

Life Group Notes 4/28/2024

Pastor Victoria Adewumi

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Victoria Adewumi has raised this week, 4/28. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On Romans 1 and "One nation under God."](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

Victoria began speaking of her expectations for this day based on God's promise. Look up Isaiah 55:8-11 [8](#)"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. [9](#)"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. [10](#)For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return without watering the earth, making it bud and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat, [11](#)so My word that proceeds from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please, and it will prosper where I send it.

1. What is the promise? What is it based on?
2. How often does it rain? What is the result? How does your lawn look today compared to a couple weeks back? Why?
3. What expectations does this promise from Isaiah evoke?
4. What did you learn from Victoria's message? Were her expectations met?
5. Do you have any new expectations/thoughts that were new to you?

Victoria declared that this day she would reveal God's heart to us for the stranger, the immigrant and the sojourner.

1. Why did she exhort the congregation to not panic?
2. With careful, cautious consideration, answer honestly: Did that declaration evoke any emotion in you?
3. Was it favorable or unfavorable? Is it possible to be neutral?

4. She says, "We do not preach politics. We do not preach news..." Why is that comforting? Do you "...get enough of that from outside," as she said?
5. How does the preaching of Jesus in troubled times prevent a negative response? How does a biblical agenda trump a political agenda every time?
6. She says, "We have a biblical agenda where you receive everything He has for you." Look at verse 10 from above. What can you expect to see in your own life with a biblical agenda?
7. When Jesus is in first place in all our consideration, what are we looking for specifically?
8. What happens when he falls out of first place? Do you have a testimony?
9. Victoria's stated agenda is for us to "...fall in love with the person of Jesus Christ." How does one promote that agenda?

Victoria, the missions pastor at Grace, says that we are a country comprised of many nations. "My story is different from yours. I come to you with the perspective of a proud, first generation American. My parents immigrated to these United States before I was born. That is a family story. My immigration story is different from yours. We are a country made up of many countries. We have many narratives and many personal issues. I think it is a Spirit ordained thing that we come together as one nation under God."

1. What are your thoughts?
2. What is your and your family's "immigration story?" How did you come to be here?
3. How remarkable in human history is the United States of America?
4. What does it take to make this "...One Nation under God?"

"And," she continues, "you have entrusted me with the strategy for the needy the lost the broken. When we talk about these folks, we remember that we were they at one point as well. In the family of God we were given sonship and daughterhood freely. We then extend our faith to those around us."

1. Victoria speaks of the quantity of news around us. How do we respond?
2. How has the news impacted us directly, here in NH?
3. How has it impacted the peace in your own family?
4. How do we reconcile God's call to reflect God's compassion toward the stranger?
5. How do we reflect our compassion for the stranger maintaining our concerns for justice and security?

Look up Psalm 85: [9](#) Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land. [10](#) Loving devotion (or: *chesed*/mercy) and faithfulness (or: truth) have joined together; righteousness and peace have kissed.

1. Take a minute and read the context of psalm 85 from verses 5-13. What does it take for His glory to be seen in the land? (See [footnote 1](#))
2. What changes when mercy/*chesed* (*agape*) love and truth/faithfulness become the primary concern? What happens to priorities?
3. What have we received instead of the punishment our sins deserved?
4. Look up Psalm 103: [10](#) He has not dealt with us according to our sins or repaid us according to our iniquities. [11](#) For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His loving devotion for those who fear Him. [12](#) As far as the east is from

the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. Do you have a testimony? What have we deserved?

5. How did God accomplish the display of this love? What does Calvary have to do with this display?
6. Come up with a strategy: How do we repay this love?
7. If it is, as Victoria says, the righteousness of God that has redeemed us and brought us to right standing to Him, how does that change our own attitude from within?
8. Where do the challenges we face come from? Where does our own response to these challenges come from?
9. How has our past been washed by the blood of Jesus? How effective is that washing?
10. (What are the functions of your blood passing through your body? How effective is it to bring life to your body? Compare this to the efficacy of Jesus' blood to your body.)
11. Victoria says, "The Blood of Jesus is playing no games with no body." Explain. What is the blood doing in you today? Can you be in a "...constant wash cycle..." as Victoria claims?
12. Look up Titus 3: ⁴*But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not by the righteous deeds we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of new birth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. ⁶This is the Spirit He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs with the hope of eternal life.* Describe how this "constant wash cycle works."
13. Explain how our righteous deeds become the product of the "wash cycle," and not the price tag for the cleansing? What's the difference between a gift and a wage earned?
14. Look up Romans 4: ²⁵*He was delivered over to death for our trespasses and was raised to life for our justification.* How effective was His death for our trespasses?
15. How effective was the resurrection? How does this prove that we are justified with Him? When Jesus was declared righteous and raised up, who was declared righteous with Him in His righteousness?
16. Explain how righteousness comes by faith? What does that righteousness look like in real terms?
17. How have you changed since you first believed?

Now look at Romans 5: ¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.

1. When Paul says we have been justified by faith...what have we believed, so that justification was confirmed?

2. If we are justified, list the benefits that were lost and have now been restored?
3. What are the benefits of this grace? What exactly is our hope? What does that glory look like in our lives?
4. Has your attitude toward your suffering changed, as Paul describes it here?
5. Look up James 1: [2](#)*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds,* [3](#)*because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4**Allow perseverance to finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* What do you see? How is this a case of two writers and one teaching?
6. Why, according to Paul and James, do we consider any trial “joy”? How “pure” is your joy?

Now answer Victoria’s question: What does this degree of confidence in our own justification enter into our response to the immigrant situation? What does forgiveness and grace have to do with immigration?

1. What’s your initial response?
2. Victoria says, “The heart of compassion we are called to have is only activated when we realize how much we are loved and how much we ourselves have been forgiven.” Can you illustrate this principle?
3. Do you have a testimony? Is it easier to love others now, since you received forgiveness?

Look up Luke 7: [44](#)And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give Me water for My feet, but she wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. [45](#)You did not greet Me with a kiss, but she has not stopped kissing My feet since I arrived. [46](#)You did not anoint My head with oil, but she has anointed My feet with perfume. [47](#)Therefore I tell you, because her many sins have been forgiven, she has loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”

1. Who loves least in Luke’s narrative? What’s the evidence for your assessment? What does the Pharisee *not* do?
2. Who loves more? What does she do?
3. Who has been forgiven only a little?
4. How does Jesus recognize that this woman’s sins have been forgiven?
5. What is the evidence that the woman received forgiveness?
6. What is the evidence of her “much” love?
7. What evidence do you have that you’ve been forgiven? Would you say you’ve been forgiven much or little?
8. What would others say?
9. Someone once asked, “If you were arrested for being a Christian, what evidence would there be to testify against you?” Have you ever thought this way? Can you answer? Would you be convicted or acquitted?
10. According to Victoria’s principle above, what activated the woman’s heart of compassion to motivate her to bring the anointing to the feet of Jesus?
11. When we have been forgiven much, what will others see?
12. If we have not been empowered to love much, what is the issue?

13. What steps do we need to take to get empowered to love? What do we need to receive? How freely is the forgiveness offered?
14. How freely have you offered forgiveness to others? Could that be an issue?
15. Look very carefully here: When did the woman receive her forgiveness? Before her arrival? Or after Jesus spoke the words?
16. How did the woman's receiving forgiveness motivate her next move?
17. What do you think? What was she saying to Jesus as she poured out the oil and the tears on His feet? "Forgive me?" or "Thank you!"
18. Did the woman come in shame and guilt to the Pharisee's house? Or did she come in gratitude, in the fulness of the grace she had received?
19. Talk of her courage.
20. How much courage is lost in shame? How much courage is gained when forgiveness is received?

Look up Proverbs 30: [5](#)*Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.* [6](#)*Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you and prove you a liar.*

1. How does Jesus, the Word of God, become our refuge?
2. How does one "take refuge" in His Word?
3. How does Jesus become our own "city of refuge," as Victoria described the principles from the Old Testament?
4. Look at Numbers 35: [13](#)*The cities you select will be your six cities of refuge.* [14](#)*Select three cities across the Jordan and three in the land of Canaan as cities of refuge.* [15](#)*These six cities will serve as a refuge for the Israelites and for the foreigner or stranger among them, so that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there.* Who benefits from the "city of refuge?" Who is excluded from the city's protection?
5. What is our response to those who have not yet received His love and compassion?
6. How do the present circumstances become our opportunity to extend freely what we have freely received?
7. Is it by changing laws that we love more effectively? Or do we love more effectively because we've been forgiven more?

Speak to Victoria's point:

1. Why do we love the stranger in our midst?
2. Why was Israel a stranger in Egypt, and enslaved before deliverance came to them?
3. And why, in light of their history, are they required to extend welcome and refuge to the stranger and the foreigner in their midst?
4. When Jesus said, "Freely you have received. So, freely give," to what was He referring? (Matthew 10: [8](#)[Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give...](#)Have you deliberately passed on what you have received? Do you have a testimony?)
5. What does God in His grace choosing us give us license to do in return?
6. To what degree are we still sojourners and wanderers ourselves?

Look up Matthew 25: [35](#)For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in,[36](#) I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.' [37](#)Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? [38](#)When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? [39](#)When did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?' [40](#)And the King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.'

1. Talk about the sheep in this parable. What do we know?
2. Have they been forgiven much or little?
3. What is the evidence that they have been forgiven much? How do they behave?
4. How much evidence testifies in their favor?
5. What is their destiny?
6. Have the goats been forgiven much or little?
7. How do you know?

Note: In the book of Revelation, the Bride's white robes are the "righteous deeds of the saints." The angel tells Cornelius in Acts 10: [4](#)Cornelius stared at him in fear and asked, "What is it, Lord?" The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have ascended as a memorial offering before God. [5](#)Now send men to Joppa to call for a man named Simon who is called Peter.

1. Have you seen this? How does kindness change the environment?
2. Do you have a testimony from home or work where kindness turned things around?
3. Was Cornelius aware that his own acts of kindness had an impact in heaven?
4. Have you ever considered how your own acts of kindness are seen in heaven, and the impact they have there as well as here?
5. What motivated Cornelius, and empowered him to reach out and be kind?
6. How are the Bride's robes looking today? Do you think they are in a "constant wash cycle"? Is there a need we can meet?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Consider the news. Does your own attitude need to be adjusted?
3. Away from the constant barrage of news, how can we deliberately contribute constructively to the needs others are facing?
4. Decide to freely forgive as you've been forgiven. Write it down.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On Romans 1 and “One nation under God”**—We’ve seen in Romans 1 how Paul describes clearly what happens when a people refuse to acknowledge God as God. God responds by turning the minds of that people over to depravity. When a nation is willing to acknowledge God as God, to seek His face and turn from their wicked ways, He promises to hear from heaven and heal their land. What will one nation under God look like when we return to the Lord?
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For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Isaiah 55:8-11
Tuesday: Psalm 85:5-13
Wednesday: Psalm 103:9-12
Thursday: Romans 4:19-25
Friday: Romans 5:1-5
Saturday: James 1:2-5
Sunday: Luke 7:44-47

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.