

Until Christ is Formed in You (Gal 4.19)
Sermon I: Sin, Baptism, Grace (Rom 6.1-9)
Small Group Questions

Some possible questions:

1. Tell us one thing that struck you from Phillip's sermon last Sun.
2. Why do you think that the contemporary church is certain Christ can forgive sin, but unsure as to whether He can provide freedom from sin's power in this life?
3. Do you think that there is any evidence in the church (or elsewhere) of men and women having been "changed" (character and lifestyle) because of an encounter with Jesus?
4. What are the two different ways that Paul uses the word "sin" in Romans 6?
 - Leaders' note: (i) sin as an action; (ii) sin as an evil power that rules over all humanity outside of Christ (the background is Rom 5 where we are told that "sin reigns" over all humanity and because of that "all sin").
5. What difference does baptism make to a person's situation (in regard to sin), according to Romans 6?
6. Phillip argued that Roman 7.7-25 is not a description of the normal Christian life. Can you recall the main reasons he gave?
 - Leaders' notes: (i) the passage does not mention the Spirit's work, which is a central component of the experience of every Christian; (ii) the passage does not describe a "struggle with sin" (as often claimed) but someone trapped in sin without remedy (a "wretched person"), which is clearly (from Rom 6 and 8), not the normal Christian life.
 - This passage (Rom 7.7-25) has a very specific purpose in Paul's argument: it is designed to help us see that even with the Law giving clear direction as to how we should live, and even with a heart that desires to do what the Law says, humanity without Christ is still unable to overcome sin and its dreadful hold on our lives. This point is **very** important to Paul's overall argument in Romans, because otherwise it looks like the Law provides a way out of sin (without Christ), which makes the cross redundant.
7. Name some factors that make it hard to believe that God can help us overcome sin in our lives.
8. Where do we go, what do we do, when the Scriptures clearly speak of things (e.g. freedom from sin's power) that don't match with our own experiences?
 - Leaders' note: We have to be willing first to take a stand in faith, in simple acceptance of the Word of God, even if at that point we cannot see how this can be worked out practically in our lives. Faith invites God into our lives to work!
 - We need to be able to speak openly to God about the situation we are in, from a position of faith (which means having a confident expectation, based on the Scriptures, of better things from God's gracious hands).
 - Faith is always the beginning of new departures with Jesus.