

Centred Discussion Guide



Part 2: Centred Faith

Matt Thiele, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Buderim - Mar 8th 2020

INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome back! Start with warmth, food, a cuppa or drink.
Also (and this matters) please turn off your phones and give real attention.

You might like to start with one or two of these questions:

- What is your biggest pet peeve?
- Have you ever had a reoccurring dream? What was it?
- Have you tried fasting (giving something up) until Easter? Why / why not?
- If you could only know one thing about God what would it be?

The first core value of our Immanuel is “everything starts with prayer”. Give it a go!

SEVEN FALSE CENTRES FOR FAITH

False Centres For Faith	Why They're Unhelpful And Where They Lead
Fear Centred Faith	<p>Fear centred faith is a selfish! It is about self-preservation. This is not the kind of faith Jesus seeks from us.</p> <p><i>There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear.</i> - 1 John 4:18</p>
Rule Centred Faith	<p>The two pitfalls of this kind of faith are success and failure! You will either fail to follow the rules and lose heart. Or you will somehow succeed and then be arrogant.</p> <p><i>For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.</i> - Galatians 5:4</p>
Personality Centred Faith	<p>If you centre your faith on other people and their personalities, when they crash, so will you.</p> <p><i>Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ."</i> - 1 Corinthians 1:12</p>
Tradition / Institution Centred Faith	<p>Jesus did not create institutions. Jesus broke traditions. And yet both of these (if not worshipped) can serve Jesus.</p> <p><i>Don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality.</i> - Colossians 2:16-17</p> <p><i>Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to serve people, and not people to serve the Sabbath."</i> - Mark 2:27</p>
Prosperity Centred Faith	<p>If you make prosperity the focus of your faith it will fail you because Jesus did not come to make you rich.</p> <p><i>No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.</i> - Matthew 6:24</p>
Intellect Centred Faith	<p><i>You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.</i> - James 2:19</p> <p><i>For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.</i> - 1 Cor 1:21</p>
Feeling Centred Faith	<p>Know your feelings. Pay attention to your feelings. But do not centre on them or mistake them for God. Faith is not a feeling.</p> <p><i>Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.</i> - Heb 13:8</p>

- What comments do you have?
- Which are we in danger of?
- What's missing from the list?

If your group goes deeper and longer then here's a bit extra to read and reflect on. Otherwise, move on to the next section...

Matthew 7:21-23

Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you...'"

HEALTHY FAITH CENTRES ON THE CROSS

1 Corinthians 2:1-4

I did not come telling the good news of God with beautiful words or wisdom. I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ crucified.

- Reflect quietly on the words above.
- What are you drawn to here?
- What does this mean for our lives?

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER COMES FROM THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS!

1 Corinthians 2:1-4

I did not come telling the good news of God with beautiful words or wisdom. I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power...

We want to see the power of God to change lives. But the key to the work of the Holy Spirit is the cross of Jesus. On the cross Jesus broke death, hell and the curse of sin forever - he won! Because he was 'forsaken' we now have the presence of the Holy Spirit with us. Here follow seven ways the Holy Spirit's work flows from the preaching of the cross...

- Read the seven ways the message of the cross brings the Spirit's power...
- Which helps you the most?

1. Cross Centred Faith Kills Self-Centredness

Facing the cross of Jesus means taking seriously our own selfishness and bringing it to Christ. It means dying to ourselves and trusting his grace.

2. Cross Centred Faith Brings Real Love

The cross proves God's love even in uncertainty and hardship, because it says God is with you always. The cross becomes our model for life - a life of joyful giving.

3. Cross Centred Faith Deals With Suffering

Our culture avoids suffering in any way possible. Can you think of ways we do? But Jesus does not avoid people's suffering. We need not fear it!

4. Cross Centred Faith Sets Us Free From Proving Ourselves

What are some ways people try to prove their worth? When your faith centres on the cross you know you are worth dying for. So you rest from trying to be worthy.

5. Cross Centred Faith Replaces Judgement With Compassion

Are Christians known as judgemental? Why or why not? With the death of Jesus for us as the centre, then we don't ever view ourselves as better than others. We admit we sin and need saving! And if God came to die for them how can we judge them?

6. Cross Centred Faith Brings Power To Forgive

One of our greatest barriers to forgiving people is that we think we're not like them. But when you realise that the cross of Jesus stands for everyone, and when you see Jesus forgive his killers, you realise that you must forgive too.

7. Cross Centred Faith Deals With Fear

The death and resurrection of Jesus means we no longer live in fear of God. Don't be afraid of the worst, because the cross proves that God is in the worst with you.

GROUP ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK

This week as a group agree to text each other a reminder of God's love. Can you work out who will text whom and commit to this action?