

Growth Group Questions

Fifth Sunday of Easter, April 28, 2024

Introduction

This week's 10:30am service was different, with examination for our youth confirmands. While confirmation is not commanded by God it has been a useful, though flawed, practice for centuries. Discuss the pros and cons of our Lutheran confirmation tradition.

Our other services this weekend followed the readings for the 5th Sunday in Easter. This guide will focus on those readings.

Into the Word – Acts 4:32-37

1. Some extremists have used this description of the early church to push the idea of “communal living” as a necessity for Christians. How do these verses differ from a lifestyle where believers are instructed to give up their earthly possessions?
2. Identify the two places in this text where we see both the spiritual and humanitarian blessings the Church brought to others.
3. How do we pursue the same “goals” at Salem? How might we do even better?
4. Before we get carried away and think the early church was a paradise without sin, read Acts 5:1-11. (The very next verses.) How did Ananias and Saphira sin in this account?

Into the Word – 1 John 3:18-24

5. Read verse 18 together and come up with three examples positive and three examples negative of this important verse.

6. Verses 19 & 20 address the believer who is burdened by a guilty conscience. He feels like his sin is too great to be forgiven. How does remembering that God is greater than us help that person find rest for his heart? (Read Micah 7:18-19.)
7. How are these verses in 1 John connected to James words in James 2:14-17?

Into the Word – John 15:1-8

8. The Greek word in v. 2 translated “prunes” also means “cleans.” In what way does God prune/clean fruitful branches so they become more fruitful? Can you think of any examples?
9. Note in v. 5 that Jesus says those remaining in him *WILL* bear much fruit. Not might, or can, or must, or could. **WILL**. How is this verse connected to James 2:14-17 (See above)?
10. What specifically keeps us connected to Jesus, our true vine according to verse 7?
11. Does Jesus give us everything we ask for, as he says? How is this startling comment true?
12. What two purposes to our good works does Jesus describe in verse 8?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, source of life and faith, bless me to remain in your Word and promises. Give me strength to serve in truth and love. Amen.