

Small Group Questions

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



July 2 – 30, 2023

So Glad You Asked

Some say doubt and questioning are the opposite of faith and trusting God. But God never seems to back away from questions and neither should we. We may not have all the answers, but we are on a journey where we can wrestle with our questions and doubts together.

For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:12

July 2, 2023

Are there certain things we have to believe to be a Christian?

Matthew 9:9-13

Connect:

What is the most challenging Christian doctrine you have struggled to embrace?

Engage:

Read Mathew 9:9-13

1. Imagine yourself in the story of the call to Matthew, the tax collector. If you were in the crowd, how do you think you would have reacted? What about if you were a pharisee, a Roman guard, or one of the disciples?
2. What was Matthew required to do or believe before, during, or after his initial encounter with Jesus?
3. What do you imagine the primary objection of the Pharisees to be? What were the cultural, religious, and social implications of Jesus' party at Matthew's home? What might a modern version of this story look like?
4. How does Jesus respond to the Pharisees' objection? How might Jesus respond to our version of Jesus sharing a meal with outcasts and sinners?
5. How does Jesus' response inform your understanding of what it means to be a Christian? Is the call to follow Christ more about believing certain things, keeping others out, or emulating Jesus?

Apply

Many ancient Christian beliefs befuddle the modern mind. Some churches say that if one doesn't embrace all their doctrines, that person is not a faithful Christian. So are the core beliefs I must affirm to be considered a Christ follower?

What does it mean for you to follow Jesus, modeling your interaction with others after him?

Pray

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

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1 Corinthians 13:12

July 9, 2023

What is grace vs. doing good works?

Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 2:14 (NET), and James 2:14-18

Connect:

What is your first reaction when people need help?

Engage:

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

1. Based on this verse, what is the nature of grace?
2. Who or what is the source of grace?

How do you acquire grace?

Read Titus 2:14 NET version: "He (Jesus) gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good."

3. What was the purpose of Jesus' teaching, his lifestyle, and his relationship to humanity? What was he hoping the consequence of his compassionate actions would be for his followers?

Read James 2:14-18

4. Is faith without good works of any use? Does doing good without faith matter?
5. What does living faith look like? What kind of good works might accompany godly faith?
6. Is there someone you know who inspires you in your faith journey? How do you see grace and good works expressed in their lives?

Apply

The nature of God's grace and mercy is universal, complete, and available to all. So what does good works have to do with it? Will we receive better rewards in heaven for doing good deeds in this life?

Thank God for how God's grace has changed your life. How can you express that gratitude by serving someone in need this week?

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July 16, 2023

The Faithfulness of the Trinity

Ephesians 3:20-21

Connect:

Share a time when you were completely surprised and how it changed you in some way.

Engage:

Read Ephesians 3:20-21

1. Name a situation in which you were caught off guard or surprised at the way(s) God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit showed up to comfort, guide, or accomplish something within or through you.
2. In what way(s) have you experienced the faithfulness of our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer? In what way(s) have you been disappointed by God? What or whom kept you seeking God?
3. How has the faithfulness of the Trinity impacted your faith journey?
4. Is there one person of the Godhead, (God, Jesus, or Holy Spirit) to whom you feel a special affinity? What name do you use most frequently to address God in prayer?
5. What scripture verse or personal mantra reflects your belief in the steadfast faithfulness of the Trinity?

Apply

The Psalmist declares, "The Lord is faithful in all his words and gracious in all his deeds." God shows up in our lives lending wisdom, strength, and compassion that enable us to accomplish that which we are called to do.

How can your experience of God's faithfulness help you face the challenges of your week?

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1 Corinthians 13:12

July 23, 2023

What difference does prayer make?

Philippians 4:4-7

Connect:

Share a time when being grateful changed your attitude toward something.

Engage:

Read Philippians 4:4-7

1. What is your definition of prayer?
2. How does prayer impact God's attitudes and behavior? How does prayer influence your attitudes and behavior?
3. What would you say if someone asked you to describe how you pray? In other words, is there a type of prayer you use or a form or structure to your prayer? Is your prayer verbal, visual, silent, etc.? Are there certain types of things you pray for?
4. How do you understand the role of gratitude or rejoicing in prayer? How does it impact your sense of God's "nearness" or God's attention to your life?
5. Paul speaks of a mystical peace that comes from prayer. How have you experienced this type of peace? How was it related to prayer or gratefulness?

Apply

Back in Jesus' day, miracles seemed to be a regular happening. If his disciples channeled God's healing power, why can't we? Does praying change anything?

Commit to writing down 3-5 things a day for which you are grateful. Incorporate these things in your daily prayer. At the end of the week, share the impact of this with someone in your small group.

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1 Corinthians 13:12

July 30, 2023

Does suffering negate God's goodness?

Romans 8:35, 37-39

Connect:

Share a time when you felt abandoned by God.

Engage:

Read Romans 8:35, 37-39

1. What are some things that threaten our faith in God's goodness? What would you add to Paul's list in Romans?
2. Does this kind of catastrophic oppression and suffering negate God's goodness? What or who is responsible for suffering? What is God's role in this?
3. How does one experience God's love and faithfulness when we are suffering?
4. People will often say that while they were in crisis, they couldn't see God's presence or faithfulness, but looking back they can see God working in their lives. How does the memory of God's presence and faithfulness help you when facing current challenges?
5. How does the community of faith help you experience God's love and faithfulness during a crisis?

Apply

We've all heard it: "God is good all the time!" This can be painful for those suffering from severe and chronic physical ailments, the tender-hearted who are grieving, and those who can't catch a break. Are challenges a test of our faith, a punishment for wrongdoing, or simply a sign that God doesn't care?

Reflect on an experience you have had of God's love and faithfulness. How can a memory of God's care be helpful to you in the future? What can you do to make this memory more accessible when facing inevitable challenges?

Pray

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