

Home for Christmas “HELP”

Matt VanCleave

December 17th, 2023

We would like your feedback!

Please answer this brief survey to help us provide you with a better small group experience!

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REVIEW LAST WEEK’S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will pray for unchurched friends, neighbors and coworkers.
- I will ask God to open the door for me to extend an invitation.
- I will be bold about extending invitations this season.

THIS WEEK’S SERMON RECAP

This message is titled "Home for Christmas 'Help!'" Because maybe for you going home means going back to where there's a difficult relationship. Someone is irritating. Something about someone in your family rubs you the wrong way.

This message is about how we prepare for that this Christmas. And what gifts we can give that will help that difficult person change.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there anyone in your family with whom you are in a difficult or uncomfortable relationship? Identify one person. Please share with the group what’s making the relationship difficult.

2. In what ways would you like your difficult person to change?

3. Read the following verses:

The Word [Jesus] became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)

Pastor Matt mentioned three gifts that flow out of the character of Jesus: grace, truth, and time. Let's think about them one at a time.

First, grace: This Christmas, can you try to extend grace? Can you try to love that person no matter what? What would this take on your side?

4. Second, Truth: "Grace without truth won't produce growth." Have you tried to speak the truth to your difficult person, especially if he/she hurts others (you) or is acting unfairly, dishonestly, or harmfully? Truth-telling sometimes hurts; but when we love that person enough to speak the truth, we should do it in Christ's love. How would you speak the truth to that person with grace?
5. Third, Time: People do not change overnight. And God has not given up on us even though we slip back to old patterns that we do not want to continue. When you gift the difficult person with grace and truth, can you be patient enough with that person and not give up after a semi-adequate conversation? Let's prepare the gifts of grace and truth by finding strategies that can impact the relationship with that person positively. What strategies can you think of?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

- I will work hard at loving difficult people this Christmas.
- I will work hard at not judging people this Christmas.
- I will be full of grace toward people this Christmas.
- I will not respond in anger and say things I regret.

- I will speak the truth in love this Christmas.
- I will recognize people are not going to change overnight.
- I will be patient with people who need to change.
- I will let God love me so I can be a conduit of love to others.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Luke 1:18
- Luke 1:19-20
- Matthew 1:18-19
- Matthew 2:13
- Luke 2:34-35
- Mark 3:20-21
- Mark 3:31-35
- John 1:14
- John 8:10-11
- Ephesians 4:15
- Isaiah 49:15-16
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Prayer Request(s)

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