



NEW HEIGHTS

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

"Our Heart is People, Our Message is Jesus"

Small Group Discussion Questions

Series: Glimpses of the Kingdom

Title: "Mercy for the Humble"

Icebreaker / Getting Started (10-15 minutes)

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon—maybe a phrase, story, or idea (like the foot-race face-plant humbling moment, the "foggy mirror" that shows us our own reflection, the idea that pride creeps in through comparison, or the line "it's never been about performance... it's only by the blood of Jesus")? Why did it hit you? (Quick shares to connect personally and surface areas of pride or humility.)
2. The sermon describes parables as glimpses of the kingdom that require "imaginative participation" and "squinting" to see—sometimes like a foggy mirror that reveals our true selves. Have you ever had a Bible story (or even a non-Bible story) that felt like it was holding up a mirror to your own heart, forcing you to confront pride or the need for humility? Share briefly.

Digging into the Scripture & Sermon (15-20 minutes)

3. Read Luke 18:9-14 together as a group. Jesus tells this parable to people who "had convinced themselves that they were righteous and who looked on everyone else with disgust." How does this shift—from self-confident religious performance to humble dependence on mercy—change how we view what it means to be "right with God"? (Reference the sermon's point: God shows mercy to the humble and justifies them, but humbles the proud.)
4. Jesus chooses two very different characters—a respected, rule-keeping Pharisee and a despised, dishonest tax collector—and flips our expectations: the "bad" guy goes home justified. Why do you think Jesus chose this shocking twist on Palm Sunday, right before the humble King rides into Jerusalem on a donkey? In our world today, who might represent a modern "Pharisee" or "tax collector" (someone we might be tempted to look down on or compare ourselves to)?
5. The sermon highlights three key glimpses of the Kingdom in this parable:
 - Pride is rooted in performance (building a spiritual portfolio, comparison, self-reliance).
 - Humility is rooted in repentance (honest dependence, turning away from self to God).
 - Humility produces life (the paradox of lowering ourselves leads to justification and the abundant life Jesus gives—embodied perfectly in His humble entry into Jerusalem and the cross).
 - Which of these three feels most convicting or relatable to you right now, and why? Share an example from your life.

Personal Application & Reflection (15-20 minutes)

6. The sermon says the kingdom of God looks like “God shows mercy to the humble” while humbling the proud. Where in your life do you see pride creeping in (even subtly—through comparison, self-reliance, or protecting your image)? How might Jesus be inviting you to “wipe away the fog” and step into humility instead of performance?
7. Jesus is the ultimate picture of humility: born in a manger, riding a donkey, obedient to death on a cross—and through that humility God exalted Him and gave us life. How does remembering that “it’s never been about performance... it’s only by the blood of Jesus” change how you respond when life humbles you or when you feel the pressure to prove yourself?
8. The sermon ends with an invitation on Palm Sunday: repentance is simply turning away from self-reliance and toward Jesus, who meets us with mercy and life. Where in your life right now (a relationship, a struggle, a role, or a hidden area) might Jesus be saying, “Come to me... I want to walk with you”? What would one small step of repentance and dependence look like this week?

Prayer & Action Steps (10 minutes)

9. In pairs, ask each other: “How can I bless/pray for you this week in the area of humility, repentance, or releasing pride/performance?” (e.g., accountability in a specific area of comparison, prayer for dependence in a challenge, encouragement to rest in God’s mercy). Then pray a simple blessing over that person/need.
10. As a closing prayer, invite the group to ask the Holy Spirit: “Lord, what is one way I can respond to Your mercy this week—practicing repentance, releasing pride, or embracing humility so I can experience the life You give?” Share any promptings (e.g., a specific area to turn away from, a prayer of dependence, or someone to extend grace to). Commit to following through and checking in next time for stories of Kingdom glimpses.