

## **The Purpose of Grace Growth Groups:**

Growth Groups help you take your next step with God by developing meaningful friendships built around God's Word. As we connect with one another and with God's Word, incredible things take place and we naturally grow. In community, this growth occurs through 4 primary activities:

### **We SHARE Life**

Each week we'll take time to connect and share what is happening in our lives. This will become more natural as we begin to feel more comfortable with one another. Sharing life and accepting each other is essential to the healthy relationships needed for growth groups.

### **We STUDY God's Word**

Each week we'll study the previous week's sermon text, though we will not rehash the sermon. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. Accountability to God's Word is transformational and brings spiritual growth in our lives. We also take time to seek God in prayer for relevant needs and issues present in our group.

### **We SUPPORT Each Other**

Each week we'll learn how to care for one another as Christ instructed us. People who know each other well, care for each other well. This care will take many forms, such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging, accountability, advice, and meeting real needs.

### **We SERVE Together**

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. Jesus reminds us that the world will know we're his disciples by our love. The role each member fills in serving one another and the local community is essential; for we were created to serve others, not ourselves. Throughout the semester, we will serve the other members of our group and together the group will serve the local community through one service project.

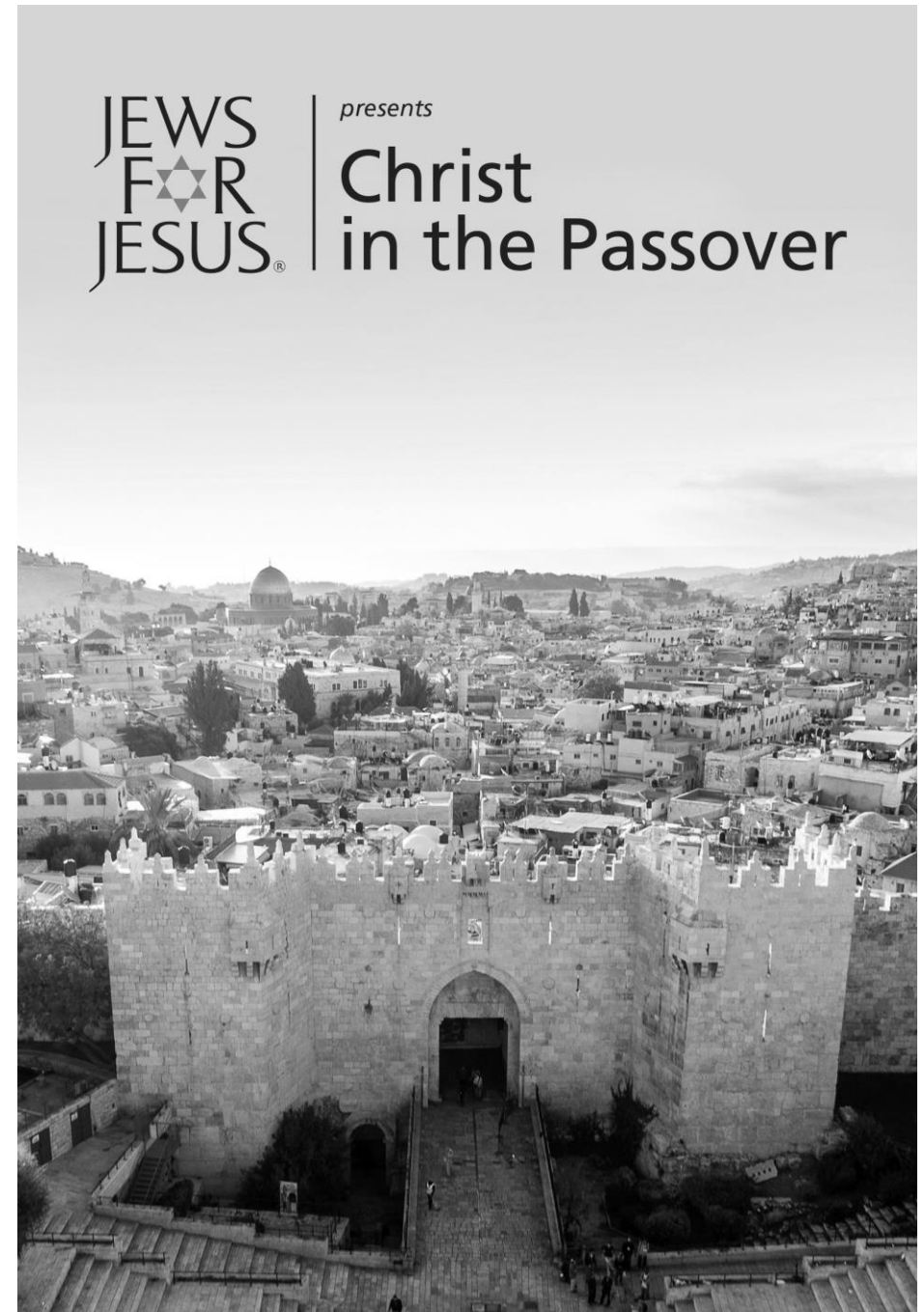


MESSAGE SERIES:

Message #:

Sermon Text:

Bob Mendelsohn  
Grace Evangelical Church  
March 25, 2018



## Growth Group Guide For the week of March 25th, 2018

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### Spring Growth Group Information:

- **Today begins the tenth week of our Spring Semester of Growth Groups.** Each semester lasts for 15 weeks. Sunday's mark the beginning of each new week.
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### **MY STORY:**

1) If tonight were your last night on earth and you had to choose one last meal, what would it be? Don't forget to include appetizers and desserts!

Every one has a favorite meal or food, so try to use this question to get the more quiet group members to talk.

2) Many significant moments in our lives involve or revolve around food or meals. What meal has become a tradition in your family?

People will probably mention Thanksgiving or Christmas meals. But there might be some fun food traditions that are a bit off the beaten path. For instance, Pastor Darrell has shared that on the eve of each of their girl's birthdays, Tammie fixes the same supper the family had the night before each of their girls were born. Some families like to have pie on March 14<sup>th</sup> (3.14). Try to dig a little; I'm sure your group will come up with some interesting food traditions.

### **DIGGING DEEPER:**

1) What part(s) of the Seder Meal stood out to you? What part(s) of the meal was most noteworthy to you in symbolizing Christ?

These will be personal answers.

Hopefully your group will have no probably coming up with at least one thing that clearly represents Christ in the meal.

2) In Exodus 12 we read the instructions God gave the Israelites regarding the Passover meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Each household was required to remove all leaven from their dwelling places before participating in the Passover meal. What does an "unleavened" life look like in today's culture and what kind of sacrifices does it take?

1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Colossians 3:12-17 are two good passages to spring board a discussion in regards to this question.

3) Please take time to read Jeremiah 31:31-34. How does this prophecy relate to the Passover meal and what Christ spoke of at the Last Supper? (Matt 26:26-30) How would the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy been significance to the first believers? Significant to today's followers of Christ?

b. I will make a new covenant: God announced that at a time future to Jeremiah's day He would make a new covenant. This new covenant would first be with Israel, but it would be not according to the covenant that God made with Israel in the Sinai desert.

i. Throughout the Bible, God reveals His plan of redemption through a series of covenants. After the extended story of the fall and ruin of humanity in Genesis 1-11, the story of the covenants begins.

• The Abrahamic Covenant promised to Abraham and His covenant descendants a land, a nation, and a blessing to extend to all nations (Genesis 12:1-3)

• The Mosaic or Sinai Covenant gave Israel the law, the sacrifices, and the choice of blessing or curse (Exodus 19)

• The Davidic Covenant that promised an everlasting dynasty, a perfect ruler, and the Promised Messiah (2 Samuel 7)

• God's plan of redemption through the covenants is completed and perfected in the New Covenant. Over the span of Old Testament passages that announce the new covenant (especially Ezekiel 11:16-20, 36:16-28, and 37:21-28), we see the promises of gathered Israel, of cleansing and spiritual transformation, and the reign of the Messiah.

ii. "The promise relates to a 'new covenant' and is a prediction of a radical change in God's economy (i.e., his dealing with humanity)." (Feinberg)

**iii. Jesus specifically instituted this new covenant by His death on the cross, and He specifically instituted the recognition and remembrance of it with the bread and cup of communion (Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20). It was future to Jeremiah's day, but it was put into effect by Jesus and specifically by His work of atoning sacrifice at the cross.**

iv. The writer to the Hebrews quotes this passage and develops the theme of the new covenant, especially in contrast to the old (Hebrews 8:8, 8:13, 9:15, and 12:14).

c. My covenant which they broke: A new covenant was promised and needed because Israel did not and could not keep the covenant God made with them at Sinai. That covenant was not designed to be enough; it was preparation for the new covenant to come.

i. "The old covenant had taken a new lease of life in Jeremiah's early days, when the lost 'book of the covenant' was found and read and reaffirmed, to become the blueprint of Josiah's continuing reformation. Yet everything that we have read in Jeremiah confirms that 'the law made nothing perfect', for the response was skin-deep, and died with the death of Joshua." (Kidner)

d. I will put My law into their minds, and write it on their hearts: The new covenant brings inner transformation. The law of God was no longer only external; God would change the minds and hearts of those connected to Him by the new covenant.

i. The new covenant does not do away with or renounce the law. It makes the law closer and more important by setting it in the mind and heart, instead of on a stone tablet or page. "It would no longer be like the external one made with the fathers, but spiritual and internal, and based on an intimate knowledge of Jehovah." (Morgan)

ii. "Obedience to the Law is not a prior condition for entering the New Covenant. Rather, it is one of the promised blessings of the New Covenant." (Ryken)

iii. "Things required by the law are bestowed by the gospel. God demands obedience under the law: God works obedience under the gospel. Holiness is asked of us by the law: holiness is wrought in us by the gospel." (Spurgeon)

iv. Here, the heart is written upon in a good, positive sense. "The heart as a writing material is spoken of in Jeremiah 17:1 in relation to sin." (Thompson)

e. I will be their God, and they shall be My people: The new covenant brings new relationship with God. Those connected to God by the new covenant have personal, close relationship with God that they did not have before: they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

i. Notably, this relationship with God had a personal aspect (they all show know Me). "Probably the most significant contribution which Jeremiah made to religious thought was inherent in his insistence that the new

covenant involved a one-to-one relationship of the spirit. When the new covenant was inaugurated by the atoning work of Jesus Christ on Calvary, this important development of personal, as opposed to corporate, faith and spirituality was made real for the whole of mankind. Henceforth anyone who submitted himself consciously in faith to the person of Christ as Saviour and Lord could claim and receive membership in the church of God.” (Harrison)

f. I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more: The new covenant brings true cleansing from sin. The sacrificial system under the old covenant could only cover sin and its guilt; the new covenant brings forgiveness so complete that it could be said that God no longer remembers the sin of those connected to Him through the new covenant.

i. “The new covenant does not envision sinlessness but forgiveness of sin resulting in restoration of fellowship with God.” (Feinberg)

#### Significance for the first believers:

This would have been significant to the first believers because they had lived so long under the Mosaic Law written on tablets, but now they were living by a new law, one that was written upon their hearts as prophesied by Jeremiah. How strange it would have been for them to step out from under the burden of all the rules and regulations and step into the freedom Christ offered through His sacrifice and new covenant. No longer would they be required to make animal sacrifices like their ancestors did for so many generations, but now they could go directly to God without need of a human priest.

#### **TAKING IT HOME:** (These will all require personal answers)

1) In Exodus 12:1-2 God radically changed the Israelite’s calendar.

How has Christ changed your “calendar” since coming into your life? As a Christian, or since becoming a Christian, how have your priorities changed when it comes to how you invest your time?

2) How do you view communion after watching the Seder meal?