

## Small Group Discussion Guide — April 5, 2020

- Series: “Life in His Name”
  - Sermon: Frail Hearts
  - Scripture: John 12: 12-13, John 13: 18, John 13: 37-38
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### **FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:**

With all the changes to our lives that we’ve seen with COVID-19, where are some places you are finding life?

### **CONNECT:**

What kind of crowd were you part of in your adolescence? How does it compare to your social circle as an adult?

### **ENGAGE:**

1. Read John 12: 12-13.
  - What observations can you make regarding this crowd surrounding Jesus? What were they expecting?
  - What do you think you would have felt or how would you have acted if you’d been in this crowd?
2. Read John 13: 18.
  - What emotions do you sense in Jesus here?
  - What is the significance of the sharing of bread?
2. Read John 13: 37-38.
  - Based on verse 37, how would you describe Peter?
  - How do you think he felt after Jesus’ response in verse 38?

### **APPLY:**

1. David Dwight said that two distinct situations reveal our character: *pressure* and *prosperity*. What have you discovered about yourself in times of pressure? How do you tend to respond naturally, and what measures do you often take to deal with it? Now think about times of prosperity — what behaviors and attitudes do you notice when things are going well? What do these reveal about your heart and where you really place your faith?
2. Jesus experienced betrayal from his closest friends during this Holy Week. The first one was by flickering candlelight at the last supper, when Judas was unmasked as a traitor. The second was by torches in the Garden of Gethsemane, as Judas used a kiss to identify Jesus to the arresting guards. The last was Peter’s denial of Jesus around the warming fire in Caiaphas’ courtyard, as Jesus was being interrogated by the religious leaders. In essence, the betrayal in each instance was simply a choice to reject a relationship with Christ and to follow one’s own motivations and desires. What are some ways that you also have betrayed Christ in your life, through overt actions, inaction, or the posture of your heart?
3. Consider the faithfulness and steadfast love of Jesus (2 Timothy 2: 13). How does this truth give you hope when you are tempted to live by your up-and-down emotions?

**PRAY:**

Lord Jesus, we are overwhelmed at the deep humiliation, isolation, and pain you suffered during this Holy Week. It's hard to imagine, and even more unimaginable that you did it for us, your fickle and afraid followers. Thank you for your immense faithfulness, and may we be emboldened by your steadfast love for us. In Your name, Amen.

**GOING DEEPER:**

1. Palm Sunday marks Holy Week, a week in Jesus' earthly life that was marked by mounting pressure, betrayal, humiliation, and isolation. Read John 13-19 this week and take some time to meditate on the enormity of what is going on here. Imagine you are one of the disciples, or simply someone in the crowds of Jerusalem. What would you think about Jesus? How do you think you would have responded? Where would you have been in the crowds?
2. On Good Friday, denominations are uniting in inviting their members to consider making it a day of fasting and prayer in light of the Coronavirus. Our denomination is one of these and Hope's board of elders will be leading the way for our church in doing this, and we invite all of you to join in. For information, visit <https://epc.org/news/goodfridayprayerfastingresources/>

**SUPPORTING VERSES:**

*Friendly reminder: Download one of the Bible apps on your phone or tablet to have quick access to the many different versions of scripture available.*

John 2:25 - "No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person's heart."

2 Corinthians 13:12 - "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

Romans 2:4 — "Or do you disregard the riches of His kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance?"

2 Timothy 2:13 - "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

**QUOTES:**

"And in no way is the gospel story sentimental or escapist. Indeed, the gospel takes evil and loss with utmost seriousness, because it says that we cannot save ourselves. Nothing short of the death of the very Son of God can save us."

Timothy Keller

"And even the damage that we do to ourselves by sin need not have the last word. It is always open to us to turn to God in this life and see our sins swallowed up in the ocean of his love. This is, of course, not to say that our sins do not matter; but it is to free us from that crippling kind of anxiety which, more than anything else, prevents us from growing in true love."

Simon Tugwell

"Every time you feel hurt, offended, or rejected, you have to dare to say to yourself, 'These feelings, strong as they may be, are not telling me the truth about myself. The truth even though I cannot feel it right now, is that I am a chosen child of God, precious in God's eyes, called the beloved from all eternity, and held safe in an everlasting embrace.'"

Henri Nouwen