

The Gathering Community Group Guide

TGAT Taylor Swift // Week 2 // Love Story

Paul Jenkins

September 20, 2015

John 4:1-30

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. TAKE TIME BEFORE GROUP TO GO OVER THIS GUIDE.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

In week 2 of *The Gospel According to Taylor Swift*, we examined the message of one of her very first hit songs, *Love Story*, and Paul showed us a woman in the Bible who was the perfect example of how Taylor Swift's gospel isn't powerful enough to do for us what only the gospel of Jesus can.

1. **The Gospel According to Taylor Swift:** One of the recurring themes in Taylor Swift's songs is a desire for a fairy tale romance, and this song is no exception. Of course, it's something that all of us can relate to, because Americans are spending money hand over fist to try and find love. Swift's gospel promises that all our problems could be solved if we simply found the right person.
2. **The end result of the Swift gospel:** In John 4, Jesus encountered a woman who tried to find the right person but failed 5 times. She was broken, shunned and shamed, and had a thirst for not only water, but for true love as well. She is a tragic picture of the end result of chasing that magical love story that Swift sings about. But on this day, instead of trying to find the right person, the right person found her!
3. **The Gospel According to Jesus:** Jesus does for us what the Swift gospel can't: he loves us so deeply that we are actually whole enough to love another. He changes our hearts from holes that can't be filled to reservoirs that can't be emptied! In fact, one encounter with that kind of love had this empty woman so full that she left behind her water jug!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Do you have a takeaway from this week's message that you would like to share?
- Take the time to read 1 John 4:7-21. There is a lot in those verses to unpack, so take as much time as you need to mention what we can learn about love from them and discuss your insights with the group.
- Did you notice the repeated theme in the verses about how we love only after we've been loved? Which verses communicated that theme?
- Let's stay in this passage a little longer and read 1 John 4:10. This verse gives a clear definition of what love is. True love isn't a fairy tale about men and women, but a holy pursuit of men by God. Why do you think it's so important that our definition of love be from heaven to earth instead of earth to heaven?
- Paul mentioned in the message that our hearts are either holes that can't be filled or reservoirs that can't be emptied. How does Psalm 90:14 confirm that statement? Why do you think the Psalmist asked the Lord to satisfy us "in the morning" with his love?
- Read the following verses and discuss what we learn about God's love from them: Romans 8:35-39; 1 John 4:18; John 15:13; Psalm 103:8; Jeremiah 31:3. How would being loved like that by God enable you to love others even more fully?