

Discussion Guide

questions to help start or continue conversations about faith

Discussion Guides accompany the weekly message.

Pardoned and Executed

In 1829 a man named George Wilson was arrested for robbery and murder in a US mail heist. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging. Some friends intervened on his behalf and were able to obtain his pardon from President Andrew Jackson. But when told of this, Wilson refused it saying he wanted to die. Well, the sheriff didn't know what to do, how do you execute a man officially pardoned? An appeal was made to the President who perplexed turned the matter over to the US Supreme court. Chief Justice John Marshall gave this ruling: A pardon is a piece of paper, the value of which depends on its acceptance by the person implicated. Anyone under the sentence of death would hardly be expected to refuse a pardon, but if it's refused, it's no pardon. Thus, George Wilson was executed while his signed pardon lay on the sheriff's desk!

In the same way, God has offered His gift of divine purity to every person, a gift that not only provides pardon from eternal condemnation, but offers much, much more. However, this gift of Christ must be personally appropriated to be personally beneficial. (From "Revolution Within" by Dwight Edwards)

Have you ever offered someone a gift that was rejected? How did this make you feel? If not – think about your plans for this Christmas, what would you feel if someone you love rejects a gift you have prepared for them?

Passage: Read John 1:1-5 and John 1:14; Read Genesis 2:7, 15-24, and Genesis 3:1-10, 23; Read Galatian 4:4-5

Observation (look at the text):

- John 1: 1-5, 14: John describes Jesus as the Word.
 - o v.1 & v.14 Who is Jesus?
 - o v. 2 What does verse 2 say about Jesus?
 - o v. 3-5 What attributes of God does John share with us about Jesus in verses 3 through 5?

- o v. 14 What did Jesus do? What do we see in Jesus? What does God the Father offer us in and through Jesus?
- Genesis 2:7, 15-24: How did God form man and woman?
- Genesis 2:15-17: Where did God put the man? What was the man put there to do? What instruction did the man receive?
- Genesis 2:18 What did God say about the man being alone?
- Genesis 3:1-7 What did the man and the woman do?
- Genesis 3:8-10 What was God doing in the garden? What were the man and woman doing?
- Genesis 3:16-19 describes the curse upon man and woman as a result of their sin. This curse would be for the rest of their lives and they would pass it on to all of their offspring and their offspring's offspring. Read v. 23. What is the final punishment for their sin?
- Galatians 4:4-5 At what time did God send Jesus? For what purpose?

Interpretation (Understand what it means)

- Read 1 Timothy 6:15-16. How is God Almighty described here? Who has seen Him?
- If no man has ever seen God, who was walking in the Garden (Genesis 3:8)? Who were the man and the woman hiding from (Genesis 3:10)? See John 1:1-5.
- Genesis 2:15 – God put the man in the garden to work and take care of it. What is the thing, the place, we work for and take care of?
- Genesis 3:23 – What did the Lord God do with the man's and the woman's first home?
- Genesis 3:10 – Why do you think The Word was walking in the Garden?
- John 1:14; Galatians 4:4-5 – What did God the Father, God Almighty, do to restore the fellowship The Word had with the man and the woman that is described in Genesis 2 & 3? When did He plan it? See John 1:1-5.

Application (Apply the Word of God to life):

John 1:3 teaches us through the Word, through Jesus, all things were made through Him. You were made through Jesus. Colossians 1:16 expands on this and teaches that all things have been made through Him and for Him. John:1:14 teaches that God the Father sent Jesus, God the Son, in the flesh full of grace and truth. We know from John 3:16, that God sent His only Son and because of love, that if we will believe in Jesus, then He will fulfill the promise of Galatians 4:5 to anyone who believes in Jesus. They will be adopted as sons and daughters of God Almighty.

- So, it is then, you were created by God through Jesus, for Jesus, to be in fellowship with Him, to be at home with Him. Because of the original sin in the Garden of Eden, you were once separated from Him, separated from your home in Him. But God has made a way through Jesus to be restored and adopted once again to Himself that you might live forever as a child of God in His home. What a gift!
 - Have you received the precious gift of God's only Son?
 - If so – take some time now to share with your small group your story of receiving Jesus and how He has brought you back home.
 - If you are not in a small group meeting – take some time to reflect on the goodness of God for sending Jesus. Take time to thank God and renew your commitment to Jesus.
 - If you have not received Jesus, what are you waiting for! It's time to come home. Today is your day of salvation. Repent of your sin, believe in the One God sent, and be saved. When you do, you will be adopted as a child of God.