

## Small Groups – Monday Night

Thoughts for discussion:

Fairy tale Gospel (reward Gospel, i.e. it's all about heaven, if you do the right thing, you'll live happily ever after.)

Retribution/revenge Gospel (fear of Hell as main motivation; If God is with me, he must be against my enemies)

Elevation Gospel (we are God's blessed, chosen people that's why we're on top, and/or if we follow God's word, we can look down on others)

Transaction/Deposit (if you do X God will Y)

Prosperity Gospel (God is going to bless me with material things if I am Godly)

About these different viewpoints: What do you believe? What are the holes in some of these theories? Can you think of Biblical examples that contradict them? Joseph? John the Baptist? Jesus? Moses (not entering the promised land).

What exactly is the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Brian McLaren says:

A lot of people think the purpose of Jesus coming to Earth was to help us get to heaven after we die. I'd like to raise some serious questions about that, based on the New Testament. I'd like to suggest Jesus didn't come here to teach us how to get to heaven after we die primarily, he came to tell us how the kingdom of Heaven can happen here on earth, while we're here, and while our children and grandchildren are here. Maybe what we should do is get Jesus to edit the Lord's Prayer to sound more like the way we think. It should say, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. May we go to heaven after we die. May we leave here and go to your kingdom in heaven, which is unlike earth, because there, your will is done." But that's not what the Lord's Prayer says. It says, "May your kingdom come here. May your will be done down here on Earth as it is in Heaven." A very different understanding of what Jesus is about when we see his message centered on the kingdom.

Do you agree? Do you disagree? Why?

How do you reconcile the times where people were faithful and were prophets and they experienced some challenging things in their lives.

What is the point? If it's not to get rewarded, get stuff, get blessings, why are we in relationship with God? (hint for leader DON'T NECESSARILY SAY

THIS, try to see where the group goes: it's about love and bringing about the Kingdom here and now and about "thy will be done ON EARTH as it is in heaven")

What are some ways that God guides/calls/nudges people?

What are some ways or practices that you think will help you be open to God's guidance?

Group leader: write down responses of these ways to be open and the what is the point question on butcher paper for potential use in closing.

- Someone will come to lead your group back into the assembly hall. Remind your group that this is a quiet time and they need to remain in a worshipful mode as we go back into the assembly hall.