

OPEN

Picture yourself as a deer running from hunters: scared, harried, nearly exhausted, and ever so thirsty.

Often, this is how we feel when we get to church on Sunday. We've faced people who had it out for us. We've been scared from our own sins. We may even be exhausted: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This brings us to church in a thirsty condition, like the deer on the run.

Hear these words from Psalm 42:

“As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.
² My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.

The Psalmist recalled how he went to church and heard God's Word. Then he comes to these words, also from Psalm 42:

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise
him,
my salvation ⁶ and my God.

What are the Four Areas of Discipleship?

GET Christ's forgiveness in Word and Sacrament.

GROW in grace and knowing Him.

GLOW with His love in your callings and through your local church.

GO tell the Good News about Him in your callings (vocations) and through your local church.

Today's lesson will focus on step 1 of discipleship, the **GETTING** we so desperately need from God.

Opening Discussion

What are some obstacles or excuses people have for their inability to **GET** the Living Word and the faith strengthening gift of the Lord's Supper, on a regular basis?

When we look at the four areas of discipleship, what begins to happen in the remaining three areas (**GROW**, **GLOW**, and **GO**) if we neglect the first area (**GET**)?

So, if an individual or local congregation is failing to “**GO**” with the good news of Christ Jesus, it could be because of their failure to be participants in the “**GETTING**, **GROWING**, and **GLOWING**.”

John 8:31-36

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin

is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

The Jews claim they are offspring of Abraham. Christians often claim they are members of such and such church. What does Jesus use to describe how He sees whether or not someone is connected to Him?

The Jews don't understand what they need to be “freed” from. Do you understand what Jesus means, if so, explain?

When you hear the Word of God, whether read, preached, or taught, are you listening for something about the text, Jesus, and yourself? If so, explain why. If not, explain why.

Romans 3:19-20

Before we read the text, let's look at some possible answers for sin. Let's also see if someone can show us where these are given to us to remove the guilt and offense of our sins.

“Lord, there were extenuating circumstances.”

“Lord, I was under a great deal of pressure.”

“Lord, I didn't know it would turn out so badly.”

“Lord, the temptation was too alluring.”

“Lord, You don't understand, it wasn't really my fault.”

Take some time to see where Jesus offers us these as ways to deal with our sin problem.

Now read the Romans passage:

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Before we GET the absolution from Christ on Sundays, what action do we take part in?

Why is confession and absolution a necessary gift to us and how does it remind us of our mixed identity as sinners/saints? Is this remembering important to the next three areas of discipleship (GROW, GLOW, and GO), why?

Matthew 9:1-8

And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. ² And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” ³ And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” ⁴ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in

your hearts? ⁵ For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’ ⁶ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” ⁷ And he rose and went home. ⁸ When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

What is the “evil” Jesus identifies in the heart of these scribes? Why does Jesus consider this “evil?”

How does Jesus demonstrate His authority to forgive sins? Who alone can forgive sins? Is it the Pastor’s word or Christ’s word that absolves us, after our confession of sins?

Can people other than the pastor speak these words of Jesus to you or can you speak His word of forgiveness to others?

List of the Places to “GET”

All under the umbrella of the Word
(spoken, heard, visible, written)

- Baptism
- Preached Word
- Absolution
- One Believer to another Believer
- Lord’s Supper

Quick Personal Assessment

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being “fantastic” and 1 being “Lord, have mercy,” how would you rank yourself in the following areas?

GET Christ’s forgiveness in Word and Sacrament.

If you gave yourself a 5, what would a 6 look like in your mind?

Prayer Time:

Pray for what needs to happen so we maximize our “GET” opportunities.

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