

## **Discussion Guide for Small Group Meetings March 3-9** (Based on Daily Readings for February 25 – March 2)

### **Icebreaker**

How do you feel about your first and middle name given to you at birth?

### **Weekly Review**

Moses highlights the importance of repentance, God's faithfulness, and the concept of divine justice. The New Testament begins with the birth and early life of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and the arrival of the Messiah to bring salvation to humanity. These chapters also illustrate the contrast between the earthly powers, symbolized by King Herod, and the divine power of Jesus, underscoring the significance of Christ's birth as a pivotal moment in history.

In your week's readings, what did you learn about God? What's one Bible passage or reflection thought that stood out to you?

### **Focus on Matthew 1**

1. Why do you think it was necessary for Matthew to establish Jesus' earthly lineage as well as His heavenly lineage?
2. How do you think Joseph felt when he learned about Mary's pregnancy, considering he was not the biological father of Jesus? What was his response to the news in verse 19? What does this reveal about his character?
3. If Jesus were not virgin born, what conclusions could you make about Him?
4. In verses 20-23, what did the angel tell Joseph in a dream that changed his plans?
5. In the dream, the angel quoted Isaiah 7:14 and explained that Jesus will be called "Immanuel" which means "God with us." How does the fact that Jesus experienced the same kinds of temptations and trials as you face in this world encourage you as you face life?
6. What did Joseph do in response to the new information he received during the dream? Do you think it was easy or difficult for him to obey what had been told him? Why?
7. How does Joseph's story encourage you that God knows what He's doing even if you don't understand?

### **Praise/Prayer**

In today's study, we saw God fulfill the long-awaited hopes of Israel by sending Jesus at just the right time. God is still on the throne and sovereign over all His creation. He will never be early

or late but always on time (Acts 1:7). If you or others in your group are in a season of waiting, pray for God's sustaining power and peace to be present in your life today as you trust in His perfect timing.

## **Discussion Guide for Small Group Meetings March 10-16**

(Based on Daily Readings for March 3-9)

### **Icebreaker**

Who did you run around with in high school? What is the most daring thing you did?

### **Weekly Review**

In the early chapters of the gospels, you read about the angel Gabriel announcing the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, Mary's visitation to Elizabeth, the birth of John and Jesus, and Jesus's temptation in the wilderness. The ministry of John the Baptist leads to the introduction of Jesus as the Lamb of God. John baptizes Jesus, marking the beginning of Jesus's public ministry. Jesus calls His first disciples and performs miracles, highlighting the beginning of His mission.

In your week's readings, what did you learn about God? What's one Bible passage or reflection thought that stood out to you?

### **Focus on Mark 2**

1. Read Mark 2:1-12. If you were one of the paralytic's friends and saw the crowds, what would you likely have done?
  - Suggest we come back later
  - Politely wait in line
  - Make a hole in the roof
  - Go along, but make it clear it wasn't my idea
2. What characteristics did these four friends demonstrate that you want in your own friendships?
3. According to Mark 2:5, what did Jesus see – a mess that had to be cleaned up or something else? What do you think impressed Jesus?
4. Why did Jesus say, "Your sins are forgiven," before healing the man physically? What insight does Mark 2:7, 10-12 provide in answering this question? What did the miracle prove about Jesus' identity and authority?
5. What was different about the man who exited the room carrying his mat than the one who was lowered from the roof besides the obvious physical healing?
6. What was a greater miracle – his physical healing or the forgiveness of sins he received?
7. If you had friends who would take you to Jesus for healing today, what kind of healing would you ask for? Physical? Spiritual? Emotional? Relational?

### **Praise/Prayer**

In the church, God has given His children a spiritual family to be a supportive community that will care for them when they are hurting. God did this because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). If you are hurting today and feel comfortable enough to share, tell the group about your need. Then, allow the group to bring you to Jesus in prayer asking for His healing touch.

**Discussion Guide for Small Group Meetings March 17-23**  
(Based on Daily Readings for March 10-16)

**Icebreaker**

What is the worst storm you've ever been through?

**Weekly Review**

Jesus encounters opposition and begins to form His core group of disciples. Matthew 5-7 contains the Sermon on the Mount, wherein Jesus imparts foundational teachings, including the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer, emphasizing principles of Christian living. Included in your reading was the story of the centurion's faith and the raising of the widow's son in Nain, demonstrating Jesus's compassion and authority. Jesus taught using stories such as the parable of the sower and the wheat and tares.

In your week's readings, what did you learn about God? What's one Bible passage or reflection thought that stood out to you?

**Focus on Mark 4**

1. In Mark 4:35-41, we find the story of Jesus and His disciples in a big storm that caused much distress. If you had been one of the disciples when the boat was about to sink, what would you have done?
  - Jumped overboard
  - Screamed for help
  - Started bailing water
  - Taken command
  - Woke Jesus up
2. The disciples asked Jesus, "Don't you care if we drown?" Based on their response, why do you think the disciples woke up Jesus? How do you react to Jesus when He seems to be asleep in your life?
3. What was the tone in Jesus' voice when He asked, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Was he scolding them, compassionate toward them, or disappointed in them?
4. How did the disciples' fear during the storm differ from their fear afterward? What was Jesus teaching about Himself?
5. What does Mark 4:31 reveal about how the disciples viewed Jesus at this point? What did they still need to learn?
6. What do you still need to learn about Jesus as you go through the storms of life?

7. What stress do you have that you need Jesus to calm? How can the group pray for you?

**Praise/Prayer**

Be encouraged that God promises to be with you and will sustain you when you go through deep waters (Isaiah 43:2). Close your time together by thanking the Lord for being in our “boat” during every storm of life that we will face.

## **Discussion Guide for Small Group Meetings March 24-30**

(Based on Daily Readings for March 17-23)

### **Icebreaker**

Have you ever helped a stranger in distress? What happened?

### **Weekly Review**

You read a series of narratives in which Jesus performs various miracles and delivers teachings, showcasing His authority and compassion. These chapters include the healing of the demon-possessed man, the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead, the feeding of the 5,000, and the Transfiguration, highlighting the power and divine nature of Jesus. Jesus sends out the seventy-two disciples to proclaim the kingdom of God and teaches the parable of the Good Samaritan, emphasizing the importance of evangelism and the mission of His followers. Jesus teaches the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son, underscoring the theme of God's joy over repentant sinners.

In your week's readings, what did you learn about God? What's one Bible passage or reflection thought that stood out to you?

### **Focus on Luke 10**

1. In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus told a parable in response to the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" Why do you think Jesus answered his question with a story?
2. Why do you think the priest and the Levite didn't stop and help the man who had been robbed?
3. If you were on your way to an important appointment and saw someone who looked beat up, what thoughts would battle in your mind in how you would respond?
4. Why did the Samaritan (whose people were disliked by the Jews) stop and help the man? What quality did the Samaritan have that the priest and Levite didn't?
5. What did it cost the Samaritan to render aid to the man? What does this indicate about the Samaritan?
6. After reading this parable, who would you say in your "neighbor"? Are there any "neighbors" God has placed in your path that you would rather avoid? Would you be willing to pray for a week that the Lord would bless them?
7. Does your schedule and finances have enough margin to be available to help others when needs arise? If not, what changes could you make?

### **Praise/Prayer**

This story is also a picture of what Jesus has done for us. Sin has left us beaten and hopeless, unable to help ourselves. Jesus came to us, rescued us from death, and made us whole. Spend a few minutes offering prayers of praise to Jesus for being our “Good Samaritan.”