

SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Spring Semester - Week 1

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) If you could travel to one country in the world, where would that be and why?
- b) Tell a story of when you felt afraid / terrified.

PASSAGE AND DISCUSSION

Read Mark 16:1-8

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this text?
- b) Is there anything you learned through our study in the gospel of Mark that has really impacted you or encouraged you in your faith?
- c) What themes stood out to you throughout Mark's gospel?
- d) What stands out to you about Jesus, in particular, in Mark's gospel? Why is this significant to you?
- e) It is nearly unanimous among scholars that **v9-20** are not from the original text nor written by John Mark (It has a different literary style and language, and these verses were not included in the earliest manuscripts, etc.). So why do you think these verses were included and remained in the book of Mark?
- f) How does knowing this impact your view of scripture? Are you concerned that there are discrepancies in the Bible, or are you encouraged by the fact that there is so little disagreement throughout the scriptures - confirming the authenticity of the Word of God?
- g) Suppose it is the first time you are reading about the resurrection of Christ, and you have never read verses **16:9-20**, nor any other gospel. What conclusions would you draw from John Mark's original ending - **v8**?

- h) Without concluding the story, Mark gives us a chance to reflect on the ladies' response but, most importantly, invites our own response to the empty tomb. How have you been responding to the empty tomb?
- i) How is Mark inviting us to step out in faith upon reading **v.8**?
- j) Mark's intention was not to provide a fairy tale ending. Instead, he stopped precisely in a confused, messy, and uncertain situation. How is this relatable to where we find ourselves?
- k) To what extent have you felt that you needed to have all the answers (no uncertainty, fear, or doubt), or act in a specific way in order to be a 'good Christian'? What does Mark's ending tell us about this necessity?

Read Mark 16:9-20

- l) How is **Mark 16:9-20** related to the rest of Scripture and the accounts of Jesus? How does this inform our understanding of these verses?
- m) Do you recognize any of these verses from other parts of scripture?
- n) This last part of the Gospel of Mark shows us how Jesus still invites imperfect people to fulfill his commandments and mission. Is there any uncertainty stopping you from obeying Jesus' calling on your life?

TAKE IT HOME (OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR RESPONSE THIS WEEK)

- a) Take time to re-read the gospel of Mark this week.
- b) Write down a few ways in which you feel God is calling you to take a step of faith. What can you do to begin the process of stepping out in faith?

OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR PRAYER TIME

- a) As we did in the service, pray for one another - that you and the people in your small group will:
 - i) Come to know God better;
 - ii) Have the faith to follow Him;
 - iii) Have the opportunity to share the good news;
 - iv) Experience His grace on the journey.

- b) Pray that God would prepare our hearts and minds for the next series, in Genesis.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER, GROW & GO

Prayer Summit: Friday, April 21st at 7 p.m. Our next church-wide Prayer Summit is happening on Friday, and you are invited to join in and experience prayer together. So whether you're new to prayer, a prayer closet mountain mover, or need some inspiration, join our Grant family as we grow in this extraordinary form of communication with our Heavenly Father—together!

Christianity Explored, start date: April 18th at 7 p.m. - Christianity Explored 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 you are new to faith or just looking to learn more, please join us on Tuesday nights starting April 11, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome! This is a safe place to meet with others, grow in community, and ask the hard questions.

Spring Sunday Daybreak: Start Date: Sunday, April 30th, 2023, at 9 a.m. Cost: \$30,00

- Join Kelly Minter in this 7-session Bible study as she unpacks the biblical foundation for these sacred habits along with approachable ways to practice disciplines like prayer, study, worship, rest, simplicity, generosity, celebration, and many more. Instead of being just one more thing on your to-do list, you'll find that these habits of faith can actually create more margin in your life—providing peace and rest as you walk closer to Jesus. 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 a.m., or Tuesday's 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.