



THE WONDERFUL CROSS

Small Group Discussion Guide: Victory in Life

Small Group Discussion Guide: From Hiding to Heroic

Big Idea: Our victory in life isn't found in our own willpower, but in the life-giving breath of the risen Christ.

I. The Icebreaker (The "Power Ranger" Moment)

1. The Stevie Long Story: In the sermon, we heard about 4-year-old Stevie Long, who put on a Power Ranger costume to scare off burglars. When you were a kid, who was the "hero" you pretended to be?
2. The "Morph": Why do we find it so much easier to be "brave" when we are pretending or wearing a mask than when we are just being ourselves?

II. The Retreat: Acknowledging our Hiding Places

Read Mark 14:50 and John 20:19.

1. The "Two Robbers": The sermon mentioned that Shame and Fear are the "armed robbers" of our joy. Which one do you feel is more likely to send you into hiding in your spiritual life?
2. The Hiding Spot: We often hide in comfort, or we hide our sins to fit in. What is one "hiding spot" you've used recently to avoid a calling or a difficult conversation?

III. The Tale of Two Failures: Judas vs. Peter

Read Matthew 27:3–5 (Judas) and John 21:15–19 (Peter).

1. Regret vs. Repentance: Both men failed publicly. Judas ended in despair; Peter ended in restoration. What is the fundamental difference between feeling *guilty* (Judas) and being *restored* (Peter)?
2. The Waiting Room: Judas gave up before the Resurrection happened. Why is "waiting for the empty tomb" so difficult when we are sitting in the middle of a failure?

IV. The Resurrection & Release: New Reality, New Resource

Read Acts 4:13 and John 20:19–22.

1. The Inward Change: The religious leaders noticed the disciples were "uneducated, common men" but were astonished by their boldness. Has anyone ever noticed a change in your character that they could only attribute to "being with Jesus"?
2. The Genesis Moment: In John 20, Jesus breathes on the disciples. Just as God breathed life into Adam in Genesis, Jesus breathes "New Life" into the church. How does it change your daily stress to know you are fighting *from* victory rather than *for* victory?

V. Application: Walking in Victory

As a group, look at the "Victory Checklist" from the sermon. Discuss how to apply these this week:

- **Retreat:** What is one area of your life where you need to stop hiding and start confessing?
- **Resurrection:** How can you remind yourself tomorrow morning that the "grave is empty" when things get difficult?
- **Release:** The Spirit transformed the "Retreat" into a "Reach." Who is one person in your life this week who needs you to reach out to them with the boldness of Christ?

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you that our failures do not have to be permanent. We thank you that the same breath that brought life to the disciples is available to us today. Help us to step out of our locked rooms of fear and into the boldness of your Spirit. Amen.

Leader's Note: If someone in the group is struggling with a "Judas" level of regret, use this time to emphasize the "Peter" promise: *As long as there is a Resurrection, there is a way back.*