

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



June 4 – 25, 2023

The Art of Neighboring

Ever wondered why people around us aren't interested in God? Maybe we never gave them a reason to be! What if we got to know our neighbors and demonstrated what a Christ-follower looks like – someone who engages in the community and who thoughtfully cares for others.

*No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.
– 1 Corinthians 10:34 (NIV)*

June 4, 2023

The Value of Neighbors

Luke 10:25-37

Connect:

Share a time you struggled with a roommate, neighbor, or co-worker.

Engage:

Yes, we have looked at the story of the Good Samaritan many times and it is very familiar to us. But this time, listen to the story with a different lens.

Read Luke 10:25-37

1. Look at the story from the perspective of the bully and the thief who beat up the man on the road. What might have motivated him? What might have been the unintended consequences for him?
2. How would the impact of the story change if the person beaten up on the road was Jesus? (Consider Matthew 25:31-46.) How would it change your perspective on what being a good neighbor means?
3. What would Jesus have you do if the person on the road was your most troublesome enemy? Does it matter if that person is someone you know or a public figure?
4. Jesus doesn't want us to get into the semantics of how we narrowly define the word "neighbor." But, broadening the definition to include anyone God puts in our path, how does this story invite you into deeper compassion towards your neighbors?

Apply

Jesus commands us to love and value our neighbors as much as we do ourselves. So maybe we should rename this parable to the "Human Samaritan." After all, all humans should engage each other with compassion.

With one of your neighbors in mind, what might you do this week to show that neighbor love and compassion?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

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June 11, 2023
The Time Factor
Luke 10:38-42

Connect:

When you get super busy, what falls off your radar? Tasks, people, fun activities, work, focus?

Engage:

Read Luke 10:38-42

1. This passage presents a contrast between the two sisters. Which sister most closely resembles your personality and why?
2. What do you imagine the core problem to be? Is it the type of work Martha does or her attitude that is the problem?
3. Given the cultural expectations that women should provide hospitality and that it was socially unacceptable for women to be a student of a rabbi, what is Jesus commending about Mary's behavior? Is it the type of activity she is doing or her attitude?
4. What does this say about the inclusive nature of his teaching and his response toward women?
5. Sometimes this story is interpreted to mean that one type of activity is better. How might this story instead be an invitation to find a balance between the two poles? After all, one must take care of practical matters as well as set aside time for spiritual enrichment.

Apply

Mary and Martha have different approaches to how they manage their time. One is consumed and busy, while the other makes time for listening to Jesus' teaching. Which one are you?

As you reflect on whether your life is more prone to distraction or devotion, how can you find a better balance?

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June 18, 2023

Share the Joy

1 Peter 1:8-9

Connect:

Describe a joyful time in your Christian journey.

Engage:

Read 1 Peter 1:8-9

1. Peter writes that many followers of Jesus have not seen him, yet we love and believe in him. How is it possible to love and believe in Jesus without physically encountering him? Is this your experience?
2. Peter describes the Christian journey as one of gratitude and celebration marked by indescribable and glorious joy. What do you think he means by indescribable and glorious joy?
3. You will note that in 1 Peter 1: 6, Peter refers to his audience's suffering. So how does joy play a role in dealing with suffering?
4. If joy is not solely circumstantial, what motivates this kind of joy?
5. How do your friends and neighbors see joy in your life? Would they attribute that joy to you being a Christian?

Apply

We have something remarkable to share with our neighbors – the joy of following Jesus.

Reflect on joy as an attribute of your faith journey. How can you more readily foster gratitude and joy?

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June 25, 2023

Overcoming Differences

Acts 10:1-23

Connect:

What formative beliefs or values from your childhood have kept you from reaching out to certain people as you were growing up?

Engage:

To fully appreciate this story, it is essential to know that in Jesus's day, faithful Jews did not mix socially with Gentiles, much less a person like Cornelius, a high-ranking Roman army officer. It was forbidden, not unlike how it was also forbidden to eat "unclean" animals.

Acts 10:1-23

1. Why do you suppose God sent an angel to a gentile general, someone responsible for the suffering and occupation of the Jewish people? Why do you think Cornelius complied with the invitation to find Simon Peter in Joppa?
2. Peter has a remarkable dream where God shatters his religious categories of what is clean and unclean to eat. What would be the modern equivalent for you? What would you consider "unclean" and despicable? A person? A group of people? A philosophy? A lifestyle?
3. God uses the vision to open Peter's heart to a new way of seeing people. Describe an experience where God helped you see something or someone you previously thought despicable in a new light.
4. The shift to welcoming, embracing, and integrating Gentiles into the community of faith took decades of struggle in the early church. So how can we be less resistant to God's radical inclusion and more actively love our neighbors?

Apply

The story of Cornelius reminds us we often fear those who are different from us. But what if that fear stands as a barrier that keeps others from missing out on receiving God's grace?

This week, what can you do to overcome your fear of someone who is different and reach out in love?

Pray

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