



# LIFEGROUP resource guide

## For the week of 25 October: the key to everything

Symbols are powerful expressions. They brand a people, a nation, a movement, a religion, or a business. Thus pirates have their "Jolly Roger", Nazis their Swastika, Islam has the Crescent and Star, Jews have the "Star of David", the Olympics have their "5 Colored Rings", McDonald's has the "Golden Arches", and Apple has – well you know... Christians have the "Cross".

This is both unquestionable and remarkable since it was the cruelest form of execution known in the ancient world until it was banned in the fifth century AD. As far back as the first century BC, the cross was considered a horror. Civilized people should not even mention the word in public! Cicero commented: "The very word 'cross' should be far removed not only from the person of the Roman citizen, but from his thoughts, his eyes and his ears. For it is not only the actual occurrence of these things... indeed the mere mention of them, that is unworthy of a Roman citizen and free man."

What other society, movement, nation, organization, or religion has a horrifying instrument of torture and death as its symbol? Especially, when the hallmarks of the movement is to herald "Good News" expressed through grace, love and peace?

The irony of the Cross has been observed across the centuries by believer and skeptic alike. We can observe a cluster of paradoxes around the Cross because the Cross is a:

picture of violence, yet it is the key to peace;  
picture of suffering, yet it is the key to healing;  
picture of utter weakness, yet it is the key to power;  
picture of capital punishment, yet it is the key to mercy and forgiveness;  
picture of vicious hatred, yet it is the key to love;  
picture of supreme shame, yet it is the Christian's supreme boast.

The cross, for the follower of Jesus, is truly the "master key" that opens the doors to everything that God desires to give us. In short, life begins at/from the Cross of Jesus and the quality of our lives is directly related to our being "opened" by this key.

This week we return to Romans 8.1-2 where Paul declares the ultimate consequence of the Good News of God's faithfulness through the Cross of Jesus. How did Paul arrive at this statement in Romans 8.1-2? To answer this question we will reflect on a few passages from earlier in this letter. Let our reflections begin!

Enjoy your LifeGroup! *Mark*

## From the Scriptures...

*"Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them... These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."*

Luke 10.23-24; 24.44

## Getting to know one another...

Everybody has been accidentally locked out of something. What is your earliest "locked-out" memory? How did it make you feel?

### Reflecting on how we got to Romans 8.1

NOTE: we are going to use 2 translations this week: The New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the New Living Translation (NLT)  
*Romans 1.16-17 (NLT): For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. 17 This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."*

What is the "Good News"?

How is it the "power of God at work, saving everyone who believes"?

What do you think "saving" means to Paul?

What does this mean: "it is through faith that a righteous person has life."?

*Romans 1.28-32 (NASB): And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.*

What does it mean to "acknowledge God"?

What does "depraved" means to Paul? Hint: read the entire list of sins!

Do you think the Bible's understanding of depravity differs from how we regard depravity today? Why or why not?

*Romans 3.23-25 (NLT): For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. 25 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood...*

What do you think "God's glorious standard" is?

Are God's standards fair? Why or why not?

How does "God with undeserved kindness, declare that we are righteous"?

Do you think God's solution is relevant to your relationships? Why or why not?

Do you feel comfortable sharing your faith –using words that share "God's undeserved kindness? Why or why not?

*Romans 8.1-2 (NASB): Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.*

What do you think "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ" means in light of the above Scriptures you have reviewed?

Why do you think many Christians still struggle with condemnation? How can we care for Christians who are struggling?

What does it mean to be a community where "no condemnation" is intended to be a shared experience?

How can your LifeGroup celebrate a "no condemning grace"?

Is there a difference between regret, conviction and condemnation?

Can you think of anyone in your life that needs to hear this "Good News"? What might keep you from sharing this?

My prayer requests (think of what you want to share in advance)...

Praying for my group...

## Highlighting...



### We are giving Christmas Away!

We have purchased 750 beautiful noble fir trees to give away this year. Our intention is to gift trees to the military community as a "Thank You" and to simply be generous with the community surrounding our campus!

Each Sunday after the worship service, you can purchase your trees (\$45 for 2 trees) or signup to help serve at the event on Saturday, Nov 28th.

For more information stop by the table in the courtyard or call Beckey in the office at 858.565.4808.

Oct 25-Children's Musical Rehearsals

11:45am-1:30pm Children Center

Nov 1-29-Children's Musical Rehearsals

4-6pm Worship Center

Nov 1 - Night Shift with Jim Foreman

8:30-9:45am Youth Center

Nov 5 and 19 - Ruth Dig-In Bible Study

6:30-8:30 pm Fellowship Center

Nov 20-22 - High School Fall Retreat - Grades 9-12

Nov 26-27 - Office closed in observance of Thanksgiving

Nov 28 - Christmas Tree Give-A-Way



Elevate High School Fall Retreat  
Hello Faith Youth and Parents!  
It's time for the Fall Retreat!

If your child is in 9th-12th grade come join us November 20th-22nd for an awesome weekend of community and fun!

This year's theme is BREAKING NEWS!!!!

Registration is available online now and costs \$125 until November 1st. After that the price goes up to \$150. The last day to sign up is November 15th so hurry up and register now! If you have any questions please contact Ryan Silvia at [ryan@faithsandiego.org](mailto:ryan@faithsandiego.org).

