Leader's note: some answers could potentially include: blaming others, saying “I didn't know it was wrong; claiming we had no choice, explaining that it wasn't really wrong in our case, justifying that what we did wasn't as bad as what someone else did. Point out that in Gen. 3 Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent. Someone else besides “me” is always guilty!

Read Deuteronomy 32:4

6. What do we learn about God's character and person through this verse?

Leader's Note: Say something like this (taken from Josh McDowell's Right from wrong curriculum) “God's nature and character define truth. God defines what is right and what is wrong. But truth is not something that God decides – it is something God is. The reason some things are right and some things are wrong is because there exists a Creator God and He is a righteous God. Truth is found in fearing God and looking to his nature and character as a measure of truth and morality.

7. Based on what we have discovered in Question 6, what about unintentional sin? Sometimes we do things we really didn't know was wrong. Are we still to be held accountable even for things we didn't know about?

Leader's note: Have the students research Leviticus 5:17

Read John 3:16-21 and I Peter 1:18-19

- 8. What was God's solution for the dilemma that is the result of God's holiness and purity, and humanity's sinfulness?**

Read Romans 3:21-26

- 9. Vs. 22 says that righteousness is not based on following the law, but rather through the means of faith in Jesus Christ. How do you think that God's solution of the willing sacrifice of his sin makes atonement for our sins?**

Leader's Note: This is obviously a huge question with complicated theological answers. But it is also a good question for the students to chew on...how is it that God's justice is satisfied and God's wrath is appeased? How is it that our faith in Jesus Christ is the only way that we can experience salvation?

Leader Note: Contact Rob McAlpine at compass@baptist.ca or Darren DeGraaf – darren@baptist.ca with any thoughts or questions suggestions.

Comments and Feedback:

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.