



Small Group Notes: Sunday 23 March 2025

Sermon Series: The Whole Easter Story

God and People: Romans 5:6-11 –

In the Whole Easter Story Jo explores the far-reaching effect of the cross and resurrection (hence the title) through exploring four relationships:

- God and People,
- God and Creation,
- People and People,
- People and Creation.

Today we look at God and People, which is the most familiar of the four. God and humanity being reconciled through the cross is a huge topic. Here are the headings Jo uses in this section: Created, loved, judged, in covenant, understood, being saved, forgiven, reconciled, renewed, and made eternal.

The focus of the Sunday sermon was on God's love shown to us as described in Romans 5:6-11 (but especially verse 8).

- Have you ever had a moment of breakthrough in your awareness of God's love? What helped you get there?
- The first thing, in Sunday's talk, that can stop us from accepting God's love is deceiving ourselves by not being able to see our need.
- Can you think of any times that you have seen human self-deception at work? You might have examples that are humorous or painful.

Read Romans 5:6-11

- When you read the passage what stands out to you about our need, or our position without Christ?

A second thing that can get in the way of accepting God's love is our attempts at being worthy of God's love.

- How can a person live a holy life without letting it affect their ego, especially in their relationship with God?

Often in stories the hero dies to rescue others.

- Can you think of any examples of a hero dying for the villain? Why is this so difficult? How does this show the significance of Jesus dying for us while we were enemies of God?
- What are some ways that people try to earn God's love, or be worthy of Jesus' sacrifice? Why do you think this is a natural human response?

Strahan Coleman, in his book *Beholding*, encourages thinking about the gospel in familial terms to help us connect with the love of God. One way into this is by thinking about the theme of adoption, and how through Christ we are adopted as sons or daughters.

- What do you find significant about this theme of adoption?

Read Romans 5:8

To God, you were worth it even when you were worthless.

You were adopted at great cost, out of great need, by God the Father who loves you more than you understand.

Here are some bible passages about God's love that you might want to prayerfully read together as a group.

Isaiah 49:15-16 – “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! ¹⁶ See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;...

Romans 8:35-39 – Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 3:16-19 – I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- What stands out to you from these passages?

Questions you also might want to use from Jo's book:

1. Briefly share stories of how you came to have a relationship with God, and what that looks like in your life at the moment
2. Read Romans, 5:6 to 11. What do these verses say about humankind in the impact of Christ death on our relationship with God? What changed because of the cross, and what stayed the same?
3. What does it mean for people to live as God's enemies?
4. How is life different for those who have accepted the gift of reconciliation?
5. 1 Corinthians 1:18 describes the cross as both foolishness and the very power of God. How do you see it? How do you feel about talking about the Easter story with family, friends or work colleagues who don't share your faith?