

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH



Community Group Discussion Guide – A Weary World Rejoices #2

A New and Glorious Morn / December 6, 2020 / Pastor Jeff Hale

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. 2020 has been a challenging year. Yet, as followers of Jesus, our hope remains that God is alive and at work in our lives. As you look back on the Fall Quarter (and year), what is something in your own life and your Community Group experience you are thankful for? *It can be a specific way God encouraged you, time spent together in your group, how your group has helped you to continue living your life for Jesus, something new you learned, time serving together, a spiritual breakthrough, growth, challenge, etc.*

Philippians 1:6 (NLT) – And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

2. The Winter Quarter begins on January 24th. Does your group plan to continue meeting? If yes, are there any changes you'd like to implement? For example – logistical changes (day, time, frequency, childcare plans), format changes (online, in person, hybrid), welcoming new group members, sharing group leadership, new approaches to your discussion or prayer time, etc.
3. Pastor Jeff reflected on the humble shepherds and their encounter with an angel of the Lord and a “multitude of heavenly host.” What is your favorite part of the Christmas narrative recorded in the Bible (see Matthew 1:18-2:12 and Luke 1:26-56, 2:1-21)? Explain your answer.

“I came to see that I was wired for awe, that awe of something sits at the bottom of everything I say and do. But I wasn't just wired for awe. I was wired for awe of God. No other awe satisfies the soul. No other awe can give my heart the peace, rest, and security that it seeks. I came to see that I needed to trace awe of God down to the most mundane of human decisions and activities.” – Paul Tripp, *Awe: Why It Matters For Everything We Think, Say, and Do*

DIVING DEEPER

4. Pastor Jeff shared that peace is not the absence of a problem, but rather the presence of a God who is there throughout the problem. Read John 14:27 and 16:33 and discuss the corresponding questions.

John 14:27 (NLT) – I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

John 16:33 (NLT) – I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

How did you define and pursue peace prior to knowing Jesus Christ? How has your understanding of peace changed and further developed since beginning a relationship with Jesus?

5. Read 1 Peter 1:3-7. Both Jesus (see John 16:33) and the Apostle Peter make it clear that life – even a life spent following Jesus – will be full of trials and sorrow. Based on this passage of scripture, what is our hope during these trying seasons? How is hope connected with experiencing the peace of God?

1 Peter 1:3-7 (NLT) – ³...It is by [God's] great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, ⁴and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. ⁵And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready

to be revealed on the last day for all to see. ⁶So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. ⁷These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

Do you have story of how God has used, or is currently using, a difficult circumstance to deepen your understanding and experience of His peace? If you're willing, share that story with your group.

TAKING IT HOME

6. Read Ephesians 2:12-17,20-22 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. While peace from God is an internal reality, it should also cause us to proactively move toward others in hopes of achieving reconciliation and pointing them to God. As you reflect on these two passages, consider the following:

To whom, whether someone inside the church or outside of the church, is God asking you to make peace with or bring peace to this Christmas season? What is your first step in this endeavor?

Ephesians 2:12-17,20-22 (NLT) – ¹²In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. ¹³But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. ¹⁵He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. ¹⁶Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. ¹⁷He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near...²⁰Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. ²¹We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. ²²Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 (NLT) – ³All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. ⁵For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. ⁶Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. ⁷We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. Christmas Conspiracy | This Christmas, we're inviting you and your family to worship fully, spend less, give more, and love all. 100% of the Christmas Conspiracy proceeds, which will be collected through a special offering on December 20th, go toward funding our local outreach ministry Joshua's Place and helping us plant churches through our 10 in 10 church planting strategy. Will you be a part of this year's Christmas Conspiracy? Learn more and join the Conspiracy at <https://riverscrossing.com/christmas-conspiracy/>.
2. Remember Song Release | Rivers Crossing Worship released an original single titled Remember on Sunday November 15th! You can purchase Remember on iTunes or listen to it on Spotify and Apple Music. Purchase Remember on iTunes: <https://music.apple.com/us/album/remember-single/1538437741>
3. 2021 Discipleship School | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God's voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, visit <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>.
4. Volunteering at Rivers Crossing | Everything we do as a church is made possible because of our incredible volunteer teams. Whether they're leading a group in River Kids, welcoming first time guests or helping produce our online services, each person makes a huge impact. If you'd like to find a place to serve, click the following link <https://riverscrossing.com/get-involved/>.