

SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Winter Semester - Week 10

Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, and skip the ones that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.

OPTIONAL ICEBREAKER(S)

- a) What Easter traditions do you and your family have?
- b) Have you experienced any ironic situations in your life? Or do you know any real-life stories of irony?

PASSAGE AND DISCUSSION

Read Mark 15:25-37

- a) What stands out to you, upon first reading of this text?
- b) **Read v29.** Jesus' statement about rebuilding the temple (**John 2:19**) was completely misunderstood, and he was mocked for it. In what way was he tearing down the temple and rebuilding it, which these onlookers could not perceive?
- c) **Read v31-32 and Philippians 2:5-11.** The chief priests and the scribes must have felt vindicated when Jesus, dying on the cross, did not save himself from his torture and death. They assumed this was because he couldn't save himself, but we know differently. How does this criticism of Jesus display the attitude of their hearts? How does Jesus, willingly dying on the cross, and taking their wrongful rebukes, display the attitude of His heart? What can we learn from their two differing examples?
- d) **Read v33 and Amos 8:9-10.** Have you ever noticed that on the day Jesus died, darkness covered the whole land for a few hours (which would have been between 12pm-3pm)? Why do you think this happened, and what do you think it represents?
- e) **Read v34.** Around the ninth hour (3 o'clock) is when the Jews would do the daily evening sacrifice in the temple. Do you think it is significant that Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" at that time?

- f) Take time to reflect on the fact that while the Jews were sacrificing lambs in the temple, the Perfect Lamb, the Son of God, was being sacrificed for you.
- g) **Read Ephesians 2:11-17.** At the time of Jesus' death, both Jews and Gentiles were present. Why is the blood of Jesus important to both people groups then and now? Why is His blood, poured out for us, Good News for everyone according to Paul in this passage? What does His blood do for us all, according to these verses?
- h) Jesus' humiliation on the cross seemed to be a direct consequence of blasphemy, so most people looked scornfully upon Jesus as he died, believing it to be just punishment from God. Why was His death on the cross *not* condemnation from God? Why did God allow Jesus to die on the cross?
- i) How has Jesus' death on the cross changed your life?
- j) Mark makes sure to emphasize the irony behind Jesus' death. Discuss how the following points show the irony of the cross.
 - i) Jesus was mocked as King of the Jews.
 - ii) Jesus died a rebel's death.
 - iii) Jesus saved others by not saving himself.
 - iv) The Messiah was proven through suffering.
 - v) The forsaken one trusted God.
 - vi) Jesus' death killed death.
- k) Read **Psalm 22.** What aspects of this prophetic prayer match what we read in **Mark 15**?
- l) Eternal life is the consequence of Jesus' death. He gave life in abundance to all the ones that deserved eternal death. How does this truth impact your life?

TAKE IT HOME (OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR RESPONSE THIS WEEK)

- a) Have you ever felt forsaken by God? How was your response? Read the following stanza from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Cowper's Grave*, and remind yourself that because Jesus was forsaken, you do not need to be.

***Deserted! God could separate / from his-own essence rather;
And Adam's sins have swept between the righteous Son and Father.
Yea, once, Immanuel's orphan'd cry his universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken!'***

***It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!***

Ask God to remind you of this, and acknowledge His presence with you.

- b) Listen to the song, "Passover Us" by Andrew Peterson ([song](#)). What stands out to you from this song after everything we have talked about in this week's passage?

OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR PRAYER TIME

- a) Take time to thank and praise God together for all that Jesus accomplished through his blood that was poured out for you on the cross.
- b) Pray this week God will open your eyes to see the circumstances with a different perspective.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER, GROW & GO

Floor Hockey & Jets Game: April 2nd at 4 pm. All men are invited to a friendly game of floor hockey in the small gym, followed by pizza and the Jets game on the big screen.

Great Music at Grant Seniors: April 2nd at 10:15am. We would like to invite you to a meeting filled with uplifting music and inspiring messages from the New Covenant Gospel Quartet. This talented group of musicians will be performing a range of gospel songs that will have you tapping your feet and singing along in no time. The event will be held at the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, April 2nd, right after the Classic Service. We hope you can join us for this special occasion, which promises to be a joyous celebration of faith and community.

Premarital Classes: April 13th at 7 p.m. For those recently engaged or planning a wedding within the next twelve months, we invite you to our next premarital class here at Grant Memorial Church. The five classes will allow you to hear from various marital experiences as you prepare for your big day. Communication tools, conflict resolution techniques, navigating relationships and sexual expectations, and many other topics will be covered. The classes will be conducted in a group style, with a couple of mentors coming alongside each premarital couple so that you have the support you need.

Christianity Explored: April 11th at 7 p.m. This is an 8-week course that explores the big questions of life and faith. We will study the Gospel of Mark to learn more about the central figure of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ. If someone in your small group is new to faith or just looking to learn more, please join us. All are welcome! This is a safe place to meet with others, grow in community, and ask the hard questions. Registration is required!

Men's Study / Forensic Faith: April 16th at 9 a.m. Now more than ever, it's important to know what you believe and why you believe it. As Christians in an increasingly skeptical world, we must do more than tell people what the Bible teaches; we must help them understand why they can trust what it says about Jesus. Are you ready to make the case? "Forensic Faith will help you develop a faith that's dedicated, inquisitive, and prepared to answer the tough questions." This eight-week study walks participants through the investigative techniques learned by J. Warner Wallace during his decades as a homicide detective. The Cold Case disciplines and practices are shared with Jesus' followers to encourage them to develop a more integrated, robust, certain, and defensible faith.

Time & Dates: 8 Sessions - Starts April 16th - Sunday's 9:00 to 10:30 am .. or... Tuesday's 7:00 to 8:30 pm