

A black, torn-edged banner with white text. The text is arranged in two lines: "QUESTIONS" on the top line and "JESUS ASKED" on the bottom line. The font is a classic, elegant serif typeface with decorative flourishes.

QUESTIONS
JESUS ASKED

Dear Crossroads Church Family,

Maybe you have some questions you'd like to ask Jesus. You're not alone. Those who study these things report that the Gospels record people asking Him 183 questions. He directly answered three.

On the other hand, Jesus asked lots of questions. Thought-provoking questions that prompt us to reflect on what we'd never thought about before. Questions that cause us to search our souls, and in the process, discover our need for the power of God to live a new way.

I am praying that during this six-week journey, we will each answer honestly the Questions Jesus Asked. And I strongly encourage you to journey with a few other people by joining a Life Group. We will go twice as far down the path when we travel with others.

Jesus asked these questions for a reason; they are not "gotcha" questions, they are designed to help us clarify where we are today and where we are headed tomorrow.

Will you join us?

Marked by grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'S'.

Steve Cordle
Lead Pastor
Crossroads Church

Spending Daily Time with God

One of the ways to get the most out of these 40 days is to spend daily time with God. At Crossroads, we teach the SOAP method of Bible reading because it helps focus on not just what to know, but what to do about it. SOAP is an acrostic which describes a process for encountering God in the Bible.

The steps are:

S Scripture – choose 1 verse from what you've read and write it down

O Observation – a brief (one or two sentence) summary of what you've read

A Application – one thing you can do today based on what you've read (I will...)

If you have a hard time coming up with an application, here is a list of helpful questions:

S - Is there a **Sin** to confess?

P - Is there a **Promise** to claim?

A - Is there an **Attitude** to change?

C - Is there a **Command** to obey?

E - Is there an **Example** to follow?

P - Is there a **Prayer** to pray?

E - Is there an **Error** to avoid?

T - Is there a **Truth** to believe?

S - Is there **Something** to praise God for?

P Prayer – ask God for help in doing that

Daily Time with God FAQs

What do I do if I don't understand what I've read?

Ask God in prayer to help you understand. Also, you can ask a fellow believer for their take. Try someone in your Life Group, or reach out to one of our pastors.

What happens if I miss some days?

What happens if you miss a meal? Catch the next one!

What version of the Bible should I read?

One that you can understand. We use the New International Version (NIV) and New Living Translation (NLT) at Sunday worship, but there are many good versions.

Note: Some versions are “translations” (like NIV, ESV, NASB) and some are “paraphrases” (like The Message [MSG], The Passion [TPT]). Basically, translations are “word for word” from the original languages. They are particularly good to use for study. Paraphrases are “idea for idea.” They are particularly good for devotional reading.

How much time should I take?

It's better to do a little each day than wait for a large chunk of time to open up. If you are just starting, aim for 15 minutes per day, and build from there as you can.

SOAP Sample

Luke 11:1-4

S: "One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'" Luke 11:1

O: The disciples are curious, for some reason, about how Jesus is praying. Maybe they saw the connection between Jesus' miracles and His devotion to the Father. Whatever the reason was, they wanted training and instruction in how to pray as they saw Jesus doing.

A: I will look to the example of Christ, and in this example, see His devotion to prayer. I should follow the model of the disciples, see that Jesus Himself prayed, and realize how much I should be praying. Jesus knows that being connected to the source of all things is the only way to live a fruitful life in/for the Kingdom of God.

P: Father, I look to the example of Jesus and see His devotion to You through work, life, and prayer. I pray that You will grow my heart so that I will more deeply desire to connect with You every day. Help me to pray through the decisions that come up today and to stay connected to You. Amen.

Life Group Guidelines and Tips

Group Guidelines

Here are some suggested guidelines to set out prior to discussion, especially when you start a group or have guests. Say the ones that pertain best to your group. This will foster a healthy group culture.

- We will start and end on time.
- Confidentiality. What's said in the group stays in the group.
- Share your perspective. We won't debate or give advice.
- Give space for others to respond. Silence is OK.
- Stay on topic by focusing on what we are hearing from God through Scripture.
- Avoid interrupting or separate conversations.
- Let us know if you can't make it or if you're running late.
- Bring up any concerns you may have with the leader(s).

Group Guide Tips

- It's a guide, not a script.
- You won't have time for everything. Some weeks, you will focus more on Up, In, or Out as the Spirit leads you.
- Always end Scripture discussion on "I will" statements and action steps.
- Break into smaller groups during Scripture discussion so people have space to share. This also helps prepare for multiplication.
- Don't be afraid of silence! It takes 30 seconds for the average person to process a question before being able to share.
- Lead meetings as a team with others in your group, finding ways of doing Up, In, and Out.

Week 1 - "Who Do You Say I Am?"

Message Notes

Week 1 - "Who Do You Say I Am?"

Group Guide

Big Idea: Our answer to this key question determines the direction of our lives.

Connect with God and each other. (1/3 of meeting)

- Icebreaker: What is the worst job you ever had?
- Briefly share a high and a low from your week.
- How do you hope to grow spiritually over the next 6 weeks?
- Let's spend time in prayer, taking turns completing the sentence "Thank you God for _____." Have someone close in prayer when it feels like we are done, asking for the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to hear from God.

Leader: Share the Group Guidelines from page 5 before we begin discussion. Bring attention to these periodically, especially on weeks with new guests.

Discover what God is saying to you. (1/3 of meeting).
Read Matthew 16:13-20

Context: Caesarea Philippi was a central place for pagan worship. As Jesus walked through with His disciples, they would be seeing idols and shrines to pagan gods as well as a cave thought to be a gate to Hades.

- What is significant to you from this passage?
- Why does it matter that Jesus was human?
- For Peter to say Jesus was the Messiah meant that Jesus was the promised savior of the Law and Prophets in the Old Testament. What does Jesus as Messiah mean to you?
- Share one way you are different because you are following Jesus.
- What prevents you from seeing Jesus clearly in your day to day life?

Go do it! (1/3 of meeting)

- How would you answer Jesus' question today, "Who do you say I am?"
- Based on your answer, in what way does your life need to change in order to match that declaration?
- Close with prayer:
 - For the action steps you feel called to take.
 - Finish by praying for the empty chair, that God would use one of us to invite someone to fill it next week.

Week 1 - "Who Do You Say I Am?"

Going Further

In Matthew 16, Jesus took His disciples to Caesarea Philippi, which was the northernmost spot Jesus traveled during His earthly ministry. It is a beautiful spot, with springs providing the headwaters for the Jordan River.

There, Jesus and the disciples were surrounded by the temples of many pagan gods, including Pan, Zeus, Augustus, Nymphs. The sights and sounds of the impressive buildings filled with sincere and ardent worshippers would make an impression on them.

And it was there that Jesus asked them, "Who do people say that I am?"

The disciples must have read the opinion polls. They knew the answer:

> *Some thought that Jesus was John the Baptist.*

One of those who thought that was Herod Antipas. Matthew 14:2 says, "When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, heard about Jesus, he said to his advisers, 'This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead! That is why he can do such miracles.'"

It doesn't even make sense that Jesus could be John raised (or reincarnated) because already Jesus was ministering while John was still alive.

But Herod was not responding to Jesus rationally, he was reacting emotionally out of guilt. Herod had ordered John the Baptist arrested and jailed because John had declared that Herod's marriage was not right in God's sight. (Herod had divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias, and she had to divorce her husband to marry Herod.) To compound that injustice, Herod rashly had John executed to please his wife.

In doing this, Herod had put himself in opposition to God, and it was clearly weighing on him. He had John the Baptist in the back of his mind, so when Jesus preached publicly like John did, Herod made the connection.

Today, many people decide that Jesus was merely human not because they honestly explored the issue, but rather out of emotional reaction. Either a previous interaction with the Church, or a need to justify their behavior, or to fit in with a group of people that is important to them.

> Others thought that Jesus was Elijah.

The Jewish people had been taught that a prophet like Elijah would come just before the Messiah appeared. The crowd could see that Jesus was more than an ordinary Rabbi, but they dared not think that He was the Messiah.

In the end, people did not recognize Jesus for who He was because they tried to fit Jesus into their pre-existing categories which they could understand. They could only see Him as a man, though exceptional. They were not wrong thinking that Jesus was a prophet; it's just that He is more than a prophet.

Finally, Jesus asked His disciples the penetrating question: "Who do you say that I am?"

It didn't matter much to Jesus what the public thought of Him. Public opinion changes often. Ultimately, what mattered to Him was who the disciples thought He was. Those 12 men who had spent years with Him, listening to Him teach, watching Him heal, and get equipped for ministry. If they were confused about who He was then Jesus' mission was in jeopardy.

But Peter recognized Jesus for who He was - "You are the Messiah, the son of the Living God."

Only God can reveal this to us.

If you are struggling to determine whether Jesus is the Son of God, ask God to show you.

Question to ponder: What does your life indicate about who you say that Jesus is?

SOAP

Week 1

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”
- AW Tozer

“Jesus is Lord” is a counter cultural, life-altering declaration to make, especially when we come to recognize the kind of Lord Jesus is. Allow these Scriptures to astonish you with who Jesus is and what that means for you.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Philippians 2:1-11

Isaiah 61:1-9

Colossians 1:15-23

Luke 7:1-10

Psalms 89:1-8, 14-18

Ephesians 2:1-9

Week 1 - Day 4
Luke 7:1-10

S

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A

P

Week 1 - Day 5
Psalm 89:1-8, 14-18

S

O

A

P

Week 1 - Day 6
Ephesians 2:1-9

S

O

A

P

**Week 2 - "Why Do You Call Me Lord, Lord
Yet Do Not Do What I Say?"**

Message Notes

Week 2 - "Why Do You Call Me Lord, Lord Yet Do Not Do What I Say?"

Group Guide

*Big Idea: To follow Jesus is to obey Him.
Obeying Jesus opens the door to Kingdom living.*

Connect with God and each other. (1/3 of meeting)

- Icebreaker: What cringe-worthy fashion trend did you participate in?
- What are you thankful for? What's stressing you out?
- How did it go with your action step from last week?
- Pray a Psalm together, having each person slowly read a verse of Psalm 24. Then have one person pray, asking that we would be responsive to the Holy Spirit's voice.

Discover what God is saying to you. (1/3 of meeting).

Read Luke 6:46-49

- What are your first thoughts?
- What have you based your decisions and actions on other than Jesus?
- Jesus says things like love your enemies, don't judge others, don't be afraid, forgive, etc. What's the hardest thing Jesus ever asked you to do?
- Living with Jesus as "Lord" involves risk and will always take you outside of your comfort zone. Why?
- Obeying Jesus opens the door to Kingdom living, which means we bring the reality of Heaven to earth. What could that look like in your day to day life?

Go do it! (1/3 of meeting)

- What area of your life feels nearly impossible to give Jesus control of right now?
- How is God calling you to a deeper level of trust? Break into pairs and pray for one another.

Week 2 - "Why Do You Call Me Lord, Lord Yet Do Not Do What I Say?"

Going Further

By the time we start reading Luke 6, it is understood from the previous chapter that Jesus is under a microscope with the Pharisees and religious people of the day looking on. Luke 5:17 tells us that they had come from far and wide to observe Jesus. The chapter begins with Jesus heading to the temple and disciples following, eating kernels of corn in a field. A task that was frowned upon because of its loose compliance with the religious law of the Sabbath: there would be no harvesting or work.

Another Sabbath is documented, where Jesus heals a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees and religious people are quite shocked and angry. In their mind, Jesus was noncompliant with the law of the Sabbath, a law that distinguished the Jewish people from all others. This was a law to be obeyed in the strictest form. But as we can see from Luke 6, Jesus had a higher view. One that did not oppose the law but rather put people over religious practices. Jesus was laying a foundation for the ethic of love.

Jesus goes on to choose the twelve disciples. At this point, we see concentric circles surrounding Jesus. The twelve who were His chosen disciples, another group of larger people following Him, also called disciples, and yet another group, the crowd or the masses. All recognized His power to heal and His ability to teach and tried to get close to Him and touch Him to receive healing.

Jesus gathers with the twelve, a large group of disciples, and a great crowd from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon. (Luke 6:17) Looking at His disciples, Jesus began preaching one of His greatest messages. He gave a voice to the poor, oppressed, and marginalized and called them blessed. He gave instructions to love your enemies. He exhorted people to forgive and not condemn, to be generous, and to tend one's own heart.

Then Jesus asks Luke 6:46, *“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”*

Jesus offers this rhetorical question to ponder. There was a law in place to obey, and now, there is a Lord to obey. The law has been given flesh and blood, legs, hands, feet, and a heart. This is Jesus. The law was an exclusive command that marked the Jewish people and religious leaders. The Lord Jesus laid out a new course to obey, marked with inclusion, love, and care for others. This new obedience Jesus called people to was action marked by grace.

A religion marked by ceremony and rules often serves to create a barrier or fence to the movement. It is a movement whose highest priority is correctness rather than compassion. But Jesus was breaking barriers down, creating a community of love. When individuals obey the commands of Christ, it is powerful, but when whole communities do so, the community becomes a transformative force for the Kingdom. Winning the lost will take a whole community of believers tending their own hearts, repenting, obeying, and loving Jesus.

How can we help each other in our groups love and obey Jesus together to be a transformative community? As you journal, ask God to show you:

Question to ponder: Ask God to show you
-What area of my heart needs to be submitted to You?
-How am I doing loving people?
-Is there anyone I need to forgive?

SOAP

Week 2

“Obedience to God’s will is the secret of spiritual knowledge and insight. It is not willingness to know, but willingness to DO (obey) God’s will that brings certainty.”
- Eric Liddell

Throughout the Bible, God honors obedience. To follow Jesus is to obey Him. Allow these passages to fuel your obedience to the Lord and watch Him work in your life.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Psalm 119:33-40

Deuteronomy 11:8-15

1 Samuel 15:13-26

John 14:15-27

Matthew 7:24-29

James 2:14-26

Week 2 - Day 1
Psalm 119:33-40

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Week 2 - Day 2
Deuteronomy 11:8-15

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Week 2 - Day 4
John 14:15-27

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Week 2 - Day 6
James 2:14-26

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**Week 3 - "Can Any of You by Worrying
Add a Single Hour to Your Span of Life?"**

Message Notes

Week 3 - "Can Any of You by Worrying Add a Single Hour to Your Span of Life?"

Group Guide

*Big Idea: Worry is fruitless and unnecessary
for Jesus' followers.*

Connect with God and each other. (1/3 of meeting)

- Icebreaker: Ketchup on the side or on top of fries?
- How have you seen God at work this week? OR What's something you're thankful for?
- Pray for one another's needs, whether it's physical, emotional, relational, or spiritual. Take turns sharing a need, then someone else prays a short, honest prayer for them.

Discover what God is saying to you. (1/3 of meeting).

Read Luke 12:22-34

- What speaks to you from this passage?
- What do you think it means that "your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom"?
- What would those who know you best say you treasure? How does that play into worry?
- Why is it important to avoid "praying it away" or being dismissive when you or someone you know are struggling?
- Share what helps you to break a cycle of worry when you find yourself ruminating.

Go do it! (1/3 of meeting)

- What are you going to do differently the next time you fall into a cycle of worry? Make an "I will" statement.
- What is an area of concern that you need to lay at Jesus' feet today? Take time to pray for each person as they share.

Week 3 - "Can Any of You by Worrying Add a Single Hour to Your Span of Life?"

Going Further

For all the statistics on the alarming anxiety levels across Western culture today, worry is not a recent development. History is marked by ages of the anxiety of war, famine, and insecurity. Worry is the nagging companion of humanity that can haunt life like a shadow, both now and back through the record of the human condition.

In Luke 12, Jesus observes this old foe (anxiety) in His disciples and the crowd that formed to listen to Him preach. The scenario begins when a listener interjects with a plea.

"Teacher," he said, "please tell my brother to divide our father's estate with me" (v. 13).

Unamused with the request, Jesus replies with the thesis for the next movement of His sermon:

Beware... Life is not measured by how much you own (v. 15).

An important theological theme though Luke's gospel is reorientation. The arrival of Jesus into the world marked a new beginning – the Kingdom of God was now near. The old ways were gone. God's promise of redeeming all things through Israel was unfolding before the world in the flesh of Jesus. God initiated the new thing that will, in time, bring all things into a state of union with God (Isa. 43:16-21; Rev. 21:1-4). Luke presents the ministry of Jesus as one that reorients Israel to this new reality. Repeatedly Jesus addresses the ways of old that were rendered senseless in His presence and guides all to consider the ways of the new reality all could participate in. It was Jesus' way of saying, Let's get on with the new thing already!

Jesus receives the man's interjection in Luke 12 as the opportunity to reorient the crowd away from the old reality (anxiety) to the new reality available to them (trust in God). He first offers a parable of a foolish rich farmer who's baffled to learn that all the possessions he accumulated to relieve his worry offer him nothing for eternity (vv. 16-21). In Jesus' mind, one can be "rich," and others can be "rich towards God" (v. 21). The distinction is deafening.

Jesus proceeds by offering another way to address the worries of the world. With the parable of the rich farmer fresh in the listeners' minds, Jesus presents a contrasting image: a raven.

In those days, ravens were considered dirty nuisances. But even they, Jesus explains, do not scramble to sow or reap, and surely do not build up barns for themselves like the rich farmer did. Yet, God feeds them. They never go hungry. Similarly, Jesus explains that God's provision is available to all who seek Him, but to an even greater measure. The dirty birds being fed had nothing to do with their anxious striving.

In the same way, our worry does nothing to yield us what we truly need, and what will last forever. If one cannot even do as simple of a thing as adding a single hour to life from worrying, what's worrying good for?

The new reality Jesus invites His audience into is one where God is not distant and unmoved, but "pleased to give the kingdom" (v. 32). Worrying leads to nothing of eternal value. Seeking out this freely given Kingdom does (v. 31).

Question to ponder: What would it look like for your actions to be driven by "seeking the kingdom" instead of worrying?

SOAP

Week 3

*“Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts
whirling around a center of fear.”*
- Corrie Ten Boom

Jesus calls us to look to Him in all matters that concern us when we experience fear and worry. Pray through these Scriptures and notice how God strengthens your faith in who He is to care for you.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Psalm 139

Matthew 6:25-34

Philippians 4:4-20

Psalm 23

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Isaiah 55:1-9

Week 3 - Day 1
Psalm 139

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Week 3 - Day 2
Matthew 6:25-34

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Week 3 - Day 3
Philippians 4:4-20

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Week 3 - Day 4
Psalm 23

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Week 3 - Day 5
2 Corinthians 4:7-18

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Week 3 - Day 6
Isaiah 55:1-9

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**Week 4 - "Do You Believe That
I Am Able to Do This?"
Message Notes**

Week 4 - "Do You Believe That I Am Able to Do This?"

Group Guide

Big Idea: Jesus calls us to bold faith in His power.

Connect with God and each other. (1/3 of meeting)

- Icebreaker: If you could hang out with a cartoon character, who would it be and why?
- Share a high and low from your week.
- How did you live out your "I will" statement you made last week after talking about worry?
- Compliment chair is a way of looking "Up" that helps us to hear from God for one another (prophetic prayer). The role of prophecy is to encourage and build up others. (1 Corinthians 14:3)
 1. Place a chair in the center of the group and nominate someone to sit in it.
 2. Ask God for a word to share that will leave this person encouraged and built up, paying attention to anything you might see, sense, or feel. Give space to listen.
 3. Take turns speaking out what you are hearing for this person as long as it follows the ABCs: Affirming, Biblical, and Christ-like.

Discover what God is saying to you. (1/3 of meeting).

Read Matthew 9:27-34

- Considering the difference between the two healings, what does this passage tell us about faith?
- What key characteristics do these blind men exhibit?
- What does it mean to have bold faith?
- There were different reactions to the healings. What is your knee jerk reaction when someone claims that God has answered prayer? Skepticism? Belief?
- How does faith or lack of faith impact your prayer life?

Go do it! (1/3 of meeting)

- In what area do you wrestle with a lack of faith in God's ability to work?
- What would it look like for you to take a step of faith in that area?
- Pray for those steps of faith as well as for the empty chair, that God would use us to invite someone new for next week.

Challenge for the week: Pray with boldness and persistence over this part of your life. We'll check in next week!

Week 4 - "Do You Believe That I Am Able to Do This?"

Going Further

Faith of a Child

In modern culture, there is a strong emphasis on pushing the boundaries of what is possible. These advancements provide us modern capabilities never thought possible by our predecessors. Medical discoveries, the internet, and modern ways of long-distance travel are some examples to name a few. While these things can be great, the pendulum can sometimes swing too far, and one can begin to make advancement synonymous with progress. In Matthew 18:3, Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

It is easy for us to forget how sovereign God is and begin to put things on our shoulders that we are unable to carry. Imagine you are sitting at the dinner table about to partake in a meal. A young child walks up to the table with an empty belly. There is no expectation placed on the child to go and earn the money to first pay for the meal, or to fire up the stove and prepare it. Yet, the child is provided for from the love of the parent. This is how God wants us to exercise our faith. Do we really trust that God is going to provide "ALL of our needs, according to HIS riches and glory?"

Do You Believe I Am Able to Do This?

In Matthew 9:27-29, we read a story about two blind men following behind Jesus and begging, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" Jesus asks the men, "do you believe I can make you see?" The heart behind this question is one I pray echoes through our hearts every time we present an ask to God. Replace the men's blindness in the story and insert whatever thing in your life that you're praying for and ask yourself, "do I believe Jesus can _____?"

One's faith is not dependent on whether God gives us what we perceive as our needs. Our faith is better invested when we answer the question, "Can Jesus do it?" He has promised to provide all of our needs. Do we believe that He is going to keep that promise?

The problem happens when we lose sight between a want versus a need. One hundred years ago, if one was to conduct a study and ask the question, "what is your list for biggest needs?" then asked the same question to people in America today, those answers would look very different! Like the child coming to eat the prepared meal, we must have a childlike faith that empowers us to trust in the Lord because He wants to provide for us. Matthew 7:8-11 says, "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

Question to ponder: What are areas that I am fully trusting in God? What are some areas of unbelief I am dealing with in terms of what Jesus can do?

SOAP

Week 4

*Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers.
Pray for power equal to your tasks.
- Phillips Brooks*

Jesus calls us to bold faith in His power. The Scriptures this week focus on examples of people who exhibited bold faith in the middle of very challenging circumstances.

Daily Scripture Readings:

1 Kings 17:7-24

1 Samuel 17:32-50

Daniel 3:8-30

Mark 2:1-12

Acts 16:16-34

Acts 7:51-60

Week 4 - Day 2
1 Samuel 17:32-50

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P

Week 4 - Day 4
Mark 2:1-12

S

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A

P

Week 4 - Day 6
Acts 7:51-60

S

O

A

P

Week 5 - "Do You Love Me?"
Message Notes

Week 5 - "Do You Love Me?" Group Guide

Big Idea: *Knowing Jesus loves and accepts us leads us to love Him back.*

Connect with God and each other. (Note: leave extra time for the ending section this week)

- Icebreaker: If you had to delete all but 3 apps from your smartphone, which ones would you keep?
- Thus far, how has God challenged or spoken to you during this series?
- How did it go praying with boldness and persistence over the area you mentioned last week?
- Have someone pray, welcoming what God has to say to us today.

Discover what God is saying to you. Read John 21:15-19

Context: Earlier, Peter had denied Jesus 3 times and was feeling low about it when once again, Jesus invited him to "follow me."

- On a scale from 1-10, how much do you live in touch with the reality that Jesus unconditionally loves and accepts you?
- Why do you think it can be difficult to accept and receive God's gift of unconditional love?
- The disciples had reverted to their old way of living, because it was safe and comfortable. What is your go to when it gets hard to follow Jesus?
- How have you seen God redeem your moments of weakness or pain for His purposes?
- What are the things that compete for your love of Jesus?

Go do it! (1/3 of meeting)

- Spend 2-3 minutes in silence to reflect and journal the following questions. The word "love" has different meanings in each of Jesus' questions. How would you respond if Jesus asked you:
 - Do you truly love Me more than other people?
 - Does your heart burn for Me?
 - Do you have great affection for Me?
- Share what came up for you.
- Close with a time of worship and adoring Jesus.
 - Choose a song to sing in worship.Recommended song: What a Beautiful Name
 - Thank Jesus for who He is and the ways you've seen Him work.
 - Take turns praising Jesus for the way He's been at work through those in your group.

Action step: Plan for the group to have fun or serve together, keeping in mind those you'd like to invite.

Going Further

The Gospel of John's climax is undoubtedly in chapter 20 when the risen Jesus appears to Mary and the disciples. Apparently, the disciples aren't entirely sure what to do with this. So in chapter 21, we find them back in their comfort zone and old routines, with Peter and others fishing. It's understandable. We tend to enjoy what we're good at doing. Following Jesus had never been a predictable lifestyle, and they had really dropped the ball when they scattered as Jesus was tried and crucified. Worst of all, Peter had 3 times denied even knowing Jesus.

Then the risen Jesus appears at their fishing outing and seizes the moment to have a do-over of when He originally called Peter (Matthew 4:18-22). As they eat at the fire, Jesus addresses the elephant in the room, asking Peter 3 times if he loves Him, restoring him from disgrace and empowering him to "feed his sheep."

But then, Jesus gets ominous. In Verse 18-19, Jesus says to Peter, "Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Wait, what's that supposed to mean? We find out in the next part of the verse. "Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God."

Peter's love would lead him to places he would never choose to go.
Peter's love and devotion would have a cost.

Throughout the Gospel of John, John refers to Jesus' death as his "glorification" (Ex: John 12:23). Church tradition tells us that Peter was crucified upside down for his faith (he didn't feel worthy to die in the same way that Jesus did). This was not a unique end for the apostles, or early Christians for that matter. Early church father Tertullian once remarked that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." The church grew stronger in persecution. As they are brutally killed for their faith, they view it as sharing in Christ's glory. When we think of glory, we think of red-carpet treatment and the rewards of status. If we're going to opt into something, it better have perks! But this is not the counterintuitive glory of Christ.

It's true, there are immense rewards for following Jesus. We get to live our life alongside the Creator of the universe and know Him as our Heavenly Father! We have access to resources far beyond our own potential. But it is all too common today for following Jesus to become an add-on or an accessory to our life. We can use Jesus for our self-improvement efforts. But the faith of so many fellow saints, both globally and historically, attests to the reality that love for Jesus will inevitably lead us to places we do NOT want to go.

Peter's story asks: do we love Jesus more than self-preservation? Do we love Him when it means doing something that goes against our will?

Where will your love for Jesus lead you?

***Question to ponder: When has your love for Jesus cost you?
Is there an area in your life that you are
avoiding the cost of following Him?***

SOAP

Week 5

“Feed my sheep: God is saying identify yourself with My interests in others; not identify Me with your interest in others.”

- Oswald Chambers

When we recognize how deeply we are loved and accepted by God, our response is to love God and love others the way He loves us.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Psalm 51:10-17

1 John 4:7-21

Isaiah 43:1-7

Ephesians 3:14-21

Psalm 36:5-12

Romans 8:31-39

Week 5 - Day 2
1 John 4:7-21

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Week 5 - Day 4
Ephesians 3:14-21

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Week 5 - Day 6
Romans 8:31-39

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**Week 6 - "Couldn't You Watch With Me
Even One Hour?"
Message Notes**

**Week 6 - "Couldn't You Watch With Me
Even One Hour?"**

Group Guide

Thursday, March 28 is Maundy Thursday - a day for commemorating the Last Supper. We encourage you and your group from all regions of Crossroads to attend the Maundy Thursday service at Crossroads Pittsburgh West.

This special service will be historic in the life of our church as the role of Lead Pastor of Crossroads Church transitions from Pastor Steve Cordle to Pastor Christy Gibas. Pastor Steve will transition to the role of Founding Pastor.

Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, March 28

6:30 p.m.

Crossroads West

1000 Crossroads Drive

Oakdale, PA 15071

Week 6 - "Couldn't You Watch With Me Even One Hour?"

Going Further

Matthew 26:37 He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed.

Peter, James, and John were the three disciples who were closest to Jesus. They were His best friends. They experienced things together that others didn't; for example, the Transfiguration. Jesus took His three friends up the mountain with Him when He was going to seek God. It was there that He was transformed --- the glory of God blazed around Him. (Matthew 17:1-13) It was a preview of His glorification after He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. Peter, James, and John saw it and were overwhelmed.

But this time, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was not going to be transfigured; He was going to be betrayed. He opened up to them:

Verse 38: He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Jesus was facing the deepest crisis of His life – of anyone's life – and He reached out to His best friends to pray with Him and for Him. He needed them. He was about to take on the physical agony of dying on a cross and the spiritual agony of taking on the sins of the world.

And He asked for His friends to be there for Him and to pray with Him.

Verse 39: He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

Jesus was struggling with surrender. He was praying in agony because He knew what God was asking of Him, and He needed strength to say the final "yes." In this crucial moment, He looked to His friends to be with Him so He wouldn't have to face the darkness alone. He needed them to pray with Him.

But His friends weren't there.

Well, they were present, but they kept falling asleep. They were not sharing in Jesus' agony of the will.

When Jesus found them sleeping, He asked Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour?" (v. 40)

The answer was obviously, "no."

Just minutes before, Peter had vowed to die with Jesus. Now he couldn't even stay awake for Jesus.

Why?

Jesus told him: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the body is weak." (v. 40)

The better translation says, "... the flesh is weak." Jesus was not just referring to the weakness of the physical body, which must have been deep, but rather to the weakness of our humanity, our mortality.

Peter's vow to die for Jesus was his spirit speaking: he was willing. A part of him wanted to be faithful to Jesus, but another part of him couldn't keep from falling asleep. That was his flesh. They fight one another.

Our bold declarations of what we will do for Jesus often come from our spirits – that is, the part of us that wants to be faithful and bold for Jesus. But then the flesh kicks in and it is far too easy to follow the moment and to fall asleep.

Here is the good news: After being arrested at Gethsemane, Jesus went to the cross and died both for our sins and to free us from the dominion of our flesh.

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. - Colossians 2:13-14.

SOAP

Week 6

“Help me, Lord, to remember that faith is not to be confined to the church, nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am in Thy Presence.”

- Susannah Wesley

We are called to be focused, with our eyes on the prize. The motivation is not to gain for ourselves, but to live a life close to Christ so others may benefit. Together we stand firm against the plans of the enemy, and pray for God’s purposes.

Daily Scripture Readings:

1 Peter 5:6-11

1 Corinthians 9:19-25

2 Corinthians 3:10-25

Hebrews 12:1-6

James 1:2-12

2 Corinthians 12:5-10

Week 6 - Day 1
1 Peter 5:6-11

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Week 6 - Day 2
1 Corinthians 9:19-25

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Week 6 - Day 3
2 Corinthians 3:10-25

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Week 6 - Day 4
Hebrews 12:1-6

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Week 6 - Day 6
2 Corinthians 12:5-10

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