

## BIG IDEA: THE CROSS CALLS US TO DISCIPLESHIP.

**KICKING IT OFF:** Easter is next week. Discuss what Easter has typically looked like for you over the years or as you were growing up.

### KEY SCRIPTURES:

**1 Corinthians 1:18** *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

**John 10:18** *"No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*

**1 Corinthians 1:20-21** *"Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those*

*who believe."*

**Ephesians 2:14-16** *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility."*

*Call to Discipleship*



### DISCUSSION:

1. Discuss what comes to mind when you hear the phrase "the cross".
2. Despite the centuries that have passed since Jesus' death on the cross, and the continued attempts to destroy, discredit and deny the deity of Christ, His resurrection and even of the existence of God, the message of the cross is alive and well in the world today. How do you explain this?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18. In this passage, the apostle Paul divides humanity into two groups: 1) those who are perishing, and 2) who are being saved. You're either moving toward God in all that is good, noble and holy or you are moving other way. How does this demonstrate the power of the Cross?
4. How did the event of Jesus' death and resurrection set this in motion?
5. Read Jesus' words in John 10:18. Jesus insists in this passage that no one is taking His life from Him, but that He is giving it willingly, at the command of the Father. What does this tell you about the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 1:20-21. Discuss where you see the "wisdom of this world" at work in our culture today?
7. In what ways do you currently see the message of the cross being on display as "foolishness"?
8. Utilizing Paul's dividing line in 1 Corinthians 1, would you say that you see Christ's message as a foolish one or a powerful one?
9. Read Ephesians 2:14-16. Discuss the irony that Christ's sacrifice on the cross destroyed one dividing line, and created another.
10. The cross of Jesus Christ has often been characterized as the Great Exchange where our guilt was exchanged for His innocence, His death for our life. Knowing Christ did this on your behalf, that you might have life, abundant and full, how has/does this impact your life from day to day?

**WRAPPING IT UP:** Who do you know that needs to hear the message of the cross? Name them, pray for them in your group, and invite them to next week's Easter services.

**PRAYER FOCUS:** Pray for the powerful message of the cross to be on display at our Easter service

and for many to be reconciled to God as a result.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*  
**1 Corinthians 1:18**



## **BIG IDEA: HOPE IS NOT A THING, IT'S A PERSON – JESUS.**

**KICKING IT OFF:** What are the things you find yourself most hoping for?

### **KEY SCRIPTURES:**

**Psalm 147:11** *"The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love."*

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** *"God has also set eternity in the human heart."*

**1 Corinthians 15:1-10** *"Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas and then to the Twelve. After that, he*

*appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."*

**1 Timothy 6:17** *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."*

**1 Corinthians 15:1** *"Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand."*

### **DISCUSSION:**

1. Read Psalm 147:11. We never outgrow hope. As children, we hope for certain gifts around the Christmas tree, to be picked for the "team", to have good friends. As we grow, our hopes change; we hope to get into that college, to land that job, to get the girl or guy of our dreams, to have a great house and great kids. Discuss the difference between hoping for something and putting your hope in someone.
2. A NY times author once wrote of those seeking and achieving celebrity fame: "One of the funny things was that after they got famous, if anything, they were more unhappy, angry, and mean than they had been before, because that giant thing they were striving for, that fame thing that was going to make everything okay and was going to provide them with fulfillment and happiness, had happened, and nothing changed. They were still them." How have you experienced hoping for a desired outcome, but then finding that nothing had changed and you were still you?
3. Read Ecclesiastes 3:11. Discuss this quote from Soren Kierkegaard: "If there were nothing eternal in a man, he could not despair" What do you think he means?
4. Desmond Tutu famously said, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness." How does eternity being set in our hearts cause us to hope when things are most dark?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-10. The apostle Paul is laying out the Gospel of Jesus' salvation, that which brought hope to the people of Corinth. How has/does this message bring hope to you?
6. Read 1 Timothy 6:17. How does hope in God bring more satisfaction than earthly wealth?
7. 1 Corinthians 15:1. Paul is essentially reminding believers that it is the Gospel in which we place our hope. Do you find yourself relying on that hope or do you struggle with putting your hope in other things?

**WRAPPING IT UP:** Take some time to pray for one another; that you would put your hope in God and Him alone.

**PRAYER FOCUS:** Pray for the many across the

world who have put their hope in Jesus for the first time this Easter.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love."* Psalm 147:11