

Grace Downtown CG Discussion Guide

December 3-6, 2018

Presence & Intimacy

Revelation 21:1-5



Announcements:

Women's Leadership Council Cookie Swap: Connect with other women from Grace Downtown to share your favorite cookies and sample many more! Meet at Sarah Campbell's home in NW (Spring Valley neighborhood). RSVP by **Wed Dec 5** to receive address and other details. Email the wlc@gracedc.net with any questions.

Christmas in Story and Song: A musical, candlelight celebration of the Christmas story. **Sun Dec 16**, 5pm during the worship service, at Christ Community Church. Would you pray for 2-3 people in your life you'd like to invite to share with them the hope of the gospel?

Christmas Eve Service: Join Grace Meridian Hill at 5pm on Monday Dec. 24 at 810 Shepherd Street, NW for a Christmas Eve service.

CG Break & Winter Term: Dec 10 will mark the last official week of CGs until the week of Jan 28. Join us in January for Winter Term, a three-week course on Thursdays (1/10, 1/17, 1/24) at 7:00 pm taught by our network pastors and hosted by Grace Meridian Hill at 810 Shepherd St NW. Topic: Christology- the person, states, and offices of Christ.

Read and Discuss:

Read Revelation 21:1-5 aloud together.

Introduction:

The Advent season celebrates the commencement of the incarnation of Jesus Christ in our world. In this season, we often think of the virgin Mary giving birth to Jesus, the manger, and the wise men coming to pay tribute. But the coming of the infant Jesus in Bethlehem also foreshadowed a future reality.

In Revelation 21:3, we read, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." The announcement that God's dwelling place is with man is the central eschatological truth that is fully realized in the new heavens and new earth. The realization that "they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God," is what all the covenants have looked forward to (Gen. 17:8, Lev 26:11-12, 2Sam 7:34, Jer. 32:38, 1 Peter 2:9-10). Each stage of revelation moved closer to this reality. For example, God's leading of his people through the wilderness to the Promised Land through the cloud by day and the fire by night was an early example of God's dwelling with his people (Ex. 13:21-22). The temple came next. Then Jesus came to dwell in the flesh with man. Finally, God and his people will be restored together in the new heavens and the new earth. This is possible only because the Son of God gave himself to reconcile us to God by his own blood (Col. 1:20). With the

forgiveness of our sin and our justification before God (Romans 3:24), we can safely and joyfully dwell with Him forever.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you recall a time when you were reunited with a good friend you hadn't seen in a long time? What was that like?
2. What does it say about God that as revelation unfolds, he is moving towards greater and greater intimacy with his people?
3. How does it build your confidence in your relationship with God to know that he is committed to being in relationship with you (both now and in the new heavens and new earth)?
4. Do you see yourself as united to other believers? How does the fact that God is in relationship with "a people" change your perspective of other Christians?
5. How can you be confident that, as a Christian, you will dwell with God in the new heavens and new earth? (Hint: you can be confident, but how?)

Application:

6. When we consider human relationships, why do you think we long to be "in person" rather than on the phone or over text? What does this suggest about how we are designed?
7. Can you think of a time when someone's presence was a blessing to you during a difficult time?
8. How does it change your perspective that God is with us at all times?
9. How does it change your perspective that everything you have in this life could be taken away, but the Lord will never leave you nor forsake you?
10. What is something you long to have changed in the new heavens and new earth?

Prayer:

=
The Grace Downtown Prayer Team creates opportunities for our community to learn more about prayer together for our church family, our city, and our world. Throughout the coming week, the Prayer Team is asking our church community to...

...for those that the Lord has placed in authority. Lift up our national and local leaders and ask that the Lord give them wisdom, discernment, and hearts devoted to him. Give

thanks for the servant leaders the Lord has placed in our church. Ask that God bless our community group leaders with renewed zeal for his mission in Washington, DC.

...for missionaries around the world who risk safety and comfort every day to spread the gospel. Confess that in any vocation we can be tempted away from lives wholly devoted to the service of God. Pray that God would change our hearts to find fulfillment in him and to desire to share that with others.

...for the environment that God has entrusted to us to steward responsibly. Give thanks for such a bountiful world that he has blessed us with for our sustenance and enjoyment.