

**Sunday 1/14 - Saturday 1/20**



## **Serenity - God Grant Me the Serenity**

by: Deacon Dennis J. Lawson Sr, PhD

### **Warm-Ups (15 min)**

*If your group has more than 7 people, you're encouraged to split into men's and women's groups for "Warm Ups". Also, it often works better to go around the circle three times instead of each person having to answer all three questions at once.*

1. Share your high moment and low moment of the week.
2. How do you define serenity?
3. How do you think a person obtains serenity?
4. What is God teaching you in your life right now?

### **Large Group Prayer (10 min)**

Take turns praying (1) Thanksgivings, (2) for each other's needs, and (3) for our community. **Click here** (</index.php/component/content/?id=181&Itemid=1627>) for creative ideas on how to pray as a group.

1. Pray for a heart that knows when to fight and when to surrender.
2. Pray for St. John's as we call our St. John's Worship Leader.
3. Prayer for those who do not believe living a serene life is possible.
4. Pray that we are a church where the community around St John's is happy that we are there.

### **Study Questions (35 min)**

#### **About the Sermon**

Read Matthew 2:1-2

1. What was the condition of the world at Jesus birth?
2. Would you say that the condition of the world at Jesus birth was serene or chaotic? Explain.
3. What did King Herod do? Why did King Herod do this?

#### 4. During the three years of Jesus ministry what kind of world was it?

But observe this, that Jesus was born into a world of chaos, narrowly escaping the blade of an unjust ruler. The chaos never stopped. During the 3 years of Jesus' ministry that we read about in the Gospels, there is strife all around him. He catches flak from every direction, people are trying to figure him out, to trip him up, to get him arrested and killed. He loses friends, suffers betrayal, and is brutally tortured and murdered. That doesn't sound like serenity.

But the chaos caused by sin is why Jesus came. He endured it. He was confident and resolute in the midst of it. At the cross, He put His love for humanity and mission to rescue us first, before his personal safety. It's because of Jesus, and through the cross, the ultimate symbol of death, that serenity became possible for you and for me. Serenity isn't about finding the perfect nature scene to gaze at, or waiting until you're dead to be at peace, but about finding peace and contentment here and now through the power of God's Spirit. When in tune with who God is, how he feels about us, and the life he calls us to, serenity is possible even in the craziest of circumstances.

### **A Deeper Look**

Read Philippians 4:4-9

1. What are some simple things we can practice today that can bring a greater sense of serenity?
2. How would a sense of gratitude help in this area?
  - Studies have shown that increasing your sense of gratitude, through things like keeping a gratitude list, or writing thank-you notes, can lead to better health, greater determination, generosity and energy, better sleep, and improved self esteem. It's almost like God created us to be grateful people
3. How would prayer help in this area?

### **Life Application**

Read Isaiah 60:1-6

1. What does scripture tell us about God?
2. Why do you think we migrate toward chaos?
3. Do you believe that God has a plan for you?
  - a. If yes, what does that plan look like?
  - b. If yes, why do you resist it, why?

These few things are monumental in helping us to achieve the serenity that God won for us at the cross. It's a serenity that will have a powerful effect on our lives, and lives of those around us. One that is not easily stolen from us by having a rough day. It's a honest serenity, which, even when we're mourning, or exhausted, or anxious or down, enables us to have a deeper contentment and peace, so that we can say in the middle of the chaos; "it is well with my soul."

## ***Discipleship Trios (25 min)***

The goal is to have intentional time to share your journey with others. **Break into same-gender groups of three and move to separate spaces.** If numbers necessitate flexibility, form groups of 2 instead.

- *Review the listener commitments*  
([/images/LIFEGroup\\_Documents/Study%20Support%20Downloads/listener\\_commitments.pdf](/images/LIFEGroup_Documents/Study%20Support%20Downloads/listener_commitments.pdf)) if you haven't done so in a while.

- *The goal is not to pressure others into sharing more than they want to, or to give unsolicited advice, but to ask others how God is stretching them, be challenged by God's Word together, ask what others are planning to do about their growth areas, and ask how you can support them!*

**Share Your Journey:** What have you heard from God through your Life Journal / Bible readings this week?

What's an area of your life in which you know you need to repent and/or grow?

- *If you need additional accountability questions, try pulling from this list ([/images/LIFEGroup\\_Documents/Study%20Support%20Downloads/20170521\\_Accountability\\_Qs.pdf](/images/LIFEGroup_Documents/Study%20Support%20Downloads/20170521_Accountability_Qs.pdf)) or the accountability questions in this doc (<http://tod dengstrom.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LTG-Overview-Formatted.pdf>) in order to spark reflection and discussion.*
- *When you hear a confession, you're encouraged to speak God's forgiveness!*
- *If you feel one of your group members is blind to something, (1) think about whether or not you're the right person to bring it up, (2) ask permission to share something, (3) phrase it as a question.*

### **Discipleship Trio Prayer Time**

- Share: Tell us what connections you're building and spiritual conversations you're having with non-believing friends.
- Pray for people who need God's grace in their lives. Pray for yourself to be a person who can share His grace.
- Pray for non-believers in your lives by name: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Pray for each other.

### **Optional Worship Song (+5 min)**

1. If you'd like, you can sing a worship song as a group. Don't have a musician? Sing along to a lyric video: [SJDenver.org/Songs](http://SJDenver.org/Songs) (/songs)
  - a. *Advent/Christmas songs can be found at [SJDenver.org/ChristmasSongs](http://SJDenver.org/ChristmasSongs) (/christmassongs)*

### **Serve Our City**

1. Has your group planned an opportunity to serve our city for this semester? Click Here for a list of Service Ideas! (</images/Serve.pdf>)

### **Feedback**

1. Was there a glitch in today's material? Want to request a song? Do you have a suggestion? Click Here! (<http://goo.gl/forms/FQVVxQgpAQ>)