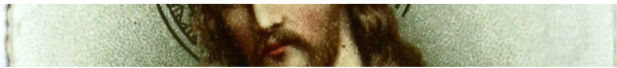


CHRISTIAN ?



REIMAGINING IT ALL

CROSSWALK CHRISTIAN?

Written by Dr. Pastor Tim Gillespie,

Tim Gillespie, Paddy McCoy, Mike Rhynus and Bryant Rodriguez.

Designed by Crosswalk Church

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Greetings,

What a year it has been. As I write this we are 52 weeks since we have met together in our worship center! It is almost impossible to think that we have been apart for so long. But during this absence there has been a great deal of time to reflect on what the term Christian really means. Where did it come from, and why was it used. Also, what does it mean for us to label ourselves as Christians, as people who claim that Christ is everything to them? How can we re-engage this term, this label, and this life? Are we doing damage to the name of Christ and the idea of Christianity when we tie it too closely to our identity, to our nation, or to our socio-economic status? Does the term mean the same thing to everyone who calls themselves a Christian? And what does Scripture say about what it means to be a follower of Christ? What are the implications of that term, and how do we conduct ourselves in a manner that does justice to the God that we serve. We are going to take 12 weeks to work this through. Thanks for coming along on the journey with us!

Pastor Tim and the Crosswalk Team.

Grace to you, and Peace.

Pastor Timothy Gillespie

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Gillespie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

WEEK 1

Matthew 16:13-16, Mark 8:27-29, and Luke 9:18-20,
and then John 6: 67-71, Matthew 16: 21-23, Mark 8: 31-33 and Luke 9:22

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”
14 “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”
15 Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”
16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” **17** Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. **18** Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. **19** And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.” **20** Then he sternly warned the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

This is one of my favorite
texts in all of scripture, and
it has a pretty important
significance in all of our
lives. While this question
went out to the disciples,
it was answered by Peter.
This was not something
uncommon, as Peter
always was the most pas-
sionate of all the disciples.
It is a question that each
of us needs to be asked,
and one that we have to
answer for ourselves in or-
der for us to call ourselves
Christian.

27 Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” **28** “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets.” **29** Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?” Peter replied, “You are the Messiah.” **30** But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

While this is the abbreviated version of the Matthean account, it is good for us to spend another day on this story. One of the things that I find is that they so missed who Jesus was. And in some respects, they didn't take responsibility for who they thought Jesus was. They mentioned that "Some say. . ." in order to shift the responsibility of answering the question. But Peter did not do this.

1- Who are you more like? Peter or the other disciples?

2- When someone asks
you who Jesus is, what
answer do you have for
them?

3- Have you ever mistak-
en Jesus for someone
else?

18 One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone. Only his disciples were with him, and he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”
19 “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from the dead.”
20 Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?” Peter replied, “You are the Messiah sent from God!”

Jesus Predicts His Death

21 Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone who he was.
22 “The Son of Man must suffer many terrible things,” he said. “He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead.”
23 Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.
24 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

The Lucan account of
this interaction is much
the same, however, Jesus
then predicts his death,
and then tells them that
they will probably follow
in his footsteps when it
comes to the way they
will lose their lives as well.
Have you ever wondered
if you might lose your life
for following Christ?

1- How far are you willing
to go to follow Jesus?

67 Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?” **68** Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. **69** We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.”

70 Then Jesus said, “I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.”

71 He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

This short pericope reminds us that Jesus and his disciples did not always get along 100%. The story begins with Jesus asking them if they are also going to leave. He had just fed 5000 and they couldn't really take his words, as they were "hard words", according to the scripture. He then turns to the disciples and asks them if they will leave. Peter, again the ever-willing to answer, says "where are we going to go?".

1- Do you ever feel like you have nowhere else to go than to Jesus?

2- Have you ever thought
it might be better not to
follow in the footsteps of
Jesus?

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3- How does following
Jesus make your life
harder/easier?

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21 From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead. 22 But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. “Heaven forbid, Lord,” he said. “This will never happen to you!” 23 Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.”

Jesus predicts his death
to his disciples, but they
couldn't handle what
he said. Peter, in partic-
ular, wouldn't have it in
any way. He tells Jesus
“this will never happen
to you!” And he probab-
ly said this with the
idea that he would nev-
er allow this to happen.
But then what does Je-
sus say? “Get behind
me, Satan” Why would
Jesus say that? Perhaps
because there was a
temptation to believe or
hope that his crucifix-
ion was not something
that would happen, or
he could thwart it. How-
ever, Jesus was commit-

ted to fulfilling the work
of God in the world.

1- Has there been some-
thing that you don't want
to have happen, but
you know you must go
through with it to fulfill
the will of God in your life?
What was it?

2- Have you ever thought,
"maybe I am seeing this
from my point of view,
and not Gods?" How can
you change that?

3- What do you think
God's point of view of your
life might look like?

31 Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. 32 As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.

33 Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. “Get away from me, Satan!” he said. “You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.”

The account of this story
is much the same as the
previous accounts you
have read. However, let’s
focus on the fact that Je-
sus is sharing with them
the idea that he would
be resurrected a few days
later. These words would
have had to have been
quite shocking for them,
even though they had
seen many miracles over
the last few years with Je-
sus. Still, I wonder how it
was for them to get their
heads around his state-
ment? Peter struggled,
but usually, he was not
the only one, just the only
one to say something
about it.
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1- Have you ever had to be
the one who says what
everyone's thinking?
When did that happen?

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2- What was it like to put
your neck out like that?

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3- Would you do it again?
And under what circum-
stances?

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Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

If you are a Christian, otherwise known as a follower of Christ, do you remember why you signed-up to be one? Or, if you're grown up as a Christian, why did you decide to stay one?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together Matthew 16: 13-16, Mark 8: 27-29, and Luke 9:18-20 and share any thoughts, reflections, or insights from the reading or hearing of the Word.

2- Why do you think Jesus asked the question from an impersonal point of view first (i.e. who do "people" say that I am)?

3- Why do you think it was so hard for the people to believe that Jesus, from Nazareth, the son of a carpenter, could be the long-awaited Messiah?

4- Had you been in the room, which camp do you think you would have fallen into? Would you have been a Peter and take a risk, or one of the other disciples who didn't answer? Why?

5- How did Jesus say that Peter was able to come to the conclusion that Jesus

was the Messiah? What does that mean for the rest of us? How do we come to know Jesus as Messiah?

6- Read together John 6: 67-71, Matthew 16: 21-23, Mark 8: 31-33 and Luke 9:22 and share any thoughts, reflections, or insights from the reading or hearing of the Word.

7- In the passage of John 6, do you think any of the disciples hesitated? Many others had left Jesus, why not them? Why not now? What had they found that the others hadn't?

8- Jesus told the disciples several times about His end and what all would happen. Why do you think they didn't believe Him especially after telling them repeatedly?

9- As the main character especially in the Matthew version,

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- Many an author has said that every generation, and every follower, has to answer the question about Jesus for themselves, "Who do you say that I am?" Do you agree? Why or why not?

2- Why is it important to realize that Jesus is more than just a good teacher, or more than just a prophet, or more than just a good man?

3- How do you handle times in your life when Jesus does something or directs you somewhere that you didn't anticipate? Do you accept it and move on, or do you "fight" back?

4- Have you ever felt like you didn't understand Jesus or what He wants you to do or to be, but you also knew there was no where else to go, no one else to follow?

5- What about following Jesus is hard, and why do so many people think it's supposed to be easy, or at least get easy the better you get at following?

6- Who is Jesus to you and how/when did you come to that knowledge or awareness?

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HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- When we truly discover that Jesus is God, I can think of no better response than to worship. This week, set aside some intentional time to worship - in one of your favorite ways to worship - play your favorite list of songs that help bring you into the throne room of grace, take a walk in a setting that steals your breathe away, read or listen to one of your favorite Psalms, etc..

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son....The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. Hebrews 1: 1-2a, 3 (NLT)

Notes

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WEEK 2

Acts 11:19-30

19 Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen’s death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, but only to Jews. **20** However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. **21** The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord.

After Stephen’s death,
mission work among the
population in Jerusalem
came to a halt. Howev-
er, wherever the early
church went, they were
sharing the gospel and
it caused the church to
expand. As the story of
Stephen was told, it was
a catalyst for those who
would share the gos-
pel and would grow the
small group of believers
in faith and in numbers.
Sometimes, out of trage-
dy we see a spark being
started that can turn into
a fire
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1- Has tragedy in your life
ever sparked something
powerful?
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22 When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. **23** When he arrived and saw this evidence of God’s blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. **24** Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord.

Good news travels fast!
People who had come
to Jerusalem were smit-
ten by the gospel story,
and they wanted to share
it as they went to and
fro in the ancient world.
Antioch was not a small
place, and sending Barn-
abas there was a stra-
tegic move for the early
church. He preached and
people listened. Howev-
er, it says that his preach-
ing was encouragement
for them to remain true
to the gospel. This has
always been the best
preaching.

1- What is the best ser-
mon you have ever
heard?

2- Did it encourage you?

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3- How did it motivate you, and what did you do because of it?

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25 Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul. 26 When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.)

So Barnabas was awe-
some, and he grew the
church in Antioch pro-
lifically. However, with
increased size comes in-
creased work, and there-
fore, he went to look for
a local teacher, Paul of
Tarsus. Tarsus wasn't that
far away from Antioch,
so Barnabas went and
brought Paul back. So, for
the next year they taught
together, and sometime
during that year, they
came to be known as
Christians.

1- What does the word
"Christian" mean to you?

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2- Why do you think they
began to be called this in
Antioch first?

3- Did it have anything to
do with Paul being there
perhaps?

27 During this time some prophets traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch.

Who are these prophets
that came down from
Jerusalem to Antioch?
They were those who
were given the gift of the
Holy Spirit to prophecy,
to preach and teach the
gospel and help guide
the community. There
seems to be a strong
connection between An-
tioch and Jerusalem, as
they were sharing teach-
ers and leaders. In our
spiritual lives, a strong
and trusted mentor or
teacher is important!

1- Who would you say in-
fluences your spiritual life
the greatest?

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2- How often do you intentionally reach out to that person?

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3- Should you do it today?

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28 One of them named Agabus stood up in one of the meetings and predicted by the Spirit that a great famine was coming upon the entire Roman world. (This was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius.) 29 So the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could.

This is an interesting
piece. There was this
prophet, Agabus, who
predicted a famine (not
prophesied, but predict-
ed) in the Roman World.
When that came to pass,
the disciples began to
help the other brothers
working for Christ in the
Roman world. It is in-
teresting that the early
church's first instinct
was to help brothers
and sisters who are in
need. Do we still have
that same impulse?

1- When was the last time
you reached out to some-
one in need?

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2- How can you make
that part of your practice
and your life?

3- What can you do to
help someone today?

30 This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

There already seems to
be some sort of organi-
zation in the early church,
as they sent help to the
other churches through
Paul and Barnabas. This
is both efficient and prac-
tical. I know some people
have a real hard time with
the idea of “organized re-
ligion” but there are some
benefits to getting orga-
nized!

1- Have you ever been
frustrated by “organized
religion?”

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2- What can you do to
help it become a better
expression of Jesus in to-
day's world?
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3- How can you grow in
understanding of how
church works?
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Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

What's in a name? Were you named after someone? Were you given a name with a certain meaning/significance? Do you like your name? Why or why not? Share the story of your "name" with the group.

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together Acts 11:19-30, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.

2- Why did the message go first to the Jews (v.19) and then to the Gentiles (v.20)? What difference do you see in the response to those messages?

3- If the work being done in Antioch showed "proof of God's favor" why did Barnabas need to encourage the believers to "stay true to the Lord?"

4- What elements were present in Antioch that allowed Barnabas and Saul (as well as all the other believers) to do such a mighty work that they began to be called "Christians?"

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- What does "Christian" mean to you today? What does it mean in the wider culture? Are these meanings similar or dissimilar?

2- Verse 29 uses the phrase "each according to his ability" or "giving as much as they could" to describe how the believers would help their brothers and sisters who were in need. How do you think our church would be different today if everyone would help "according to their ability?"

3- What "abilities" do you have that are not currently being (or have never been) used to benefit the work of God in your community?

HANDS

(in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- What does it mean to be "Christian" in a world that may be (or is) disenchanted with that movement?

2- What does (or should) mission look like in our time and place?

3- What do we need to do in our lives

to realign ourselves with the mission of Jesus?

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just

as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” John 13:35

“And they’ll know we are Christians by our love...”

Fr. Peter Scholtes

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WEEK 3

Galatians 2: 11-21

This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

These are pretty strong words. Paul had to oppose Peter, because Peter was wrong. Have you ever had to do this with someone you respected, worked with, or loved? How hard was it? I can't imagine that Paul took this rebuke lightly. It is difficult to tell the truth to someone who you really respect and admire. But Paul did it because he saw something that was wrong and it needed to be righted.

1- Have you ever had to do this?

2- What was it like?

12 When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. **13** As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

Paul explains what Peter had done wrong, and why it was an issue. You see, it wasn't just that Peter decided to bend to the will of those from Jerusalem about eating with Gentiles, but others followed his example. For Paul, it seems this was even more of an issue. Our hypocrisy is never ours alone. We always have people watching us, listening to us, and deciding how they should act and conduct themselves from us.

1- Have you ever been accused of hypocrisy? Was it an appropriate accusation?

2- Who do you think is watching and listening to your actions?

3- How can you make sure you align those actions with what God wants from you?

14 When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, “Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?”

Paul rebuked Peter in
public. This was bold.
But he was so concerned
that Peter was not follow-
ing the truth of the Gos-
pel message. Of course,
it was a much bigger
discussion than simply
eating with Gentiles,
and Paul says as much.
He mentions that they
are now having to hold
to the Jewish traditions,
which Paul knew well. He
was pushing back on the
very identity that each
Jew had lived with for
thousands of years. Paul
understood that things
had changed, and it was
time to live into that new
reality.

1- Have you had major
changes in your life that
you fought?

2- Why do you think Peter had such a hard time letting go of old traditions?

3- What traditions should you move on from in your life? And why?

15 “You and I are Jews by birth, not ‘sinners’ like the Gentiles. 16 Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.”

Paul lays out the truth
of what it means to be
a Christian, regardless
of birth or family. He re-
minds Peter that the
only salvation we have
comes through Christ,
from God, and by his
grace. And he again re-
minds Peter that no one
has been saved by keep-
ing the law. Therefore, his
rebuke is a rebuke of the
traditions of Judaism at
its core.

1- Why was Paul so ada-
mant about the law not
saving anyone?
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2- Why do you think this
was an important con-
versation for Paul to have
with Peter?
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3- What can you do to
remind yourself that sal-
vation comes from Jesus,
and not from your be-
havior?
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17 But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not! 18 Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down. 19 For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. 20 My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

Paul again exposes the
wrong thinking that Pe-
ter has fallen into while
with Paul in Antioch. Paul
wants Peter to know, un-
equivocally, that there is
no way that a)the law will
save you, and b) that fol-
lowing Jesus would lead
you into more sin. There
is no way that following
Jesus will ever lead us
into sin, not if we are fol-
lowing with our whole
heart and soul.

1- Do you ever get con-
fused between the law
and God's gift of Grace
through Jesus?

2- What can you do to
remind yourself that the
grace of God is sufficient
for all salvation?

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3- How grateful are you
today for the gift of Grace?

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DAY 20

I love this text. When it tells us to put on the “new nature” one that has been given to us by God, we know that we are living a new life, and that is just amazing.

1- What does it feel like to live a new life in Christ for you?

2- What can you do to share that feeling/experience?

3- How can you give away this grace that has been given to you?

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

• (Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

What is one thing that you started doing because it was so mainstream that you couldn't avoid it? Are you still doing it?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together Galatians 2:11-21. How would you evaluate the actions of Paul? What about the actions of Peter?

2- Notice that Paul says Peter's behavior changed when certain men came from Jerusalem (v. 12). Is there anything in the text that would indicate whether Peter was following his conscience by eating with Gentiles or by not eating with Gentiles?

3- Take a moment to reread Galatians 2:14-15 individually. Can you explain to one another the argument that Paul is making to indict the behaviors Peter, Barnabas, and the other Jews?

4- What law is Paul referring to in Galatians 2?

5- Now that you've worked through the arguments in Galatians 2, do you think Paul's accusation of "hypocrisy" (v. 13)

among Peter, Barnabas, and the Jews is valid?

6- Paul escalates his arguments in verses 17-21. He is calling those who would refuse fellowship with Gentile Christians sinners. (This flips the situation because Peter's group was technically implying that Gentile Christians were sinners so that's why they couldn't eat with them). What is the key point in this section?

7- One of the ways in which Paul saw the new life in Christ manifest itself was that Gentiles and Jews could have fellowship together because they were part of the same family. What are the other characteristics of our new life, according to Paul?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- Have you ever confronted someone due to the spiritual harm they were causing?

2- Do you have any spiritual heroes or mentors that cause your behavior to change when they show up around your house? (Before the pandemic, of course) Have you ever thought about

whether that “peer pressure” is in harmony with the gospel?

3- Paul reserved some of his harshest words for those who would refuse fellowship to Gentile Christians; are there any hypocrisies in our church that need to be corrected today?

4- What are some ways in which we can “rebuild the old system of law”? What are ways in which we can live as those who trust in the Son of God?

5- Paul states that if you go back to living as if you need to keep the law to be saved, you are treating the grace of God as meaningless and making Jesus’ sacrifice vain. Take a moment to pray over one another that you would be people who cherish God’s grace to save us.

HANDS

(in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- We are working through our series christian? that explores the foundations

of what it means to be a Christian. The passage we explored this week documents a major conflict that Paul had with many Christian Jews who were struggling to abandon their old codes of conduct. Ultimately, Paul reminds us that we are saved by faith in Jesus not by keeping the law.

2- Are there any systems of church law that are causing us to be hypocritical about God’s grace today—saying that we believe in Jesus’ sacrifice but living as if His death was pointless?

3- What can you or your small group do today to strengthen your testimony of faith in Jesus to those around you?

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

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WEEK 4

John 5: 39-47

39 “You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! 40 Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

What do you look for
when you search the
Scriptures? Here, Jesus
reminds us that all of the
scriptures exist in order to
express who God is. The
scriptures don't give eter-
nal life, but only the one
whom they speak of! We
would do well to remem-
ber where our salvation
comes from.

1- Have you seen Jesus all
over the scriptures?
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2- Where in the Old Testament do you see hints of Jesus?

3- How can we use the Old Testament as an account of how people were not only looking for their salvation, but were hoping for their savior?

41 “Your approval means nothing to me, 42 because I know you don’t have God’s love within you.

This seems like a harsh word, but Jesus did not come to earth for approval, but for his purpose. His mission was to give us hope, salvation, and show us who God really is. Too often, we have thought that his life was simply to be an example of how we were supposed to act. But truthfully, his life is an example of who God really is. It’s easy for us to make the story of Jesus about us and what we do, but it is not, it is about God and what he does.

1- Have you ever made the aforementioned mistake? Where did it lead you?

2- How does Jesus show us who God is in each and every interaction?

3- How could you help express to the world who God really is?

43 For I have come to you in my Father's name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them. 44 No wonder you can't believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don't care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.

How do we honor God?
And how does God honor us?
When we tell the world about who God truly is, the God of love, inclusion, and grace, we do him honor, and he blesses us as well. When we monger in fear, in end-of-time conspiracy, and in strange theology, God is not honored. Jesus understood this, and what he showed us was the greatest of all the attributes of God, self-sacrificing love.

1- When was the last time you honored God by the way you spoke of him?

2- How can the world
see how amazing and
gracious God is through
you?

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3- How can we believe
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45 “Yet it isn’t I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes.

What does Jesus mean
that “Moses will accuse
us?” Could it mean that
God is not an accuser,
but our humanity is that
which accuses us. To be
disconnected to God is
to be not completely hu-
man. To be completely
human means that we
are most connected to
God and to others. It is
that Jewish sense of Sha-
lom that reminds us that
we are deeply held with-
in the love of God. We for-
get that, and see God as
only a judge, rather than
the one who loves us and
justifies us.

1- When have you felt
Shalom in your life?
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2- Are you concerned
about being accused of
anything?

3- Do you think God sits
in judgment or is working
hard to make sure you
are proven not guilty?

46 If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.

Jesus is reminding those listening that he has shown up through all of scripture. For his Jewish audience, that means the books of Moses most of all. Jesus tells them again and again that he is the one the books point towards. Why was it so hard for them to remember this? Perhaps it is the same reason that we have a hard time remembering that all of scripture speaks of Jesus. I love chasing the hints of Jesus throughout all of scriptures.

1- Have you ever been challenged to REALLY believe in Scripture?

2- What would that look like in your life?

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3- How can you show others Jesus in Scripture?

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47 But since you don't believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

Again, and this is even more of a challenge, Jesus lays it out on the line. If they won't believe what Moses said, how are they going to believe in what Jesus says? By calling this out, we are reminded that Jesus' words are more important than those of Moses, even though Moses' words speak of Jesus. The words that Jesus spoke take precedence over all of the rest of the words found in scripture. This is why, in some churches, when they read the words of Jesus, everyone stands.

1- How important are the words of Jesus to you?

2- How do you know they
are so important? Do you
put them into your life
and align your life with
them?

3- What do you need
to rearrange in order to
make sure Christ is the
central organizing point
of your life?

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

Who is one of your childhood heroes aside from Jesus or your parents? Someone you admired, looked up too, or wanted to be like in some way. If it wasn't someone close to you, did you ever get a chance to meet them?.

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together John 5:39-47, and share any insights, reflections, or thoughts as you read or listened to the passage.

2- It was said that a Jew, by the age of 12, had memorized the first five books of the Bible (the Torah). Why did they study the Scriptures so diligently?

3- What do you think these Pharisees had gotten wrong about their study of the Scriptures? Were they studying to know God better, or for man's approval, or to make other people envious?

4- Jesus has harsh words to share with these Pharisees in verses 41-44. What do you think His purpose was in being so sharp with them?

5- Why does Jesus invoke Moses here? It seems like he's putting God on one

side of the argument and Moses on the other? What do you think Moses represents in His comments?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- Is there a story or picture of God from the Old Testament that causes you fear and trembling, making you question whether or not God is truly good or loving?

2- If all the Scriptures point to Jesus, who is the clearest revelation of God that we have (read Hebrews 1: 1-3), then how can we look at some of those Old Testament stories we don't like or don't understand in a way that helps us see God more clearly?

3- The Jewish leaders of Jesus day, the Pharisees in particular, seem to "do" all the right things and "check" all the right boxes, but why do you think they missed the forest for the trees?

4- Related to the previous question, Jesus said you study the Scriptures as if in them you find eternal life, but according to John 1: 4, who actually is life and how do we miss that walk with Jesus even when we're "checking all the boxes"?

5- One quality the Pharisees were lacking was humility, which is why they “refused” to come to Jesus. How can you and I seek more humility in our walk with Jesus and as we relate to those around us?

HANDS

(in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- 19th Century Bible Student, William Miller, once said that He studied all of the Scriptures so much that he began to see Jesus on every page. That should be the goal of every follower, every Christian. Spend time this week and see if you can “find Jesus” in the stories and words from the Old, or First, Testament. Here are a few places to get you started:

Psalms 23, Daniel 3, John 1: 1-14 with Genesis 1-2, I Samuel 20.

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him,

and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. (John 1: 1-4, NLT)

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WEEK 5

Colossians 1:15-23

15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,

This begins the story of Christ being supreme. This text is important for 2 reasons: 1) it shows us that everything we see of God is seen through Jesus, and 2) that he was there at creation and before all creation, and therefore over all creation. It is a bold and powerful statement that is being made in this text. However, it is an anchor text for all of us. If you ever doubted who Jesus was and is, it begins here.

1- When you describe Jesus, what words do you use?

2- Do you think these
words encapsulate what
you believe about Jesus?

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3- Why is it important
that Jesus be around at
creation?

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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.

This text is another example of majestic wording being used to help us understand who Christ really is. The use of universal and global language, the language of creation, and hierarchy, reminds us that Jesus is truly one of a kind in the universe. We diminish who he is by thinking he is simply the "best of us." Rather, he is something different altogether. Whether we are simply praying to him, or telling someone about him, it does us good to remember how great he really is.

1- Have you ever used this type of language to speak of Jesus before?

2- What images do you
get when you read this?

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3- How can you inte-
grate this type of under-
standing into your spiri-
tual life?

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17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

He holds all things together! This is important. It means that Jesus is the center knot of the universe, holding all things together. Without him holding all the strands together, we would literally unravel as a universe and as a creation. Because he existed before anything else, we get our breath from him and from him we have our reason and purpose to live.

1- Did you ever think of Jesus this way?

2- How can we even understand how important Jesus is to the universe itself?

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3- Why do you think Paul used such grandiose language?

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**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.**

As Christ is the head of the church, he is where we go when we are in need of direction and understanding. There are no popes or presidents that hold a spiritual office higher than yours as a child of Christ. No Pastor or preacher is more important or has greater access and authority than you do. They may have studied more, but that does not make them more important. They can guide to a greater understanding of God, but the only hierarchy in the church is Jesus.

1- What does that mean for a church like ours? (The SDA Church)

2- Why do we elect presidents then?

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3- Should we be as organized as we are?

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19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ,

Perhaps my favorite
scripture of all time is this
one. It means that God
was willing to put EV-
ERYTHING that he is into
Jesus. Therefore, when
we see Jesus we see God
in his entirety. Without
this understanding we
are simply looking at a
piece of God, much like
we did before we had
the full revelation of God
through Jesus. We can-
not forget this. It is too
important. See Hebrews
1:1,2 to understand this
even more.

1- What is Easter to you?
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2- Do you feel like you are
looking at God when you
look to who Jesus is?

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3- How can you express
this grandeur of Jesus to
those around you?

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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.

There is too much to un-
pack in these texts. It
speaks of reconciliation,
of standing firm, and of
trusting in God. It speaks
of Christ's incarnation and
his love for us. It speaks
of how we are thought
of as holy and blameless
because of what he has
done for us. Each text illu-
minates for us even more
the power and presence
of Jesus in our lives. Hold
on to these texts for dear
life!
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1- Today is Good Friday.
Can you remember what
his Death means to us?

2- Tomorrow is the day
when Jesus rested in
the tomb. Can you rest
knowing that Sunday is
coming?

3- On Easter, do you cele-
brate the grace that God
has given you and the
power that Christ was
given to overcome the
grave?

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

Has anyone ever questioned your identity? If so, how did you explain who you were? What was that like? If not, how would you describe yourself? What words would you use??

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together Colossians 1:15-23 and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that arise.

2- What does it mean that all things were created by Christ, for Christ, and are held together in Christ?

3- This passage includes many statements/descriptions of Jesus; which one surprises you? Which one have you not thought of much?

4- How much of God dwells in Jesus? How would you try to explain to someone that Jesus is fully God?

5- How are we viewed by God, through Jesus? What difference does that make for your life?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- The Colossians had a hard time

remembering the deity of Jesus. Was there anytime in your life when you treated or thought about Jesus as merely human? What does it look like for you to remember He is fully God? What change(s) does that bring about in your life?

2- Paul was a servant/minister of the Gospel in his day. What does that mean for us now? Have you seen others doing this well?

3- If all of creation is “for Him” and “for His glory”—what is our role? How do we accomplish it?

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- In what ways can the fullness of God be more present in your life this week?

2- This week, remember that we are to “continue in our faith of the hope of the Gospel...” (v.23). What is that hope? What work does it require of you? Who did the work?? So you being presented to God as holy and blameless rests only on the actions of...?? Let that truth be evident in your life!

Notes

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WEEK 6

Peter 4: 15, Mark 1: 17, John 6: 22-60

15 If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs.

In short, a disciple is a
student. A disciple is one
who disciplines himself
to the words, practices,
and themes of Jesus.
This becomes their life-
long pursuit, and there is
nothing more important
than learning, studying,
and living these words.
So we take the things
that Jesus says serious-
ly, and we also take the
things that the disciples/
apostles said seriously as
well, as they have an un-
derstanding of the words
and actions of Jesus that
the rest of us simply ha-
ven't been exposed to in
the same way.

1- Do you consider your-
self a disciple of Jesus?

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17 Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”

What does it mean to follow someone? I was on spotify the other day, and I can follow my favorite artists, but is that what Jesus really meant? When Jesus uttered these words to his disciples in the boat, do you think he meant to have a group of disengaged followers, or a group of disciples? They mean very different things!

1- Who do you follow on your social media? Would you call yourself a disciple of any of them?

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. **23** Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. **24** So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. **25** They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

All of these people had
followed Jesus after he
fed them. I am sure they
thought that they would
be his disciples and fol-
low him like those who
Jesus already had with
him. However, they were
about to sorely disap-
pointed, as they were in
no way ready to heed the
difficult words that he
had to say.

1- Have you ever felt like
you were following Jesus
only to find it was a bit
more difficult than you
had thought?
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26 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. 27 But don’t be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval.”

28 They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?”

29 Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.”

So Jesus continues the
conversation and when
they say they want to
perform miracles, Jesus
reminds them that the
only thing they need to
do is believe in the one
that God has sent, name-
ly, Jesus. While they were
wanting the power and
privilege, Jesus saw that
the privilege was really
the ability to follow him
throughout their lives.
That would bring them
closer to God and give
them all the power they
would ever need.

1- Why did you follow Je-
sus in the first place?

2- Was it to get some sort
of power? Was it for eter-
nal life?

3- Or was it for the amaz-
ing life God gives you
right now, through the
power of the Holy Spirit?

30 They answered, “Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? **31** After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, ‘Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

32 Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. **33** The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

34 “Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.”

So they asked if He would
show them another sign,
which was of course after
he had already fed them
the previous day, which
just seems sort of greedy.
Then they continued to
push Jesus to give them
some more to eat, citing
Moses in the process. This
did not go well, as Jesus
reminded them who was
the true bread of life.

1- Who gives you suste-
nance in today’s world?

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30 They answered, “Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? **31** After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, ‘Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

32 Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. **33** The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

34 “Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.”

I hope that you have
enjoyed the rest of the
story. It’s a pretty fasci-
nating one, in that we
can see that Jesus was
unhappy with how the
interaction went, and
then pushed them to
take him even more at
his word about who he
was and what he could
offer them. They just
couldn’t get their heads
around the ideas Jesus
was pushing. They were
afraid, they were un-
willing, and they were
confused. This happens
a lot when we give our
lives to Jesus. Mainly
because his wisdom is
so different then our
human wisdom, that

we have to take much
of what he says on faith.

1- What are hard teach-
ings of Jesus in your life?

2- Do you still follow even
though you might not
understand?

3- How can you have a
better understanding of
what Jesus is calling you
to do?

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

What is one of your all-time favorite songs, religious or not, and why?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together Exodus 15: 1-3 and 20-21, and share why you think song was the method chosen to celebrate God's work in this moment?

2- It's interesting that when the Israelites left Egypt, they left in such a hurry that they couldn't put yeast in their bread, but when we get to Exodus 15: 20, we see that the women brought their tambourines. Tambourines were used for music and to praise God. Why did they make sure to grab their tambourines on the way out of town?

3- Read together Exodus 19: 16-20. Can we both love God and want to be near Him and yet "tremble" in front of Him at the same time? Explain.

4- Where in your life have you felt like you were in the presence of God? What was it about that moment(s) and what did you take away from those moments that help you know God better?

Read together Exodus 20: 1-21 (commandments) and share how you were taught about the commandments growing up or how you think of them today.

5- Why was it important for God to give the Israelites rules for how to relate to Him and to each other so soon after leaving Egypt?

6- Which one of the commandments do you think would have been the hardest for the Israelites to keep? What about us?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- What is one of your favorite ways to worship God outside of singing to Him?

2- God performed miracles to rescue the Israelites out of Egypt, He continued to provide for them in the desert with the pillars of cloud and fire, with manna and quail, and with water. Yet with all His provisions, it's not long before the people complain again. Why were they so hard to please? What things does God provide us that we may be quick to take for granted?

3- It has been said before that the best description of what love looks like in the Bible outside of I Corinthians 13, are the 10 commandments. What about the 10 commandments do you think could be describing what it looks like to be in a love relationship?

4- What are some ways that living the Biblical Sabbath every week can rearrange our lives and our priorities? How does the Biblical Sabbath challenge the values of western society (think of our definition of success, of workaholics, of mercy and justice)? How might living Sabbath help us be kinder to one another?

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HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- Since we're in a series called Rearrange, and since the first four commandments are about how we put God first, think through what may need to be rearranged in your life to give God more of your heart/time. What area in your heart does God need more access to, and what's one step you could take this week to let Him in?

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him - my father's God, and I will exalt him! (Exodus 15: 2)

"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means God with us." (Matthew 1: 23, NLT)

Notes

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WEEK 7

1 Chronicles 16: 29, 2 Chronicles 29: 28, Psalm 95: 6, 96: 5-9,
John 4: 23-24

29 Give to the Lord the glory he deserves!

Bring your offering and come into his presence.

Worship the Lord in all his holy splendor.

Worship with our offerings. Worship takes many different forms. We do actually worship when we give of our financial offerings. Worshipping God with our giving reveals our hearts to him. When we give sacrificially, generously, and consistently as a way of ascribing value to who God is in our lives, our hearts are calmed and our anxieties about what we have and what we want to acquire subside. We simply can't fall in love with money when we give it away so graciously.

1- What is your relationship with Money and do you use it for worship, or do you worship it?

2- Scripture says we
“can’t serve two mas-
ters”, have you ever
tried? How did that work
out?

3- Does it feel like wor-
shipping when you give
of your finances? Why or
why not?

28 The entire assembly worshiped the Lord as the singers sang and the trumpets blew, until all the burnt offerings were finished.

Worship with musical instruments. While there are some faith traditions that do not use musical instruments, that seems to go against the traditions of judeo-christian history. From early on, there is a strong sense that musical instruments add to the intensity, the energy, and the passion of worshiping God in song. If the focus remains on God, musical instruments can bring people's hearts in alignment with the presence of God.

1- What are your favorite worship songs?

2- While not everyone
can agree on style, what
do you like best about
Crosswalk's worship ex-
perience?

3- Do you listen to wor-
ship music when not in
church?

**6 Come, let us worship and bow down.
Let us kneel before the Lord our maker,**

There seems to be a
physicality to the way we
worship that is agreed to
in scripture. The hassidic
Jews pray and sway, mov-
ing every bone in their
body in order to connote
every law they intend to
keep. We kneel and close
our eyes when we pray,
and some, in worship, lift
hands, or clap during or
after the song. We do this
to remind ourselves that
worship is a whole-per-
son experience.

1- What do you feel com-
fortable doing during a
worship set?

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**9 Worship the Lord in all his holy splendor.
Let all the earth tremble before him.**

This text speaks of the
whole earth trembling
before God. We worship
God in his holiness and
in his splendor, which is
great. Perhaps this is why
churches have historical-
ly been very ornate and
splendid in their decor.
If you have ever gone
to St. Peters in Rome,
you know how majestic
churches and cathedrals
can be. We don't build
churches much like that
anymore, however, what
we do with the lights and
the modern technology
is an assent to the fact
that God should be wor-
shipped in his greatness
at times.

1- What is the coolest
worship space you have
ever been in?

**5 The gods of other nations are mere idols,
but the Lord made the heavens!**

**6 Honor and majesty surround him;
strength and beauty fill his sanctuary.**

First, are there other gods? This text indicates that there are, but remember, it is an ancient language that agrees to an understanding of other cultures. This does not affirm that there are other Gods, however, it does put the idea of one God overall into the vernacular of the day. We can take solace in the fact that even if there were other Gods, none would be greater than the God we serve. Perhaps, to translate into today's world, we could say that God is greater than the idols that we put into our lives. Those things that distract us from worshipping God.

1- What gets in the way of your worship of God?

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.”

Worshiping in Spirit and Truth. These texts are always so great to read, but a little confusing. What is spirit and truth? I think they are attitudes and a continued pursuit of who God really is. We should be spending our lives in the relentless pursuit of discovering the character of God more clearly. When we do this, our worship conforms to a better understanding of God, and therefore our attitude and our knowledge changes to become a more profound expression of gratitude for all of what God truly is!

1- When have you learned something new about God that informs your worship?

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(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

Think about one of your favorite worship experiences over the course of your life, and share about that experience; where you were, what you were doing, and what made it special.

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together the following passage about worship: 1 Chronicles 16: 29, 2 Chronicles 29: 28, Psalm 95: 6, Psalm 96: 5-9, and John 4: 23-24. Share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you gleaned from the reading or hearing of the Word.

2- Before digging into each passage, share what overall lessons can be learned about worship through these texts.

3- In 1 Chronicles 16: 29, giving is an act of worship. 2 Corinthians 9: 7 says God loves a cheerful giver. How does the act of giving create a spirit of worship? When you give, what are you trusting in God to do?

4- In 2 Chronicles 29: 28, singing and instruments are a part of worship, as

are much of the Psalms that were almost always prayers that were sung not just spoken. In fact, angels are said to be singing before the throne day and night. So what do you think makes music the language of worship. Do you think all styles of music can praise God if God is the focus or not? Why do you think worship wars are almost always about what kind of music is and isn't ok?

5- How can motion or action in worship help connect us to the heart of God? Deuteronomy 6: 5 says to love the Lord you God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength or might, so could engaging your whole self in the act of worship be a part of God's plan for us? Share your thoughts. Why do you think some are afraid of movement in worship?

6- Psalm 96: 5-9 speaks about God being the greatest and the only one worthy of our praise. Share some attributes of God that bring you to worship, what makes Him worthy, and have you ever been in His creation and felt the urge

to kneel or sing or just be silent in worship?

7- In John 4: 23-24 it speaks to worshipping in spirit and truth. What have you understood this to mean? Could truth be the constant pursuit of who He is? I Corinthians 13 says that we see Him know as in a mirror dimly, but one day we'll see Him face to face. Could our pursuit of worship in Spirit and truth be a pursuit of a more clear picture of Him and if so, what do you think life will be like when we live face to face each day with Him?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- How can you seek today to live a life of worship? What practices could you put into the rhythm of your life that remind you of God's worthiness each and every day?

2- Some have said that worship is about God becoming bigger as we become

smaller (John 3: 30). Why do you think we need this regular reminder?

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- If you have the ability, make a playlist on iTunes or Spotify or whatever software you use (even if it's pulling out some literal CD's or even cassette tapes), of some of those worship songs that speak to your soul. Play those songs and think of God's goodness, His righteousness, His faithfulness, and if it's in you, sing your heart out even if there is no one around (or if you're blessed with the gift of being tone-deaf, sing especially when no one is around).

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

"Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, Lord."

(Psalm 89: 15, NLT)

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WEEK 8

Exodus 20: 1-17

- 1 Then God gave the people all these instructions:**
- 2 “I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.**
- 3 “You must not have any other god but me.**

So these instructions
come from God. They
were given to the chil-
dren of Israel because
they had forgotten what
it was like to be in charge
of their own relation-
ships, both with God and
with one another. While
these texts are not about
what it takes to gain sal-
vation, the children of Is-
rael quickly tried to make
them into the rules of en-
gagement and the hope
of salvation. Paul, in the
New Testament reminds
us that the Law was only
used to point out sin,
but it could never save.
However, to ignore these
rules is to miss a deeper
understanding of what it
means to be in relation-
ship with God and with
others.
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1- God began with reminding them who he was and what he had done for them. What would that phrase if verse 2 look like in your life?

2- When God says you must not have any other gods but me, what does that mean in your life today?

3- Have you ever broken this commandment?

4 “You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. 6 But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.

7 “You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

Since Idolatry was a big
deal in the ancient world,
making a point of not
having any graven imag-
es and idols was a pretty
solid and practical bit of
advice. But he goes on to
say that we should never
worship them, because
he has loved us so much
we would not need the
love of any other before
him. Also, he wants us to
not misuse his name. We
could unpack this for a
long time, but I love the
NLT that says we should
not “misuse” the name of
God.
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8 “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

12 “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

Our faith tradition has
put a pretty big empha-
sis on the fourth com-
mandment. It is often
the first commandment
that we learn. We even
have the idea of the
Sabbath in our name,
so it must be important.
Did you ever feel it was
more important than
the other 9? To be clear,
it is not, but it is such a
blessing, it is one of best
commandments. The
relational nature of God
means that he wants our
relationships to be good
with him and with oth-
ers; therefore, taking a

day to emphasize relationships makes a ton of sense!

1- Do you remember trying to “keep” the Sabbath? What did that look like?

2- What is your relationship with the Sabbath now?

3- How can you make the Sabbath a blessing like it was intended to be?

13 “You must not murder.

14 “You must not commit adultery.

These seem like the easiest of all of the commandments to keep. At least verse 13! While we know that not everyone can keep these commandments, the vast majority of us do. Why would God have to tell a group of people, who were closely related and of the same background not to do this? Perhaps because they had given all they were over to their slave masters and they forgot the basic tenets of relationships. While we may never know exactly why these laws were necessary, I find some comfort that they are there.

1- Why do you think Jesus took on these commandments in Matthew 5?

15 “You must not steal.

16 “You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.

Again, these two commandments remind us of what it means to be a good neighbor. Don't lie against your neighbor, and don't take his/her stuff. Seems simple enough. But people have this way of not really taking into account how others feel about their actions. This is a shame, as these commandments, all of them, can make us into the greatest neighbors that the world has ever known. If we did that, then the name of Jesus would be proclaimed in every neighborhood that had a Christian as a neighbor.

1- When was the last time you stole something? How did you feel about it?

17 “You must not covet your neighbor’s house. You must not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”

This is maybe one of the toughest ones. The fact that we always want to keep up with the Joneses, or that we want to believe that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence is what keeps us coveting the things we don’t have. God has given us the idea that enough is all we need, but we always strive beyond. There is nothing wrong with ambition, but there is something wrong with obsession. Wanting what others have can become a stain on our character if we are not careful. So let’s be careful.

1- Have you ever been stung with the coveting bug? How did you get over it?

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(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

Has there ever been a rule that was hard for you to follow? What was it about that rule(s) that made it so difficult for you to adhere to it?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together Exodus 20 and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that arise.

2- Why do people often worship more than one god? In regards to worship, why is exclusivity important to God?

3- Is it wrong to say "Oh my G**?!" What about using Jesus' name that way? If we shouldn't misuse the name of God, then how should we use it? What does that say about the way we should view/approach God?

4- What is the difference between honoring and obeying? How do you obey the principles in scripture including honoring your parents? What does that mean for other relationships in your life?

5- What is a white lie? Is lying ok if it doesn't hurt anyone, as bearing false

witness does? What does lying normally lead to and what are the consequences of it?

6- The word covet means "to have a strong desire for." What happens to us when we covet something? How can/do you keep those feelings and desires in check? What happens if you do not?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- We often interpret "idols" in a figurative way, i.e., money, pleasure, etc. Is that a valid interpretation? What "idols" are present in your life? What can/should we do about the idol worship that takes place in our life and all around us?

2- What does loyalty to God look like in your life? How would you rate your loyalty to God right now? Was there a time in your life when it was stronger?

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- What new attribute of God and/or practical application came from this study? How can that change the way you pray, think, speak or act this week?

Notes

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WEEK 9

1 Peter 3:21 (Baptism) Acts 2:38 (Baptism) Mark 16:6 (Baptism)
1 Corinthians 12:13 (Baptism) Luke 22:19; John 6:53 (Communion)

21 And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Rituals or traditions, or
even what we sometimes
call sacraments are an
integral part of the Chris-
tian life. We don't just do
these things in order to
create a sense of conti-
nuity with the past, rath-
er, we continue to take
part in them as a recog-
nition that what God set
in place has lasting value.
We bring these things
into our lives in order that
we would continue to un-
derstand the meaning
of these rituals and tra-
ditions and imbue them
with meaning in our lives
today.

1- What does baptism
mean to you today?

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38 Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Is the gift of the Holy Spirit regulated only to those who have been baptized? It seems to be saying that. Remember the context of this text. It is with the advent of pentecost, where the Holy Spirit rained down with tongues of fire. Therefore, it is not simply relegated to that situation, but we also know that Baptism puts us in the long line and tradition of those who have made the decision for themselves to follow Christ and his will in their lives.

1- Have you ever “received” the Holy Spirit? And what was that like?

2- How do you think the Holy Spirit works today in and around baptism?

3- SDA's are not particularly "spirit filled" in their tradition, does that mean we don't believe in the Holy Spirit moving at all?

6 but the angel said, “Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body.

The reenactment, or at least recognition of the easter (resurrection) weekend is one that Christians take very seriously. It has, at times, been downplayed in the SDA tradition, but there are some churches that are gravitating toward a greater expression of this incredibly important weekend in their congregations. To recognize that Jesus is no longer in the grave is to recognize that Jesus is alive and well in heaven.

1- Growing up, how was Easter celebrated in your home?

13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

Going back to the concept of baptism; what does it mean that we are all baptized into one body? Does this mean that there is a body of Christ that supersedes all of the different denominations and names of churches, and that we reside in the same body of Christ? Actually, yes, it does mean that. This is hard to swallow if you have been told that your tradition is the only one that would make it to heaven.

1- What was your relationship with other christians growing up?

19 He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Everytime we take communion, we continue the tradition that began with Jesus and his disciples in that upper room. Someone from the Christian tradition has probably been practicing this sacrament every day, if not every hour since that fateful night. We are so blessed to live in this grand tradition of Christianity, this unbroken line from our savior to us.

1- What is the most meaningful communion service you have ever experienced? Be specific.

53 So Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you.

This is difficult language
for us to get our heads
around. It is almost can-
nibalistic in nature, and
it was deeply confusing
for the people of the day.
Jesus was again playing
a different game than
the people around him.
However, although the
language seems strange,
there is a deep willing-
ness of God to reside
within us.

1- Does this language
make you uncomfort-
able? Or have you heard
it enough to not sound
strange?
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7- Which one of the commandments do you think would have been the hardest for the Israelites to keep? What about us?

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4- What are some ways that living the Biblical Sabbath every week can rearrange our lives and our priorities? How does the Biblical Sabbath challenge the values of western society (think of our definition of success, of workaholics, of mercy and justice)? How might living Sabbath help us be kinder to one another?

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LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

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"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means God with us." (Matthew 1: 23, NLT)

Notes

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WEEK 10

I John 5: 14-15, Philippians 4: 6-7, John 15: 7, I Thessalonians 5: 17,
Romans 8: 26, Luke 22: 42

14 And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. 15 And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.

This is the beginning of
our week long thinking
about prayer. Prayer has
always been an integral
part of our faith lives, even
when we don't always
understand how it works,
or even what is supposed
to specifically do to us or
for us. However, there are
texts that guide us into a
better understanding of
prayer and what it means
in our lives. This text, in
particular, reminds us
that God hears us. Not
only does he hear us, but
he recognizes when we
are living within his will,
as then what we request
is in line with his desires
for us.

1- What is prayer to you?
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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.

Is there something that
you feel you cannot
take to God in prayer?
What would that be?
In the book of Philippi-
ans, Paul asks us to pray
about everything in our
lives. There is gratitude
involved, and there is a
sense of peace. In fact, it
is a sense of peace that
"guards our hearts and
minds" throughout our
whole lives. I love this
promise and I love it
when I live in this peace
that is granted us.

1- Have you ever experi-
enced the peace of God?

17 Never stop praying.

This statement could
not be more simple. We
are to clearly never stop
praying when it comes
to our relationship with
God. It's important to
know that not everything
happens on the timeline
we hope for it to happen,
so we need to commit to
praying ceaselessly, not
to convince God, but to
show our deep desire for
a relationship with God.
We are not going to bug
him, nor are we going to
annoy him. Rather, we
are simply going to re-
mind ourselves how im-
portant he is to us.

1- Have you ever found
yourself weary of pray-
ing? Why do you think
that was?

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Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

If you could sit down and talk, or just listen, to anyone in history aside from Jesus, who would that person be and why?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together the following verses on prayer: 1 John 5: 14-15, Philippians 4: 6-7, John 15: 7, 1 Thessalonians 5: 17, Romans 8: 26, Luke 22: 42, and share any insights, thoughts, or impressions that came to you through the reading or hearing of the Word.

2- Of the above verses, what is one of your favorites about prayer and why?

3- What do you love about prayer? What do you struggle with or what questions do you have?

4- Does 1 John 5: 14-15 speak to this idea of a vending machine God who promises to give you whatever you ask, or is it speaking to a deeper principle? Have you ever prayed earnestly for something that you didn't receive? What comfort comes in knowing that whatever the request, God hears us?

5- In Philippians 4: 6-7, Paul seems to teach several things about prayer. What does he say prayer helps with and what are some elements of prayer according to that passage?

6- John 15 is a famous passage about abiding, or remaining, in Jesus. This speaks to an ongoing relationship where we know Him intimately as He knows us. How do you think that knowledge of Him influences the things we ask for in prayer?

7- How in the world can a person practice living life in such a way as to "never stop praying" as we are instructed to do in 1 Thessalonians 5: 17? Do you hide away in a monastery so you can pray continuously, or is there a way to live life that is a prayer?

8- Romans 8: 26, is a favorite passage on prayer as it hints at the times in our life when we know we need God, but we don't have the words. In those times, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. Read further in Romans 8, it says that Jesus intercedes for us too when we pray. What does it mean to you to have 2 of

the 3 members of the Trinity interceding for you every time you pray? Do our prayers have to have words?

9- In Luke 22: 42, we read the heart-wrenching prayer of Jesus who was experiencing incredible suffering, and as far as we know that prayer when unanswered. Does God's silence in a situation signal His lack of caring? How can you and I help each other stay the course of following Jesus even when it's incredibly hard and we're not sure what He's up to in our lives?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- Prayer can be such a private thing for some, but if you're willing to share ways your pray or things you do as a part of your prayer life with others you may help them grow in their prayers. Share if you're willing.

2- Have any of you prayed for something for so long, maybe even given up and surrendered that prayer, only to have it answered after giving up?

3- Which do you think is easier; to see God at work in a moment or to look back over your life and see Him work? How can we remind ourselves in our

prayers that God is always at work even when we don't see it or feel it, and He has our best interest at heart even if what's best for us is not what we're asking for at the time?

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- Think through some thing you could do this week to grow your prayer life. Find a book on prayer like one called Prayer from Timothy Keller, or the chapter on prayer in Steps to Christ by Ellen White. Connect with a friend who you feel has a special gift of prayer and have them pray with you. Write a prayer to God if you've never done that before. Find ways to stretch your prayer life this week.

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

"When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!"

(Matthew 6: 7-8, NLT)

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WEEK 11

Mark 9: 14-29

16 “What is all this arguing about?” Jesus asked.

17 One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, “Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won’t let him talk. 18 And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn’t do it.”

I wonder why the disciples were not able to cast out this particular demon? Demon possession was a much more regular occurrence during this time, and some have suggested that it is possible that there was some mental illness that was misdiagnosed. While that is entirely possible, I don't think that is the main point of this story.

1- What do you think the main point of this story is?

19 Jesus said to them, “You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

20 So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth.

Jesus seemed to be a
bit annoyed by those
without faith. However,
it also seems that when
the demon saw Jesus,
things got a lot worse!
This seems to always
have this effect on evil.
When it is around him, it
doesn't know what to do.
So it was taking out it's
frustration on the boy. I
think we have a tenden-
cy to underestimate the
power that is indelible to
Jesus. We should try not
to do that.
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1- Have you ever felt the
presence of evil?
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21 “How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy’s father.

He replied, “Since he was a little boy. 22 The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.”

Jesus asks some clarifying questions, and they were willing to give the patient history. But at the end of the sentence is a plea for Jesus to help them and to have mercy. Perhaps they didn’t know if Jesus would be willing to help them at all. They obviously didn’t understand who they were talking to, as Jesus always is willing to have mercy and take care of people.

1- Have you ever wondered if Jesus was willing to help you? What texts do you go to and get the reassurance you need?

2- How can those two things, doubt and belief exist together?

3- Do you believe there is a sacredness in doubt? Can doubt be holy?

25 When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. “Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,” he said. “I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!”

26 Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, “He’s dead.”

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up. 28 Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, “Why couldn’t we cast out that evil spirit?” 29 Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer”

There is so much going on in these texts. However, the most important thing that we can see is that Jesus is willing to help the man with his doubt, he is also willing to serve the man by taking care of the boy, and lastly, he uses this as a teachable moment for the disciples, and ultimately for us as well. What do you find interesting about these texts?

1- What do you think these texts have to do with being a Christian?

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

How do you handle doubts and disbelief? What kinds of doubts hit you the hardest? Daily life issues? Worries about the future? Faith concerns? What have you found helpful in dealing with doubts?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together Mark 9:14-29 and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that arise.

2- Who do you identify with most in this passage? The father? The boy? The disciples? The pharisees? Someone in the crowd??

3- What do you think about the father's words/actions in this story? How much faith do his words "if you can..." represent? How does Jesus respond and what does that teach us about faith and possibility?

4- How does Jesus show empathy in this passage? What does he not only say, but do?

5- Jesus says the disciples were unable to drive out the evil spirit because they

didn't pray, and yet there is no recorded prayer by Jesus either. What do you think he meant by this? Is he pointing to a ritualistic (eyes closed, hands together prayer) or a lifestyle of prayer? Where in your life do you find yourself becoming self-reliant vs. God-reliant?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- Is our generation more or less of a "faithless generation" than the one Jesus confronted?

2- In what ways does the father's plea, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!" resonate with you and your faith journey? How does this prayer actually demonstrate great faith?

3- In what areas of your life do you struggle with doubt, confusion, or even a lack of faith? Are you willing to share those with the group? With Jesus?

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

1- There is a beauty and honesty to the father's statement about "unbelief." Doubt can be an important part of our

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WEEK 12

John 4: 9-38

4 Jesus 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). **3** So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. **4** He had to go through Samaria on the way. **5** Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. **6** Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. **7** Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." **8** He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

Here is Jesus, breaking
convention. Also, note
the time of day. There
must have been a reason
this woman was there in
the middle of the day
rather than in the cool
of the morning or eve-
ning, when everyone
else would have come to
make the trip a bit easier.
We see much going on
in this text, but it is the
beginning of a greater
conversation that we will
see unfold throughout
this week.
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1- Have you ever been
in a situation that bucks
the convention of the
culture and time you
live?

2- What are the reasons
you have heard that this
woman might be at the
well in the middle of the
day?

3- Do you believe in di-
vine appointments?
Have you ever had one?
Write about it.

9 The 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?”

10 Jesus 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? **12** And 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?”

13 Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. **14** But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

She was surprised he was
talking to her, but he re-
buked her and let her
know that she was deal-
ing with someone she
couldn’t imagine. How-
ever, I have also always
thought that this was a
very strange conversa-
tion, as she was talking
about something, and
he seemed to be talking
about something else en-
tirely. Have you ever been
in a conversation with
someone who seemed to

be having a different conversation than you were?
That is the way of Jesus,
he is always so far ahead,
sometimes it even feels a
little confusing.

1- Has Jesus ever seemed
like an enigma to you?
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2- What can you be sure
of when it comes to Je-
sus?
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3- What is the greatest
gift that Jesus has ever
given you?

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— 18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

Now Jesus calls her out
on her own sin. This
must have been fright-
ening and frustrating to
her. For her to be public-
ly shamed like this would
have been a disaster,
however, only the two
of them were together.
This conversation was to
prove the insight that Je-
sus had into her life, and
to prove that she was not
dealing with someone
who was within her nor-
mal sphere of influence.
Jesus was something
else altogether.

1- When you think about
Jesus, what is the first
thing you think about?

2- Why was Jesus so different than anyone she had met? Was it just because of his insight, or something more?

3- Do you ever fear that Jesus knows the deepest, darkest, parts of you?

19 “Sir,” the woman 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!”

Now the truth comes
out! There are at least 2
important points to this
part of the message to-
day; 1) when she began to
realize he was something
different, she asked him
a serious question about
worship. And 2) he want-
ed her to know for sure
that what was coming
was now here. And that
this changed how we
worship. It ceases to be

27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?”

28 The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, **29** “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?”

30 So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.”

32 But Jesus replied, “I have a kind of food you know nothing about.”

Jesus is back with his
disciples, and of course
they didn't understand
what was happening at
that moment. They were
surprised he was speak-
ing to a woman, as well
as being surprised the
he had something to eat
they didn't understand,
since they were just com-
ing back from finding
food for all of them.

1- Do you think the disci-
ples were often confused
by the behavior that Je-
sus showed?

2- What would you do if you were hanging out with Jesus and say him constantly doing what was not culturally appropriate?

3- Do you think that you treat your family and the church in the same way you would speak to Jesus if they were around doing the same things? (I say this because we often want our families and church to fall in line, when Jesus rarely did).

33 “Did someone bring him food while we were gone?” the disciples asked each other.

34 Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. **35** You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. **36** The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! **37** You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvests.’ And it’s true. **38** I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.”

Jesus speaks words that
seem harsh, but he is
desperately trying to get
them to understand that
the work he is doing for
the Father is something
different than they ex-
pect. He wants them to
understand that he has
come to save the world,
not just the Jews. The
more they understand
this, the more the gospel
is spread to the world.
In fact, we are products
of that kind of thinking.
Praise God that we are
to take our cues from
those who finally under-

stood that the Gospel was
meant for every person
on the planet, in every
age. This means that the
new Christians are going
to be people that are des-
perate to share the word
of God with all who they
meet.

1- Who have you shared
God's word with lately?

2- Don't feel bad if you
haven't, but where do
you think you might be
able to share the gospel,
through your love and
your life?

3- Keep reading the sto-
ry to see what happened
in the town with the Sa-
maritan woman. It's fas-
cinating.

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

(Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

What is one of your all-time favorite songs, religious or not, and why?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

1- Read together Exodus 15: 1-3 and 20-21, and share why you think song was the method chosen to celebrate God's work in this moment?

2- It's interesting that when the Israelites left Egypt, they left in such a hurry that they couldn't put yeast in their bread, but when we get to Exodus 15: 20, we see that the women brought their tambourines. Tambourines were used for music and to praise God. Why did they make sure to grab their tambourines on the way out of town?

3- Read together Exodus 19: 16-20. Can we both love God and want to be near Him and yet "tremble" in front of Him at the same time? Explain.

4- Where in your life have you felt like you were in the presence of God? What was it about that moment(s) and what did you take away from those moments that help you know God better?

5- Read together Exodus 20: 1-21 (commandments) and share how you were taught about the commandments growing up or how you think of them today.

6- Why was it important for God to give the Israelites rules for how to relate to Him and to each other so soon after leaving Egypt?

7- Which one of the commandments do you think would have been the hardest for the Israelites to keep? What about us?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

1- What is one of your favorite ways to worship God outside of singing to Him?

2- God performed miracles to rescue the Israelites out of Egypt, He continued to provide for them in the desert with the pillars of cloud and fire, with manna and quail, and with water. Yet with all His provisions, it's not long before the people complain again. Why were they so hard to please? What things does God provide us that we may be quick to take for granted?

3- It has been said before that the best description of what love looks like in the Bible outside of I Corinthians 13, are the 10 commandments. What about the 10 commandments do you think could be describing what it looks like to be in a love relationship?

4- What are some ways that living the Biblical Sabbath every week can rearrange our lives and our priorities? How does the Biblical Sabbath challenge the values of western society (think of our definition of success, of workaholics, of mercy and justice)? How might living Sabbath help us be kinder to one another?

5- God spends a lot of time telling the Israelites first how to put Him first, then how to care for each other through love and mercy and justice. Why is the order of those two things important?

1- Since we're in a series called Rearrange, and since the first four commandments are about how we put God first, think through what may need to be rearranged in your life to give God more of your heart/time. What area in your heart does God need more access to, and what's one step you could take this week to let Him in?

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

(carry these words with you this week as a reminder)

The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him - my father's God, and I will exalt him! (Exodus 15: 2)

"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means God with us." (Matthew 1: 23, NLT)

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

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