

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. Spiritual freedom is to recognize that we have brought nothing (good) to the table; God brings it all and has brought us to His table because of His impartial love and kindness toward all. How does that statement shift your view of who God is? How does that view shape your relationship with God?

2. What does this passage teach about us?

- a. Pastor Mark explained that *spiritual bondage* involves adding works or moral acts to faith in Jesus. In what ways have you seen individuals fall back into bondage by trying to add good works to faith? In what ways have you found yourself adding works to faith in Jesus? What effects did this have on your life and relationships with God and others?
- b. Pastor Mark also helped us realize that spiritual bondage does not just happen; it can result from influences that corrupt the gospel and try to pull us into it. What influences do you see around us that sneak us back into spiritual bondage? What do these influences look like, and how do they ultimately get us to submit to their false authority? Can you share a time (if any) when you were influenced into this form of spiritual bondage, and the effects it had on you and your relationships?
- c. Pastor Mark said that *cultural bondage* involves elevating a secondary cultural value or conviction to the level of the gospel (i.e., when people say, “you are a Christian if you sing, dress, pray, talk, or think like us”). How have you seen this displayed around you, and what effects does it have on the body of Christ?

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

- a. Gospel freedom is acknowledging and accepting that salvation is by grace through faith alone in the perfect works of Christ alone, not our works. Why do you think that is freeing?
- b. Pastor Mark said that gospel freedom should be protected not because the gospel itself needs it, but because our hearts need protection from the false gospel. What false gospels do you hear from others or say to yourself? Discuss some practical ways to protect our hearts and each other’s from the false gospel.
- c. The centrality of salvation by grace through faith alone frees us to *appreciate our diversity* and to *give cheerfully to the needy*. Share why that is the case and how you have seen it expressed at your local church and in your relationships.

APPLICATION

a) Think/discuss which applies to you and how it might first reveal an improper understanding of the gospel.

- I. Excluding others who are different from you.
- II. Hoarding time and money or giving grudgingly.
- III. Legalism.
- IV. Licentiousness.

PRAYER

- Praise the Father because He redeems us with His love.
- Confess the areas where you might be adding works to grace by falling back into cultural or spiritual bondage.
- Thank Christ that through His perfect sacrifice, you have access to God’s kingdom
- Ask God to strengthen you to protect you and others from falling back into any false gospels.