

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
- CG Mission Statement

Icebreaker

How would you convince someone to move to your city?

Worship: Hebrews 5:7-9

(Read the poem or a Scripture passage to meditate on)

Practice lectio divina (sacred reading) by attentively reading Hebrews 5:7-9 aloud several times. Enter into a time of worship through prayer by using a word or a phrase from the passage.

Text for Discussion: Mark 14:32-46

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

When confronted by life's most painful trials, what do we do? Where are we to turn? The Bible urges us to look to Jesus. For when we see how He faced such difficulty, we will find comfort.

Jesus is like us... and so He is with us. It's nearly impossible to listen to anyone who tries to comfort us if they don't know anything about us. But Jesus dwelt among us, fully human, and experienced all we will go through – physically, emotionally and spiritually. He has plumbed the depths of agony and sorrow.

What Jesus dreaded more than anything was the wrath of God's divine justice. Why, though? Most of us go through life not bothered by such thoughts. We may fear death or separation from those who love us, but not God's wrath. But this is the very thing that the cross represents. On it, Jesus experienced – once and **for all** – the eternal, spiritual separation from God's loving embrace that our sinful nature deserves.

This is both externally assuring and personally comforting for us. The horror Jesus feels in the garden of Gethsemane speaks to the truth of the account. Our God felt temptation, experienced sorrow, wept. Meaning we can reliably lean on Him and His strength when we are at our weakest. Nor should we feel shame when we're at our lowest. Our God has been there before us and will never forsake us (Heb 4:15).

Jesus is nothing like us at all... and so He is for us. Some trials will be so intense that we don't just need somebody with us; we need somebody for us. We don't just need help; we need salvation. When facing His impending crucifixion, Jesus had every right to walk away. He had no personal reason to bear our sins and face God's wrath. But had Jesus been self-serving, it would mean that our only path through trials is to take matters into our own hands, enslaving us to our own brokenness and insufficiency.

But there was no other way of redeeming God's creation. So Jesus entrusted Himself to our Father's will, selflessly choosing to be for us in the very darkest moment. This is the active obedience of our sinless Savior, which enables God to look at us as His blameless, beloved children. Because of Christ, we have assurance that the trial of all trials – standing before the throne of God – is already decided.

What does that mean for us today? It means we have forgiveness for every failure; there is no shame in those moments. It means assurance that God's wrath has already been poured out; we need not fear condemnation. It means provision for the trials we will endure; because we have already been saved from the ultimate trial. And so we can endure, resting in the knowledge that because of Jesus we really are accepted, we really are loved, and we really are safe.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How does looking to the life Jesus, help us when we go through times of trial?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- What stands out to you in this passage?
- Describe Jesus' emotions and body response in this passage, the eve of his death. See a parallel passage in Luke:22:39-46
 - What is Jesus' view of the Father in this prayer of lament?
 - What do we learn about prayer for when we are in times of distress or temptation?
 - How does the way in which Jesus faced His distress help us face our trials?
- What is the "hour" and "cup" that troubled Jesus so much? What is He aware of?
 - Will we ever have to drink the cup of God's wrath? Why or why not? What is your response to your answer?
 - Did God answer Jesus' prayer? See Hebrews 5:7-9.
 - Discuss all that Jesus' obedience accomplished for us?
- Jesus is like us, so He is with us. How does this help when we experience hard things? See Hebrews 4:15.
 - What areas of life are you glad that He knows and understands our human experience? Why?
- Jesus is nothing like us, so He is for us. What is helpful in knowing this?
 - What happens when we try to take things into our own hands?
- What is something you most want to remember from this passage?
 - What life application will you make?

Prayer

Use the following questions to pray prayers of lament together. What is the yearning of your heart right now? What has God done that you want to "call to mind" right now?

Experiment of the Month

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

Spiritual Formation Experience:

Since the role of lament is a crucial part of the journey of faith in a broken world, write in a journal some prayers of lament for the concerns you have for the world, country, city, home, job, church, family or personal life. Experience freedom before God and offer Him everything in your heart as worship and submission before Him. Ask God's Spirit to show you anything that may need to be put before Him to receive His healing. You will find that prayers of lament often include prayers of repentance and gratitude and always turn into worship and waiting. Turn toward Him with all your heart. (If you need help with this read Job, Jeremiah or Psalms 5, 12, 22, 28, 31, 51, 52, 55, 88 and so many others.)

Missional Experiment:

Sometimes sharing our faith simply involves having lunch with neighbors or co-workers. Through conversation and good listening, you will discover their felt needs and hopefully one day explore with them their deepest need, their need for Christ. This doesn't just happen. You will have to intentionally make time for others in your calendar. Begin praying for at least three people and plan some opportunities to get to know them better through shared lunches. As a group, continue to pray for one another and the people you are sharing with. Celebrate any answers to prayer.