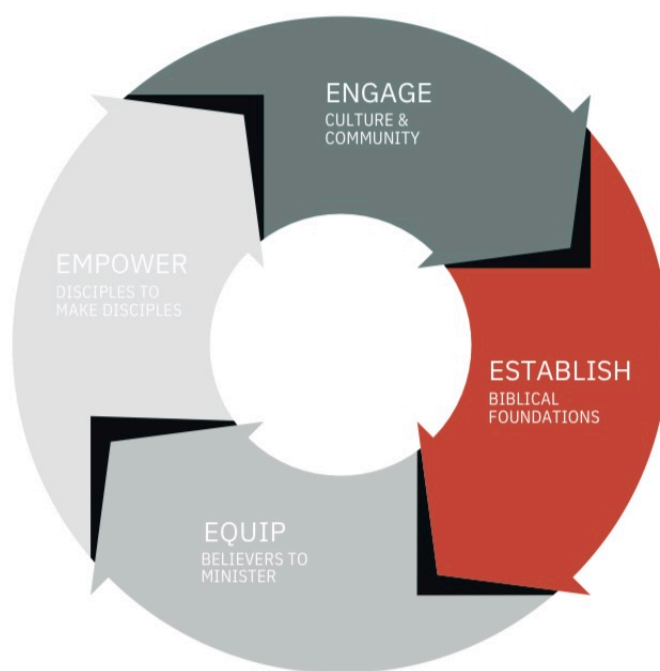


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and helping others do the same.



The purpose of our Koinonia Gatherings is to establish people in biblical foundations by building Christ-centered connections. We believe the Scriptures teaches that life change happens best in community, as we grow together in God's Word and are led by the Holy Spirit.

Below, you'll find a sermon-based guide from the most recent sermon to help lead a Rise Up Church Koinonia Gathering, along with a five day devotional designed to help you apply the sermon throughout the week.

Koinonia Gathering Guide: Jesus Gives Life to Those Who Believe

Based on John 5:16-34

Opening Prayer

Ask: Is there anything specific that we can be praying and believing for specifically in your life right now?

Begin your time together by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and open your hearts to what God wants to teach you.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you witnessed something amazing but others around you seemed more focused on the "rules" or "how it was done" rather than celebrating what happened.

Sermon Summary

Jesus heals a man who had been sick for 38 years, but the Jewish leaders are upset because it happened on the Sabbath. Rather than defending his actions, Jesus affirms his identity as the Son of God, declares his authority to give life and judge, and invites all who hear to believe and receive eternal life.

Key Scripture: "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life." (John 5:24)

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Why do you think the Jewish leaders were more concerned about the day Jesus healed rather than the miracle itself?** How does religious tradition sometimes blind us to what God is doing?

2. **What does Jesus mean when he says "My Father is always working, and so am I"?** What is he revealing about his identity and relationship with God the Father?
3. **Jesus says the Son can do nothing by himself but only what he sees the Father doing.** What does this teach us about Jesus' relationship with the Father? How might this model our own relationship with God?

Personal Reflection

4. **The sermon mentioned that we sometimes "enslave ourselves to the laws of life and culture."** What are some modern-day "Sabbath rules" or cultural expectations that we prioritize over experiencing Jesus' power in our lives?
5. **Jesus invites the Jewish leaders to "watch" and be transformed, not just astonished.** Can you think of a time when you witnessed God's power but weren't transformed by it? What was the difference between being amazed and being changed?
6. **The pastor asked: "What does it mean to truly believe?"** How would you answer that question? What's the difference between intellectual agreement and life-transforming belief?

Going Deeper

7. **Jesus says anyone who doesn't honor the Son isn't honoring the Father.** Why is it impossible to honor God while rejecting Jesus? What are the implications of this truth?
8. **The sermon mentioned we sometimes find life in "fugazi" (fake) things** like titles, bank accounts, status, or relationships. Where are you tempted to find life outside of Jesus? What makes these things appealing yet ultimately unsatisfying?
9. **Jesus offers "life that is worth living" both now and eternally.** What does abundant life in Jesus look like practically? How is it different from what the world offers?

Key Takeaways

1. **Jesus is Lord over all** - including our circumstances, our struggles, and even the things we think are most important.
2. **Believe Jesus is who He says He is** - True belief transforms how we think, speak, and act.
3. **Jesus gives life to those who listen and believe** - Eternal life isn't just about the afterlife; it's about experiencing real, abundant life now.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Identify Your "Fugazi"

- Write down 2-3 things you tend to find life in besides Jesus
- Pray each day asking God to help you find your identity and worth in Him alone
- Share your struggle with an accountability partner

Option 2: Practice "Delusional Faith"

- Identify one area where you need to trust Jesus even when it seems unreasonable
- Take one step of faith this week (pray boldly, obey specifically, trust completely)
- Journal about what happens when you step out in faith

Option 3: Honor Jesus Intentionally

- Each day this week, find one specific way to honor Jesus as Lord
- This could be through obedience, worship, service, or testimony
- Share with the group next week how this practice changed your perspective

Reflection Questions for the Week

Use these for personal devotion time:

1. **Monday:** What areas of my life am I treating as "off-limits" to Jesus (like the Sabbath was to the Jewish leaders)?
2. **Tuesday:** Do I truly believe Jesus has authority over my circumstances? What would change if I did?

3. **Wednesday:** Where am I being astonished by Jesus but not transformed?
4. **Thursday:** What does it mean for me to have "already passed from death into life"?
5. **Friday:** How can I better imitate my Heavenly Father the way Jesus did?

Memory Verse

John 5:24 - "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life."

Closing Prayer Points

- Pray for areas where you need to stop being enslaved to cultural expectations and experience Jesus' freedom
- Ask God to help you truly believe, not just be astonished
- Thank Jesus for offering you abundant life now and eternally
- Pray for specific needs and struggles shared in your group

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to those who may be wrestling with doubt or struggling to believe
- Create space for honest conversation about where people find life outside of Jesus
- Encourage testimonies of transformation, not just astonishment
- Follow up during the week with group members who shared specific struggles

Next Week: Continue in the book of John as we explore more of Jesus' identity and invitation to life.

5-Day Devotional: Believing Jesus for Life

Day 1: Jesus is Lord Over All

Reading: Mark 2:23-28; Exodus 20:8-11

Devotional: The Jewish leaders became so focused on religious rules that they missed the miracle-working Savior standing before them. A man healed after 38 years of suffering should have caused celebration, yet they fixated on the day it happened. How often do we become enslaved to the "laws of life"—cultural expectations, routines, or self-imposed rules—that we miss Jesus working in our midst? Jesus declared himself Lord even over the Sabbath, reminding us that religious observance without relationship misses the point entirely. The Sabbath was made for humanity's benefit, not as a burden. Today, examine what rules or expectations have become more important than encountering Jesus himself. He is Lord over every area of your life, including the things that seem to control you.

Day 2: Don't Just Be Astonished—Be Transformed

Reading: John 5:16-24; James 1:22-25

Devotional: Jesus warned the Jewish leaders they would be "astonished" at his greater works, but astonishment alone doesn't save. Many people witness God's power—in answered prayers, miraculous provisions, or transformed lives—yet remain unchanged. They're amazed spectators rather than surrendered believers. True faith moves beyond admiration to transformation. When you see God work, does it change how you live, or do you simply add it to your collection of impressive God-stories? James warns against being hearers only, deceiving ourselves. Witnessing miracles should lead to worship, surrender, and life change. As you reflect today, ask yourself: Am I merely astonished by Jesus, or am I being transformed by him? Let today be a day where you move from observer to participant in God's work.

Day 3: Honoring the Son Honors the Father

Reading: John 5:19-23; Colossians 1:15-20

Devotional: Jesus made a shocking declaration: you cannot honor God the Father without honoring God the Son. For the Jewish leaders who dedicated their lives to honoring God through strict law-keeping, this was earth-shattering. All their religious efforts meant nothing if they rejected Jesus. This truth remains today. Many people claim to believe in God while dismissing Jesus as merely a good teacher or prophet.

But Jesus is the exact representation of the Father—to see him is to see God. Any attempt to honor God that bypasses Jesus misses the mark entirely. The Father has given all authority to the Son, including the authority to give life and to judge. Today, examine your relationship with Jesus specifically. Is he central to your faith, or have you created a version of spirituality that keeps him at arm's length?

Day 4: Listen and Believe to Receive Life

Reading: John 5:24-30; Romans 10:14-17

Devotional: Jesus offers a stunning promise: those who listen to his message and believe in the Father who sent him have eternal life and have already passed from death to life. Notice the two requirements—listening and believing. Listening means more than hearing words; it requires attention, openness, and willingness to be changed. Believing goes beyond intellectual agreement to life-transforming trust that affects how you think, speak, and act. If you truly believed jumping off a building would harm you, you wouldn't do it. Similarly, genuine belief in Jesus transforms your entire life. You're not waiting for eternal life to begin after death—it has already started. You've passed from death to life. Today, ask yourself: Am I truly listening to Jesus' words, or just hearing them? Does my life reflect genuine belief?

Day 5: Finding Life Where Life is Found

Reading: John 10:10; Psalm 16:11

Devotional: Jesus came to give us life—not just existence, but life worth living, both now and eternally. Yet we often search for life in counterfeit places: titles, bank accounts, relationships, status, or achievements. These things are fleeting and ultimately futile. The pleasure they bring is momentary; the fulfillment they promise is empty. Jesus is the only consistent, faithful, eternal source of true life. While our physical bodies will expire and circumstances will change, Jesus remains forever. He offers a life that won't disappoint, waste your time, or let you down. Following him isn't easy, but it's worth it. Today, honestly evaluate where you've been finding life. What things have you elevated to give you purpose, meaning, or value? Surrender those counterfeit sources and choose to find your life in the One who is life itself.