

OBSERVATION -- As a group, talk through and summarize the passage. Think through *Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why* questions together.

INTERPRETATION -- Answer these questions together:

1. What does this passage teach us about God?

- a. *What you believe about God shapes how you approach Him and how your heart acknowledges Him. What stories about God does your heart dwell on most (i.e., lies or truths)?*
- b. *The holiness of God shows us that there is a gap between our ways and His ways. Which attributes of God, as seen in His word, show you that there is a gap between His ways and your ways? What responses do we most often show in view of the differences or gap between God's way and our ways?*

2. What does this passage teach about us?

- a. *Wickedness is to find any means of salvation apart from God. So, we can either fall into these two traps below that say, "I don't need God or the salvation a Holy God offers."*
 - **Legalism** (salvation through self-righteousness and finding ultimate satisfaction, security, and God's acceptance through good works).
 - **Lawlessness** (salvation through finding ultimate satisfaction and security in created things and having earthly desires met).

Share with your group the trap you mostly fell into before salvation, and the effect it had on how you viewed God and viewed/interacted with others.

- b. *Shame develops when we realize that neither our attempts to earn God's favor through rule-keeping nor our attempts to live apart from God's authority through self-rule can remove our guilt and restore us to Him. How does the legalist respond when sin is exposed? How does the lawless person respond too?*

3. What does this passage teach us about grace/salvation? How does it point to Christ?

- a. *Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life but went to the cross to bear our sins, shame, and guilt, so that we would be made righteous **through Him** and brought into God's family. Where are you still trying to prove your righteousness instead of resting in Christ? Where are you still resisting Christ's authority instead of joyfully submitting to Him, who loves you?*
- b. *Because Christ has borne your shame, God will never forsake you. What gospel truth can replace the shame-filled story you may be telling yourself? (**Shame-filled stories sound like "God must be done with or tired of me;" "I've gone too far for His forgiveness;" "I should be doing better by now;" "God must love them better than me;" "maybe if I do better, God will..." etc.**).*

APPLICATION

- a) Read Rom 6:11. That passage calls us to consider our identity in Christ. To **consider** means moving from understanding the truth about our identity in Christ to applying that truth to ourselves daily.
- What accountability or spiritual disciplines would help you constantly consider your redemptive narrative?
 - Where in your life do you feel forsaken by God? What truths in God's word (and the gospel) can help redeem those feelings?

PRAYER

- Praise the Father because He is holy, and His holiness reveals the greatness of love, goodness, justice, and kindness.
- Confess areas where your actions may be disregarding His holiness.
- Thank Christ that through Him, you have been made righteous and nothing can separate you from this greater love.
- Ask God to strengthen you to find confidence, assurance, and joy in the good news of salvation.