LifeGroup Discussion Questions

The Garden City | July 16, 2023

Summary

This is the final message in the *Grasping God's Big Story* series. God has prepared a place where He can dwell with His people. Just as there are two cities in the Bible—the city of men and the City of God—believers are called to live as citizens of the heavenly city in the present and bring hope and healing to the world through the gospel.

Scripture

Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."
-Genesis 11:4 (ESV)

"But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?"-Jonah 4:11 (NLT)

"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."-Matthew 5:13-16 (NLT)

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.-Philippians 3:20 (NLT)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll." I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard

and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!"-Revelation 22:1-9 (NIV)

Let's Start

In your travels, what is the most beautiful city you have visited?

Gratitude and Prayer

How has God worked in your life since the last time we were together?

Let's Talk

1. In what ways does the concept of the Garden City inspire you? How does it shape your understanding of the future God has prepared for His people?

2. In what ways can we actively engage in the future God has prepared for us right now? How can we live as citizens of the City of God in the midst of the city of humanity?

3. Pastor Dale shared the following list of modern idols:
   - Materialism and Consumerism
   - Power and Success
   - Pleasure and Sensuality
   - Fame and Celebrity
   - Nationalism and Patriotism
   - Technology and Entertainment
   - Self-Idolatry

   Do you find yourself looking to any of these things for meaning, security and satisfaction? How?

4. How can we actively participate in the construction of the City of God in our present lives? What practical steps can we take to resist the influence of the city of humanity?

5. Reflecting on your life, how do you draw your sense of significance and value? How can we shift our focus from making a name for ourselves to finding our identity in Christ?

6. How does the gospel provide both a pessimistic and optimistic outlook on the world? How can we strike a balance between acknowledging the brokenness of humanity while remaining hopeful in the transformative power of Jesus?

Let's Act

Pastor Dale encouraged us to bring hope and healing to the world through the gospel. How can we practically do this in our daily lives and interactions with others this week?