

Life Changing Community Group Discussion Questions

week of 11/16/25

Summary

In this sermon, Pastor Mark examined Jesus' words from Luke 21:5-19 about the destruction of the temple and the trials that would come upon his followers. Jesus clearly warned his disciples that they would face persecution, imprisonment, betrayal by family and friends, and even death for following him. Rather than promising an easy life, Jesus told them to expect hardship. The key message was that these very trials and difficulties would result in believers becoming witnesses and testimonies to their faith. Pastor Mark emphasized that the witness of the church shines brightest when the world is darkest - it is our persistent faith, resolute hope, and steadfast love during difficult times that serves as our testimony. He illustrated this with the example of a congregation member, who chose Psalm 100 (a psalm of praise) to be read at his wife's funeral after caring for her through Alzheimer's disease, demonstrating faith and praise even in grief.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you with grateful hearts, knowing that you have called us together as your people. We thank you for your faithfulness and for the privilege of gathering in your name. Lord, as we open your Word together and share in discussion, we ask that you would open our hearts and minds to what you want to teach us today. Help us to be receptive to your Spirit's leading and to encourage one another in our faith journey. May our time together strengthen our witness and deepen our love for you and for one another. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one tradition or practice that your family has maintained through both good times and difficult seasons?

Key Verses

1. Luke 21:5-19
2. Luke 21:6
3. Luke 21:13
4. Psalm 100

Questions

1. Jesus warned his disciples that following him would bring persecution and hardship rather than an easy life. How does this challenge common expectations about what the Christian life should look like?
2. Pastor Mark said that 'the witness of the church shines most brightly when the world is most dark.' Can you think of examples from history or your own experience where this has been true?
3. Jesus told his disciples that their trials would 'result in you being a witness.' How can our difficulties and challenges become opportunities for testimony?
4. What does it mean to have 'persistent faith,' 'resolute hope,' and 'steadfast love' when everything around us seems to be going wrong?

5. The example of Dave Atkinson choosing Psalm 100 for his wife's funeral demonstrates praise in the midst of grief. How can we maintain a spirit of worship during our darkest moments?
6. Jesus said not to worry beforehand about how to defend ourselves because he would give us words and wisdom. How does this promise encourage you when facing opposition for your faith?
7. The sermon mentions that sometimes we expect God to 'level paths and straighten roads' as a reward for following him. How do we balance trusting God's goodness with accepting that following Jesus may make life harder?
8. Looking at the current state of our world - wars, natural disasters, social unrest - how should Christians respond differently than those without faith?

Life Application

This week, identify one area of difficulty or challenge in your life and intentionally choose to respond with faith, hope, and love rather than complaint or despair. Look for opportunities to be a witness through how you handle this situation, remembering that your response in hard times can be a powerful testimony to others about the reality of your faith in Christ.

Key Takeaways

1. Jesus never promised his followers an easy life - he warned them to expect persecution, betrayal, and hardship for following him.

2. Our trials and difficulties are not signs of God's absence but opportunities for us to be witnesses and testimonies to our faith.
3. The witness of the church shines brightest when the world is darkest - it is our persistent faith, resolute hope, and steadfast love during hard times that serves as our testimony.
4. We should not be surprised by wars, natural disasters, persecution, or opposition - Jesus clearly warned these things would happen.
5. Being a witness means maintaining faith, hope, and love for God and His people even when everything around us seems to be going wrong.

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for your honesty about what it means to follow you. Help us not to be surprised by trials or difficulties, but to see them as opportunities to be witnesses to your faithfulness. Strengthen our faith when institutions fail, give us hope when the world seems dark, and fill us with your love even when others turn against us. May our lives be testimonies to your goodness and grace, especially in the hard times. Help us to be the light that shines brightest in the darkness, always ready to give an account for the hope that we have in you. We commit ourselves to being your witnesses, no matter the cost. In your precious name we pray, Amen.