



COMMUNITY Groups

April 7, 2024 - Sermon Discussion Questions

Icebreaker

- Do highs and lows from last week!
- Can you think of a time when you had to work in a group with people who were different from you. How did the differences make the work challenging? How did the differences make the work rewarding?

Dig a Little Deeper

Review the message:

- This week's sermon focuses on navigating political differences within a Christian community. It emphasizes that Jesus taught his followers the 'how' of political engagement rather than the 'what,' highlighting the importance of how we engage with each other when discussing potentially polarizing or divisive issues.
- The sermon drew parallels between modern political divisions and historical contexts where Christians lived under various political systems, including oppressive regimes, yet remained united in their faith.
- The core message is that unity among Christians in the face of political diversity is possible and desirable. This unity is not based on agreeing on all issues but on prioritizing our identity in Christ above political affiliations and embracing Jesus' ethic of love towards friends, neighbors, and enemies alike.

Read Mark 3:16-17

In Mark 3:16-17, Jesus not only calls the disciples but also gives them new names, signifying a transformation or a new identity in following Him.

- Reflecting on this passage, how do you think being called and named by Jesus impacted the disciples' understanding of their mission and identity?
- How does Jesus' call to follow Him transform our own identities and purposes today?
- In this passage, Jesus gave some of the disciples nicknames. What might this tell us about Jesus' relationship with them, and how does it encourage us to embrace our unique characteristics within the body of Christ?

Read Mark 3:18-19

Eric used the movie "Red Dawn" to illustrate how differing responses to an occupying force can divide a community, similar to political divisions today. He pointed out that in Jesus' time Israel was under Roman occupation and tensions existed where society was divided between those who complied with Roman rule (e.g., Jewish tax collectors) and those who resisted (e.g., zealots).

- How does Jesus' choice of such a diverse group of disciples speak to His vision for the kingdom of God?
- What does it teach us about building community with others who may not share our political views or ideas?

Read John 20: 24-29

- In verse 28, how does Thomas identify Jesus? What does this mean for how Thomas identified himself? Whose authority was he under?
- How does this story illustrate how we can be uniquely united in Christ?

Closing

Jesus taught the "how" of politics, not the "what." There are two steps that describe the "how" of political engagement for Christ followers:

- Intentionally put being a follower of Jesus before your political affiliation. This means prioritizing and separating your identity in Christ over your political identity.
- Embrace the ethic of love (friend, neighbor, enemy).
- What practical steps can you take to love and engage with people who have different political views, especially within the church?
- Pray