

# Gospel Centered | Mission Focused

Jesus said, "Come off by yourselves; let's take a break and get a little rest."

Mark 6:30

## Mark's Gospel | Week of January 31

Our invitation this New Year is to live gospel centered lives, encouraged and equipped by our gospel centered relationships (especially in Connect Groups). The questions below are designed specifically for Connect Groups and can also be used in households or spiritual friendships.

### Gospel Centered

Have you ever had someone that made a way for you? Someone who went ahead of you in life, or your career – maybe in friendship or family – perhaps journeyed to the other side of a difficult situation and could help you when you were just at the beginning of your? Who were they and what did they do?

*As an example, many of us who have faced a health journey can think of someone on the other side of their recovery whose friendship made a way for our own experience...*

Read Mark 1:1-15

What actions or words on Mark's part prepared the way for Jesus' public ministry?

Read Mark 6:6-31

*This story is an example of an "interruption" in Mark's gospel.*

*Several times in this gospel Mark begins one story, changes perspective to something else, then returns to the main story again. What interrupts the story of the sending of the 12?*

Pastor Laurie made some observations about what this interruption tells us about grief or suffering in following Jesus – did anything in particular strike you?

Where would you be in this story – among the disciples exhausted but exuberant about the ways that Jesus' salvation mission is showing up in the world or among John's disciples grieving and discouraged at the lack of rescue and progress of Jesus' kingdom rule in the world/your life?

In our Connect Group, what practices or habits will help us to "rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn"?

### Mission Focused

Get ready for the six week Mission Focus challenge in Lent!

- Talk as a group about beginning to meet each week during Lent – is there any room in your group to invite some new folks to join you? (If so please contact Christina Hjort [ChristinaH@wspc.org](mailto:ChristinaH@wspc.org))
- When you hear "Mission Focus Challenge" does that feel energizing or exhausting?

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## Gospel Practice | The Examen

*Did you try any of the “home missionary” practices? How did they go?*

In practice, rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn (Romans 12:15) can be harder than it sounds. We more often rejoice with those who rejoice, moan with those who moan and try to fix the ones in mourning!

There is a listening prayer practice from the Ignatian (Catholic) tradition that can be helpful. It's a great practice not only in Connect Groups but especially with friends and family. It is a simple concept – Thanks – give/take – prayer. It goes like this:

- Give **thanks** to God for the gifts of the day
- What was high point today – the thing **that gave** you're the greatest joy?
- What was your low point today – the thing **that took** the wind out of your sails?
- **Pray** for each other (repeating the words the other person actually used to describe the day)

The conviction is that Jesus' Spirit meets us in both the consolation (joyful) and desolation (sad) experiences of the day. The more we carefully listen and pay attention to what these are, the more we begin to hear and attend to Jesus' presence in every situation.

## Readings

*The readings this week begin to work our way through Mark's gospel so that over the next few weeks we have read one full gospel as we embark on our Lent series! These week's readings lead up to the sending and return of the 12 apostles.*

**Monday, February 1** | Mark 1

**Tuesday, February 2** | Mark 2

**Wednesday, February 3** | Mark 3

**Thursday, February 4** | Mark 4

**Friday, February 5** | Mark 5

**Saturday, February 6** | Mark 6:1-31

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