

Small Group Discussion Questions

Spirit and Truth: Rediscovering Christian Worship

These questions are designed to invite group reflection on today's Bible passage and life application of the themes introduced in today's sermon.

Week 10: Praise and Glory

Revelation 7:9-17

1. Recall a time you read a book or watched a TV program or movie that was suspenseful, and you weren't sure it would end well. Did you skip ahead to make sure it had a happy ending?
2. Do you think of your life as a story? Do you expect it will have a happy ending? Why or why not?
3. Who is the human author of Revelation? What are his personal circumstances as he writes? What are the political circumstances of his world, and how do they affect the church? Given the circumstances, should John be optimistic or pessimistic?
4. The two main occupying powers of the Bible – Babylon (Old Testament) and Rome (New Testament) had similar belief systems. What were some of their key common features? If either was your belief system, would you have reason to expect a hopeful future for the human race?
5. Consider the dominant, non-Christian “stories” of our culture (e.g., secular popular culture, secular natural science and secular history). What do they profess to believe about the end of human life, the trajectory of human history or the ultimate future of this world? How do these “stories” compare to the myths of the ancient Romans and Babylonians?
6. If any of the above myths or stories represented your world view, what would you conclude about the time we're living in right now – based on the evidence, could you expect your life to have a happy ending?
7. The Bible, though consisting of many individual stories, tells one big story. What are its four main movements? Does it have a happy ending?
8. What happens to the Apostle John in Revelation? What are some of the things he witnesses in today's passage? Who does he testify presides over heaven and earth? Who surrounds the throne? What are they doing?
9. Sometimes we think “praise” is a diversion or distraction from the productive things we could be doing. How does John's vision of the praise of heaven correct that thinking?
10. How does a Christian worship service parallel the themes of the Bible? Does the service tell a story? What are the movements of that story?
11. How do the movements of the Christian worship inform the way we view a world that others might consider hopeless?
12. How does the regular discipline of praise equip us with a story that our pessimistic neighbors, friends and associates need to hear?

Pray: For God to be praised in our worship and our world; for God's hopeful story to permeate our whole lives.