

SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Winter Semester - Week 8

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's your favourite movie you've seen this year?
- b) What book of the Bible are you reading right now?

PASSAGE AND DISCUSSION

Read Mark 15: 1-15

- a) How do you feel upon reading this passage?
- b) Why is Pontius Pilate included in the Apostles Creed? Why is Christianity's recording of historical context important? How impact does that make on our faith today?
- c) Have you ever sympathized with Pilate? How does the historical account of Pilate's cruelty impact the way we read this text?
- d) It seems like Pilate is genuinely curious about who Jesus is, yet he wants to satisfy the demands of the crowds. There are those who are curious about Jesus and those who overtly oppose Him. Can you think of someone who is curious about Jesus? Do you know anyone who outright opposes Jesus?
- e) Why do you think Pilate gave Jesus the title, "The King of the Jews"? Is this a proper title for Jesus?
- f) Read **v2**. Why do you think Jesus answered Pilate's question so cryptically?
- g) Read **John 18:36**. In John's account of this narrative, Jesus is a king, but His kingdom is not of this world? What does this mean? What does this mean for us as we follow him?

- h) **v10** says Pilate knew that the chief priests were offering up Jesus out of self-interest. How does eliminating Jesus serve the best interests of the Jewish religious leaders?
- i) How was the crowd forced to choose between Barabbas and Jesus? What did each represent? How are we forced to make similar decisions today?
- j) Is it notable that Barabbas' name is actually 'Jesus'? (**See Matthew 27:16**). How notable is it that Barabbas means 'Son of the Father'?
- k) Have you ever thought of Barabbas as a popular revolutionary before, or have you viewed him as a low-life criminal - a menace to society? How does viewing Barabbas as popular with the crowd change the way we read this text?
- l) Barabbas was convicted of murder, and Jesus paid His death sentence. We don't know if Barabbas used his new found freedom to, in turn, follow Jesus, or to continue living his own way. Spiritually speaking, we're all in his shoes; Jesus has taken on himself the consequences of our sin and offered us forgiveness in Him. How does reflecting on this help you appreciate your freedom in Christ?
- m) Read **Hebrews 4:14-16**. Jesus can sympathize with us in our weaknesses because he has experienced the same sufferings that we go through. In this moment in the gospel of Mark, Jesus is utterly alone and abandoned by his closest friends. Loneliness is something that everybody faces at some point in their life, maybe it is something you are struggling through right now. How do these passages offer us hope when we are suffering with loneliness?
- n) Read **Genesis 50:20**. The chief priests thought they were doing God's will by having Jesus be put to death for blasphemy, but God was fulfilling his plan for salvation through their actions. How do you think this passage reflects the spiritual principle found here in Genesis?
- o) The corrupt global system rewards evil while punishing good. Throughout history, we see good people suffer at the hands of oppressors. Some people question why a good God would allow such terrible things to happen. What is God's attitude toward injustice, according to the text you read? Is He blind to wrongdoing? What is Jesus' response to the great injustice He endured?
- p) How quickly do you surrender a situation to God, in which you are not treated fairly?
- q) What choices did Jesus make in all of this? Why did he make the decisions He did? What was his motivation?
- r) Was there anything else in the passage or shared on Sunday that you found of note?

TAKE IT HOME (OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR RESPONSE THIS WEEK)

- a) Take time to reflect on your own story and how God has redeemed you.
- b) Ask God to show you which battles He wants you to fight and which He wants you to let it go.

OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR PRAYER TIME

- a) This week, pray and reflect on how Jesus took our place and how He died the death that was supposed to be ours.
- b) Keep praying for your friends, family members, and people around you that doesn't know Jesus. Pray they will come to understand what Jesus has done for them.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER, GROW & GO

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 7:00 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!