

Vineyard Crossroads Church

Sunday, September 5, 2010
Reef's Notes

Finding our Story – *Entering God's Story*

how to die well

Bible Text: 1Samuel 31

Introduction – *what will your epitaph read?*

How *not* to die well:

- live your life in a self-reliant, self-sufficient kind of way
- consistently live in disobedience to God – have no regard for God's will and authority in your life
- ignore the reality and inevitability of death
- live a "need-not-have-been" kind of life

Since death is such a radical interruption in our story, we ought to consider the following:

- the reality of divine judgment
- the importance of knowing God now
- the great goal of life
- the urgency of the hour

Conclusion – *death is not the end of the story*

Devotional Life Worksheet

September 5-11, 2010

Finding our Story – Entering God’s Story
how to die well

Bible Text: 1Samuel 31

This worksheet is designed to help you in your personal study and individual reflection, and for small group discussion and comment.

Devotion #1 – If you had to write your epitaph today based on how you’ve lived your life thus far, what would it say? What do you want your epitaph to read? What does it mean to “die well”? Or, what does it mean to “live your life in light of eternity”? If being a follower of Jesus includes living your life mindful of death and eternity, what are two or three specific things you can do on a regular basis that would put action and practice to the idea? Find several scriptures in the Bible that support your thinking.

Devotion #2 – Read 1st Samuel chapter 31. This is the account of the tragic, disgraceful end of Saul’s life; a summary of how *not* to die well. One of the tragic things about Saul’s life (and death) is that it didn’t have to be that way – he chose a broken, disobedient life – repeatedly. Are you presently living a “need-not-have-been” kind of life, either in part or fully? If so, spend some time today considering the possibility of change. What needs to change in your story? Where have you lost the trail on your Jesus journey? What would it look like for you to repent and return to a relationship of love and obedience and trust with God?

Devotion #3 – Read and reflect on Revelation 20:11-15. Divine judgment is a central concept in biblical thought. How does the idea of divine judgment affect how you live your life now? When you think of God as a just God, does this evoke hope or terror in you? In your own journey of faith, how do you reconcile the idea that God is both a merciful God and a just God? Where have you experienced the justice/ judgment of God in your life? When have you experienced his mercy?

Consider today the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Mercy and judgment have met at the cross. Which storyline (mercy or judgment) do you tend to live your life by? When you think about life beyond death, do you tend to think more of God’s mercy or God’s judgment?

Devotion #4 – How much of your Christian experience would you describe as a *relationship* with God through Jesus Christ? How much of your Christianity is based on something else – fear, guilt, shame, doing good works, etc.? Take some time today to just stop and be with God. Talk to him. Consider the joy and hope of having a relationship with God – who loves you and is crazy about you! How are you doing in your relationship with Jesus? How are you doing at the great goal of life – loving God and loving others? If you had to re-prioritize some things in your life based on the goal of knowing God really well, loving God really well, and loving others really well, what would you change? Commit these things to God in prayer, and perhaps share them with your small group or some Christian friends.

Devotion #5 – Death is not the end of the story! This truth brings both hope and a sense of urgency. Take some time today to ponder the reality of death, and eternity. As you do, think about your life – and what matters most to you, what your dreams and hopes are in this life, and how you’re doing with all of that. As well, consider the urgency of the hour – the reality that every person will die and stand before God one day. Think about the people in your life that do not presently have a relationship with Jesus. Pray for them. Ask God to give you a way to speak and show the good news of God’s love to these people.