

Life Issues Series

Hope For Real Life

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."

Matthew 9:35-38

About The Life Issue Series

"More Life!" is the unconscious prayer of all creation..."
- George MacDonald

"More Life!" Think about it. Isn't this what we really want - More Life? You and I along with our families and friends share with humanity a profound passion, thirst, and even an ache for more life. Everyone, consciously some of the time and unconsciously most of the time, is searching for more life. When we stop to listen, we can sometimes hear that yearning for "more life" all around us through our own lives, family, friends, the media, and the famous.

For example, long before winning his fourth Super Bowl as the quarterback for the New England Patriots, Tom Brady said...

"Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, 'Hey man, that is what is.' I reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think, 'It's got to be more than this.' I mean this isn't, this can't be what it's all cracked up to be."

And what if "more life" has something to do with God? George Harrison, ex-Beatle, said...

*"Everything else can wait,
but the search for God can't wait."*

The *Life Issues Series* is about discovering hope for real life amid the issues of life we all face such as stress, money, relationships, fear, longing for love, and purpose. And this series is also about discovering more about Jesus - who Jesus is, how he connects to real life, and even discovering what he has to say about finding "more life." In fact, Jesus said, *"My purpose is to give life in all its fullness."*

The 24 Sessions in the *Life Issues Series* each contain a passage from the Bible focused on a life issue or discovering more about Jesus Christ.

You might start out by picking 2-3 of the *Life Issues Series* sessions and go through them with another friend or with a small group of friends. Each session has the same format to help guide you in discovering more about the passage of the Bible and how it might speak to your life.

"The Glory of God is man fully alive." – Irenaeus

A complete PDF copy of this booklet is available for printing by going to NavigatorsDetroit.com and clicking on "Creating Discussion Groups"

The Navigators Detroit Ministries

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All Bible passages are taken from the New Living Translation.



Reading The Bible With Seeker Friends

*"Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart
what is written in it, because the time is near."*

- Revelation 1:3

*"Everything else can wait,
but the search for God can't wait."*

- George Harrison, Ex-Beatle

Three Ways to Read the Bible with Seeker Friends...

One-to-One

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

Proverbs 27:17

One Christian reading the Word with a seeker friend
in a home, office, or restaurant.

Two-on-two

"Calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two..."

Mark 6:7

Two Christians reading the Word with two seeker friends
in a home, office or restaurant.

Three Christians with five to ten seeker friends

*"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend
themselves, a cord of three strands is not quickly broken."*

Ecclesiastes 4:12

A triad of Christians reading the Word with five to ten
seeker friends in a home or office.

Getting Started

- Develop a list of potential people to invite to your reading group.
- Pray daily over your list of names.
- Go deeper in your relationship with potential people.
- Initiate some spiritual conversations. For example: “Do you have a faith background?” “How could I pray for you?”
- Ask God to give you one or two Christian partners to co-labor with you.

Extending The Invitation To Your Seeker Friends

(Possible ways to invite your friends)

- “The Bible says a lot about money, stress, and relationships. Would you be interested in reading a short passage from the Bible on one of these subjects?” Maybe show them one of the studies.
- “I’m planning to get together with a small group of us from the office (neighborhood) for an hour discussion about money, stress or relationships from the Bible. It would be great to have you join us. It’s open to anyone, no matter what perspective people are coming from. Would you have interest in checking it out once?” Show them one of the studies.
- “In a couple of months, I’m planning to get together a small group of us from the office (neighborhood) for an hour discussion about money, stress or relationships from the Bible. When I get around to this, could I invite you to come once? No obligation.”
- “Would you be interested in investigating what Jesus said about himself and putting life together?”



Some Helpful Guidelines For Group Discussion

- The purpose of the Life Issues Series is to have an open and enjoyable discussion about real life issues as they relate to the Bible and Jesus Christ.
- The format is an informal discussion centered on:
 - ◊ Touching base on our lives.
 - ◊ Reflecting on previous discussions.
 - ◊ Reading and discussing a passage from the Bible using five discussion questions.
- The aim is to explore, discover, learn and apply the Bible to everyday life.
- Resist the urge to teach. Instead try to listen and ask questions so everyone can discover answers for themselves.
- Take turns guiding the discussions to encourage everyone's participation.
- Discussion Tips:
 - ◊ Stick to the topic or passage under discussion.
 - ◊ Avoid tangents.
 - ◊ When discussing the Bible, let it speak for itself.
- Allow people to ask questions and share their thoughts.
- Our aim is to have a good discussion of the passage at hand.
- Maintain confidentiality, courtesy and respect toward others.
- Begin and end on time.

Stress Amid Our Chaotic Lives

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

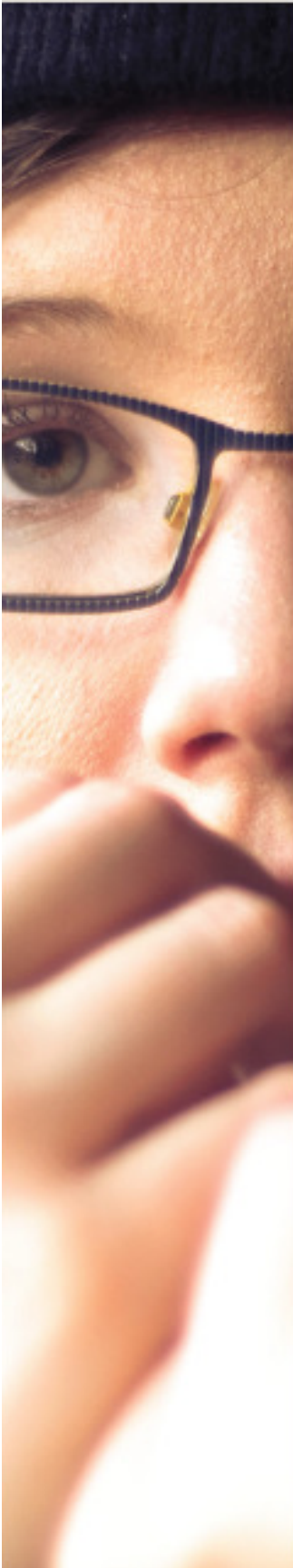
Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Matthew 6:25-34 (Jesus is speaking)

²⁵“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁸And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, ²⁹yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? ³¹So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³²These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. ³⁴So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?



Freedom From Our Stress

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passages from the Bible and let’s retell them in our own words.

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Philippians 4:6-9

⁶ Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. ⁸ And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. ⁹ Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Discussion Questions

1. What do these passages tell us about God?
2. What do these passages tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from these passages?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about these passages could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Overcoming Our Fears With Faith

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passages from the Bible and let’s retell them in our own words.

John 14:27

²⁷ I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, do not depend on your own understanding. ⁶ Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.

Discussion Questions

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Moving From Fear To Hope

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passages from the Bible and let’s retell them in our own words.

John 16:33

³³*Jesus said, “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”*

Jeremiah 29:11

¹¹*“For I know the plans I have for you.” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”*

Deuteronomy 31:6

⁶*So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.*

Isaiah 26:3

³³*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*

Psalms 56:3-4

³*But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.* ⁴*I praise God for what He has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?*

Discussion Questions

1. What do these passages tell us about God?
2. What do these passages tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from these passages?
4. If you believed these passages were true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply them to your life?
5. What about these passages could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

What About Money?

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

⁶ Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. ⁷ After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. ⁸ So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.

⁹ But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows ...

¹⁷ Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. ¹⁹ By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

Discussion Questions

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2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Fame & Fortune

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passages from the Bible and let’s retell them in our own words.

I Chronicles 29:10-12

¹⁰ O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever!

¹¹ Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. ¹² Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.

Ecclesiastes 5:10

¹⁰ Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness!

Matthew 6:19-21, 24

¹⁹ Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

²⁴ No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Mark 12:41-44

⁴¹ Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. ⁴² Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins, ⁴³ Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. ⁴⁴ For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on.”

Discussion Questions

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5. What about these passages could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

I Am Known And Accepted By God

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Psalm 139:1-18

¹O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. ²You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I’m far away. ³You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. ⁴You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. ⁵You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! ⁷I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! ⁸If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. ⁹If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, ¹⁰even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. ¹¹I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—¹²but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. ¹³You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. ¹⁵You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. ¹⁶You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. ¹⁷How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! ¹⁸I can’t even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

Discussion Questions

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2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

God Works Everything For Our Good Because He Loves Us

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Romans 8:28-39

²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. ²⁹ For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory. ³¹ What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? ³² Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else? ³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, pleading for us. ³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. ³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Discussion Questions

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Relating To & Loving The People In Your Life

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Romans 12:9-21

⁹ Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹ Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. ¹² Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. ¹³ When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. ¹⁵ Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all! ¹⁷ Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ¹⁸ Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the LORD. ²⁰ Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.” ²¹ Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
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Loving Others Is The Greatest Virtue

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

1 Corinthians 13

¹ If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. ³ If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing. ⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. ⁸ Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! ⁹ Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! ¹⁰ But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. ¹² Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. ¹³ Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

Discussion Questions

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Loving God & The People Around Us

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?” ²⁷ The man answered, “‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” ²⁸ “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!” ²⁹ The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. ³¹ By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. ³² A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. ³³ Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. ³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’” ³⁶ Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. ³⁷ The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

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Jesus—The Healer & Forgiver

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Mark 2:1-12

¹ When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. ² Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God’s word to them, ³ four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. ⁴ They couldn’t bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. ⁵ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “My child, your sins are forgiven.” ⁶ But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, ⁷ “What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!” ⁸ Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, “Why do you question this in your hearts? ⁹ Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk’? ¹⁰ So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.” Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, ¹¹ “Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!” ¹² And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, “We’ve never seen anything like this before!”

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Who Is Jesus And What Has He Done For Us?

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Colossians 1:13-23

¹³ For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, ¹⁴ who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. ¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶ for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. ¹⁸ Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. ¹⁹ For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, ²⁰ and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross. ²¹ This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. ²³ But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don’t drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God’s servant to proclaim it.

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?



Jesus—Bringing Light Into Our Dark World

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

John 1:1-14

¹ In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He existed in the beginning with God. ³ God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. ⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. ⁶ God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. ¹² But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. ¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Jesus—Meets A Man Seeking God

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

John 3:1-21

¹There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. ²After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” ³Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again,* you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” ⁴“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” ⁵Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You * must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.” ⁹“How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked. ¹⁰Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? ¹¹I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. ¹²But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. ¹⁶For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe

Continued on the next page...



Jesus—Meets A Man Seeking God

Continued from the previous page ... John 3:1-21

in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. ²⁰ All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?



Jesus—Offers Living Water To A Wayward Woman

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

John 4:1-26

¹Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John ²(though Jesus himself didn’t baptize them—his disciples did). ³So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. ⁴He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink.” ⁸He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. ⁹The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. ^{*}She said to Jesus, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?” ¹⁰Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.” ¹¹“But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?” ¹²And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?” ¹³Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.” ¹⁵“Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.” ¹⁶“Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her. ¹⁷“I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied. Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!” ¹⁹“Sir,” the woman

Continued on the next page...



Jesus—Offers Living Water To A Wayward Woman

Continued from the previous page ... John 4:1-26

said, “You must be a prophet.”²⁰ So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”²¹ Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem.”²² You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews.²³ But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”²⁵ The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”²⁶ Then Jesus told her, “I am the Messiah!”

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Jesus—Claims He Made About Himself

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passages from the Bible and let’s retell them in our own words.

John 6:35

³⁵ *Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

John 8:12

¹² *Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”*

John 10:7-8

⁷ *Jesus explained to them: “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them.”*

John 10:10-11

¹⁰ *Jesus said, “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.”*

John 11:25-26

²⁵ *Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. ²⁶ Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”*

John 14:6

⁶ *Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”*

Discussion Questions

1. What do these passages tell us about God?
2. What do these passages tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from these passages?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about these passages could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Jesus—The Gatekeeper

To A Full Life

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

John 10:1-21

¹Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber!” ²But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t know his voice.” ⁶Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn’t understand what he meant, ⁷so he explained it to them: “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. ¹⁰The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. ¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. ¹²A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. ¹³The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the money and doesn’t really care about the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, ¹⁵just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd. ¹⁷The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again.

Continued on the next page...



Jesus—The Gatekeeper To A Full Life

Continued from previous page ... John 10:1-21

¹⁸ *No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.* ¹⁹ *When he said these things, the people were again divided in their opinions about him.* ²⁰ *Some said, “He’s demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?”* ²¹ *Others said, “This doesn’t sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”*

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?



Jesus—Brings A Man Back To Life

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

John 11:1-27, 33-44

¹A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. ²This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord’s feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. ³So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, “Lord, your dear friend is very sick.” ⁴But when Jesus heard about it he said, “Lazarus’s sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this.” ⁵So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, ⁶he stayed where he was for the next two days. ⁷Finally, he said to his disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.” ⁸But his disciples objected. “Rabbi,” they said, “only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?” ⁹Jesus replied, “There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. ¹⁰But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light.” ¹¹Then he said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up.” ¹²The disciples said, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!” ¹³They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died. ¹⁴So he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵And for your sakes, I’m glad I wasn’t there, for now you will really believe. Come, let’s go see him.” ¹⁶Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s go, too—and die with Jesus.” ¹⁷When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. ¹⁸Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. ²⁰When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.” ²³Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴“Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.” ²⁵Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me

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Jesus—Brings A Man Back To Life

Continued from previous page ... John 11:1-27, 33-44

will live, even after dying.²⁶ Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God." ---³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within Him, and He was deeply troubled.³⁴ "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see."³⁵ Then Jesus wept.³⁶ The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!"³⁷ But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"³⁸ Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance.³⁹ "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."⁴⁰ Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?"⁴¹ So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me."⁴² You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."⁴³ Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"⁴⁴ And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in grave clothes, his face wrapped in a head cloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Jesus—His One Of A Kind Birth

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Matthew 1:18—2:12

¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. ²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet: ²³ “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus. ¹ Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ² “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.” ³ King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. ⁴ He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?” ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote: ⁶ ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’” ⁷ Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. ⁸ Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him,

Continued on the next page...

Jesus—His One Of A Kind Birth

Continued from the previous page ... Matthew 1:18—2:12

come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!”⁹ After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was.¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.¹² When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Jesus—His Death For Us

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

Luke 23:32-47

³² Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. ³³ When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. ³⁵ The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” ³⁶ The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. ³⁷ They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.” ³⁹ One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!” ⁴⁰ But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die?” ⁴¹ We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” ⁴³ And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.” ⁴⁴ By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. ⁴⁵ The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus shouted, “Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!” And with those words he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ When the Roman officer overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, “Surely this man was innocent.”

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

Jesus—Comes Back To Life For Us

Touching Base – What’s going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today’s Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let’s retell it in our own words.

John 20:1-31

¹Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ² She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, “They have taken the Lord’s body out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” ³ Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. ⁴ They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. ⁸ Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— ⁹ for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then they went home. ¹¹ Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹² She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³ “Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her. “Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” ¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him. ¹⁵ “Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?” She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.” ¹⁶ “Mary!” Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”). ¹⁷ “Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message. ¹⁹ That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind

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Jesus—Comes Back To Life For Us

Continued from the previous page ... John 20:1-31

locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said.²⁰ As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!²¹ Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”²² Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”²⁴ One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came.²⁵ They told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said.²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”²⁸ “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”³⁰ The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book.³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?



Jesus—Declaring What's Most Important

Touching Base – What's going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today's Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let's retell it in our own words.

Mark 12:28-34

²⁸One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" ²⁹Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD.' ³⁰And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' ³¹The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." ³²The teacher of religious law replied, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. ³³And I know it is important to love Him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law." ³⁴Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." And after that, no one dared to ask Him any more questions.

Discussion Questions

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about this passage could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

God's Initiative And Our Belief in Him

Touching Base – What's going on in our lives ... any highs or lows?

Reflecting – What have you thought about, applied to your life, or shared with others from our last discussion?

Today's Topic – Read the passage from the Bible and let's retell it in our own words.

John 1:12

¹But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 3:16

¹⁶For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

Ephesians 2:1-10

¹Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. ⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. ⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Discussion Questions

1. What do these passages tell us about God?
2. What do these passages tell us about people?
3. What else did you learn from this passage?
4. If you believed this was true, what could be the benefits and how might you apply it to your life?
5. What about these passages could you share with someone else, and who might that be?

