

- **What was something that your parents told you growing up, that you didn't believe at the time, but turned out to be true?**

Have fun with this question. The idea is that this will help set up the idea that there are promises from God that we have a hard time believing to be true at times.

As we continue walking with Jesus through the Gospel of John, we are going to see Jesus make those who follow Him a simple, yet powerful promise that eternal life is a gift. In the same way we failed to believe our parents, there are times in our journeys where we doubt God's promises.

Have someone volunteer to read John 10:22-30

- **Think about a season where you didn't feel secure in your relationship with God. What was happening? What did you learn from it?**

Come prepared with an example of your own in case your group is slow to open up with this question. Help them to see that their example does not need to be a massive crisis of faith. A season where they felt like God was distant or disappointed in them is also a great example worth sharing. The hope is that the moments that are shared with this question will help set up the discussion that is coming.

Have someone volunteer to read Luke 23:39-43

- **What is the significance that the criminal on the cross gets into heaven? Is this fair?**

This is a great snapshot of how eternal life is received. It is a gift. The man on the cross, despite a life of crime (which led to his execution), is deemed righteous enough to enter heaven because His belief in Jesus in his final moments. This is NOT fair, but it is why the good news is such good news. While it is not fair, God is a God of justice. The penalty of that man's sin is not swept under the rug. It is being paid for right beside him as Jesus, innocent and sinless, is being punished in his place.

- **What should his story teach us about our own salvation?**

This moment is a great reminder for us of what it is our salvation actually depends on. When you think about how the man showed up to heaven without any works to show, without ever making up for his mistakes on earth, and never coming off the cross to be baptized or do good, it shows us what our hope is really in. Our good works do not earn us anything, but we are compelled to do good works BECAUSE of what Jesus has already done for us.

Have someone volunteer to read Ephesians 2:8-9 & Romans 8:35-39

Even as we understand that eternal life is a gift from God, there are plenty of times where we doubt the truth of this promise. Many times, that looks like us doubting that it "can't be earned," and doubting that "we can't lose it."

– **Why can we believe that “we can’t EARN it?” What causes us to doubt this truth?**

Reference Ephesians 2 as your group discusses this question. This is one of the best reminders that NONE of us could possibly earn our salvation. It is a gift from Jesus. There are times in life, when we make mistakes in our journey with Jesus, where this promise may seem too good to be true or too simple. Where we may want to try to work towards a right standing with God, or list our accomplishments for God, but no matter the resume, we can’t earn it. It is important to know that our sins do affect our intimacy/connection with Jesus, but they do not change our righteousness or the fact that we belong to Him.

– **Why can we believe that” we can’t LOSE it?” What causes us to doubt this truth?**

This can be difficult for us to believe in the midst of our sins and mistakes after we’ve trusted in Jesus. Sometimes we convince ourselves that that sin was just too much for God’s grace and He must be done with us. Reference Romans 8 as your group discusses this question. The simplest way to understand this big promise is the remind ourselves that we are incapable of getting ourselves into Jesus hand (as He described), and thus we are incapable of removing ourselves. Jesus promised that no one can snatch His sheep from His hand, and Romans 8 reminds us that nothing in all creation can separate us from God. Which leads us to believe that we are included in the list of things that cannot separate us from Him.

– **How does the good news of the Gospel grant us comfort both NOW and FOREVER?**

As we discuss these promises from God, we often focus on the eternal aspect of it. Yet, the promise that we are in Jesus’ hand and that nothing can separate us from him, is also meant to grant us comfort about TODAY. Despite the storms of life and the chaos that may come our way, we are meant to always find peace and hope in what Jesus has done for us and that nothing can separate us from Him. The truth that our hope is not in our finances, our possessions, our health, or anything else. Our hope is in Him and nothing can change that.

If anyone in your group listens to the podcast there is a special surprise at the end this week.