Life Changing Community Group Discussion Questions

week of 11/15/26

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you today as a group of people who want to know you more deeply and live more faithfully for you. As we open your Word together, quiet our hearts and minds. Help us to set aside the noise of the world and the opinions of others, and fix our eyes on you alone. Speak to us through this discussion, and show each of us what you want us to take away today. May everything we share and everything we hear draw us closer to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

If you could receive a personal letter of encouragement from someone you deeply admire, who would it be from and what would you hope it said?

Summary

This sermon centered on the truth that followers of Jesus are ultimately accountable to one person: Jesus Christ Himself. Using the image of a solitary chair facing an empty pulpit in an abandoned Mississippi church, Pastor Mark illustrated that the chair is never truly empty. Jesus is always present, watching, and one day every believer will give an account to Him. The sermon called us to stop living for the approval of others or ourselves and to begin living wholeheartedly for the One whose judgment truly matters.

Drawing from the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25, the pastor emphasized that it is not enough to simply avoid doing evil. God expects us to actively use the gifts, resources, and opportunities He has entrusted to us. Inspired by Paul's words in 2 Timothy 4, the sermon challenged every believer to live in such a way that they can one day say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith," and hear from Jesus those six precious words: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Key Verses

- Matthew 25:14-30
- Matthew 25:21
- Matthew 16:15
- 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Questions

1. Pastor Mark described seeing a photograph of an empty chair facing a pulpit and immediately imagining Jesus sitting in it. How does the idea that Jesus is always watching and listening change the way you approach your daily life?
2. In the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30, NIV), the master gave each servant a different amount but expected each one to be faithful with what they had. How does it encourage or challenge you to know that God does not compare your results to someone else's, only your faithfulness to what He gave you?
3. The third servant buried his talent out of fear and a distorted view of his master. In what ways can a wrong or incomplete understanding of who God is lead us to hold back from fully serving Him?

4. Pastor Mark pointed out that the third servant's sin was not doing something evil with the money, but failing to do something good with it. How does this reframe the way you think about sins of omission in your own life?
5. The sermon highlighted that we live in a culture that says the individual is the measure of all things. How do you personally feel the tension between seeking cultural approval or self-approval and seeking God's approval?
6. Pastor Mark shared how Matthew 16:15 (NIV), "But what about you? Who do you say I am?", moved from an academic exercise to a deeply personal moment. Has there been a time when a familiar Bible verse suddenly became personal and real for you? What happened?
7. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7 (NIV), "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." What does living in a way that allows you to say those words at the end of your life look like practically for you right now?
8. Pastor Mark said, "If you aren't living for the One, maybe today is a good day to start." What is one area of your life where you sense God calling you to greater faithfulness or intentionality as you wait for Christ's return?

Life Application

This week, take some time to sit quietly before God and ask Him to show you one gift, resource, or opportunity He has entrusted to you that you may have been burying out of fear, distraction, or indifference. Write it down. Then take one concrete step toward using it for his glory. Let the image of Jesus sitting in that chair remind you throughout the week that you are living for an audience of One, and that His "well done" is worth everything.

Key Takeaways

- We are ultimately accountable to Jesus alone. His judgment is the only one that will truly matter at the end of our lives, and we should order our lives around seeking his approval above all others.
- God entrusts each of us with different gifts and resources, but He expects every one of us to be faithful and active with what we have been given, not just to avoid misusing it.
- It is not enough to simply avoid doing evil. God calls us to actively do good with what He has placed in our hands, and failing to do so is itself a serious failure of faithfulness.
- A distorted or fearful view of God leads to passivity and missed opportunity. Knowing God as He truly is, generous and just, should motivate us to engage boldly in His work.
- Living for the One means anchoring our identity and purpose in Christ, confessing Him as Lord, and pursuing a life we can one day summarize with Paul's words: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7, NIV).

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for this time together around your Word. Thank you for the reminder that the chair is never empty, that you are always present, always watching, and always for us. We confess that too often we live for the approval of others or for our own comfort rather than for you. Forgive us for the gifts we have buried and the good we have left undone. Stir something fresh in each of us today. Give us the courage to use what you have entrusted to us, the wisdom to see the opportunities right in front of us, and the faith to trust that you are a generous and just Master. May we leave this place more committed to living for you, so that one day we might hear those six words we long for: "Well done, good and faithful servant." We pray this in your name, Jesus. Amen.

———---

A Note About These Questions: These small group questions are developed from each week's sermon with the assistance of Sermonshots, which incorporates AI technology. The resulting questions and content are reviewed and edited by the pastor before being shared with the congregation.