



grow. pray. study.

July 21, 2019 The Resurrection Life: Who Invited You?

Scripture: John 1:35-40, NRSV

The next day John (the Baptist) again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

Questions in this GPS marked with an arrow bullet point are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

Imitating the love Jesus taught (and modeled)

MONDAY 7.22.19 Luke 10:25-37

Luke said, "A legal expert stood up to test Jesus." The phrase pointed, not to simple curiosity but to an adversarial approach to Jesus. Jesus answered a question with a question, in good Middle Eastern style. The expert quoted the law from Leviticus 19:18 and Jesus agreed with the Scriptures he cited. The expert's concept of "neighbor" was apparently quite narrow, though, so Jesus told the famous parable of the Good Samaritan to give the man an example to imitate (verse 37).

- When Jesus turned the question back to the legal expert (verse 26--"What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?"), the man gave a great answer—the one Jesus would have given. Have there been times when your head knew a correct answer, but your heart and hands hadn't yet caught up with what you knew? Where is the "growing edge" in your life right now when it comes to loving your neighbor as yourself?
- "Jewish teachers usually used 'neighbor' to mean 'fellow Israelite.'" * But Leviticus 19:34 said, "Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself, because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God." What made that hard for people in 1st-century Palestine to do? What makes it hard for you to do today?

Prayer: Lord God, I want to love you with my whole heart, mind, and soul. I want to love my neighbor as I love myself. Help me open my eyes to see the neighbors who live, work, and breathe all around me. Amen.

* Comment on Luke 10:29 in Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Imitating God's love by loving

TUESDAY 7.23.19 Ephesians 5:1-2, 17-21

God is, and always will be, greater than we as God's creatures and God's servants are. But when we choose to make God the Lord of our lives, it only makes sense that we would wish to imitate our Lord's qualities as fully as we can. And while that can take on many dimensions, today's reading offered a simple summary of what it means to imitate God: "Live your life with love."

- Scholar N. T. Wright wrote a concrete picture of ways to imitate God: "Kindness is one of the purest forms of the imitation of God. How would it be if God were...always making snide or bitter remarks at us? What would worship and prayer be like if we thought God had been talking about us behind our backs, putting us down to others? How would we feel if we thought we couldn't trust God to tell us the truth, if he was always losing his temper with us? Well: how do people feel about us if that's what we're like? Wouldn't it be better in every way to be like God?" * How can you grow more like God?
- Drunkenness "was a common feature of ancient Mediterranean life, especially in Gentile cities. It was common both in the late-night banquets of the rich, often accompanied by sexual immorality, and in the taverns of the poor....God's Spirit provides inspiration for a different way of living." *** Can gratitude to God be "intoxicating," even habit-forming? What are some of the life benefits of having a "gratitude habit"?

Prayer: Living Lord, life in this world sometimes leaves me parched and thirsty inside. Keep teaching me that, in the end, imitating you connects me to an unfailing source of inner renewal. Amen.

* N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, p. 55.

** HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Locations 268474-268475, 268478). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Imitating the good Jesus did

WEDNESDAY 7.24.19 John 14:9-14, 3 John 1:11

John 14 reported that Jesus, on the night before he was crucified, made a startling assertion. He told his disciples, "Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these." After his resurrection, he told them the Father was sending them to the same mission as Jesus (cf. [John 20:19-22](#)). But they wouldn't work in their unaided strength—Jesus gave them his power through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- How could anyone do greater works than Jesus? Scholar William Barclay wrote, "When it came to a matter of numbers and extent and changing power, the triumphs of the message of the Cross were even greater than the triumphs of Jesus in the days of his flesh....In the days of his flesh he was limited to Palestine; when he had died and risen again, he was liberated from these limitations and his Spirit could work mightily anywhere." * The church bulletin or web site lists ways Resurrection offers for you to join in these "greater works."

Did You Know?

Recycling glass is one simple "work" Jesus' followers can do. Glass is 100% recyclable and can be recycled endlessly. Ripple Glass, a local glass recycling company with bins throughout the Kansas City area, has kept almost 200,000 tons of glass out of landfills across the region since 2009. [Click here](#) to visit their website for bin locations and a list of curbside pickup partners. **

- We seldom read from 3 John, a short letter that addressed some tensions between leaders in the early church. But the letter offered another simple guide for living a "resurrection life:" "don't

imitate what is bad but what is good.” It’s a psychological truth that we tend to imitate whatever we focus on the most. How can you choose to focus the greatest share of your attention on people and actions that you wish to imitate?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, transform my mind and heart so that I am more fascinated and attracted by the good to which you call me than the many bad things that surround me day after day. Amen.

* William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of John—Volume 2 Chapters 8–21 (Revised Edition)*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976, p. 165.

Being like Jesus means helping make disciples

THURSDAY 7.25.19 Matthew 28:16-20

A disciple is not just a person who knows some information about Jesus. A disciple intends to imitate Jesus in all parts of life. So “making disciples” is not a one-time effort, but a continual choice to invest yourself in making the lives of others better. According to Jesus’ “Great Commission,” that included (and includes) caring about “all nations.” As the apostle Paul wrote, after wrestling with questions of ethnicity and faith, “God’s riches, wisdom, and knowledge are so deep!” (Romans 11:33)

- This passage offered both a command, and a promise. Jesus addressed the command to all his followers: “Go...make disciples of all nations...baptizing them...and teaching them.” In what ways are you gifted to help carry out this commission? In what ways does this make “the church” like a hospital that is open 24/7 rather than a fortress with gates shut tightly against “enemies” or “outsiders”?
- Jesus’ promise was far more priceless than anything a MasterCard can get you: “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” In what situations has it made your life better to remember and live in the light of that promise? How can knowing Jesus is with you give you courage, strength and peace to reach beyond your comfort zone to bless others?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in my best moments I realize I need you to be with me, every day, every minute. Thank you for promising to do just that. Amen.

Testifying to the light that transforms us

FRIDAY 7.26.19 John 1:6-14

The “man named John” in verse 6 was not the man who wrote this gospel, but the preacher/prophet known as John the Baptist. He lived out a calling to “testify concerning the light.” The gospel writer clearly defined what he meant by “light.” Jesus, he said—the Jesus he had seen, heard and known—was the light who broke into the world’s darkness. As darkness couldn’t put out light, so Jesus could deliver us from the darkness of our world, and within ourselves. Then we, like John the Baptist, could “testify” to the light.

- Greek thinkers like Plato said the “*logos*” (Greek for “word”) was too pure to enter the corrupt material world. Hebrews usually saw God as so awesome and distant that they feared to even say the divine name. John drew on both those thought worlds, yet boldly wrote, “The Word became flesh.” How can it help you realize how much God values you to believe that he “became flesh,” like us, rather than just wishing you well from afar?
- Verse 8 reflected a sad fact. John the Baptist refuted any idea that he was the Messiah (cf. [Mark 1:7-8](#), [Luke 3:15-18](#)). Yet some people were so loyal to the Baptist that they didn’t want Jesus to be the supreme Lord (cf. [John 3:25-30](#)). (That went on later in distant Ephesus—cf. [Acts 19:1-5](#).)

Some of us can still be more loyal to a favorite preacher or teacher than to the Lord they all serve.

How can you value those who deepen your spiritual journey without putting them in Jesus' place?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I choose you as the Lord of my life. Help me, even when it challenges me, to always keep my heart open to welcome you. Amen.

The greatest commandment(s)

SATURDAY 7.27.19 Matthew 22:35-40

When asked what the greatest commandment was (which was a lively debate among Jewish rabbis of his day), Jesus chose not one but two. The first was from Deuteronomy 6:4: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind." The second came from Leviticus 19:18: "You must love your neighbor as you love yourself." Jesus said all other truths or orthodoxies have ultimate value only as they lead us to more fully love God and neighbor. Imitating Jesus in creating loving relationships is a key to living as God calls us to live.

- Jesus said every key principle the Bible teaches, all the truths we know about what God wants, "depend" on the two commands he quoted. What do you believe made these two commands so essential in Jesus' thinking and teaching? Can you recall any time when some belief you held led you to be unloving, maybe even without realizing it? Long before our modern psychological insights developed, Leviticus called God's people to "love your neighbor as yourself." That implicitly asked: how well can you love your neighbor if you don't have healthy ways of loving and caring for yourself? How well have you learned to nurture and value yourself, outwardly and, even more importantly, inwardly? (If you find this hard, Mindy Caliguire's little book *Soul Care*, available through The Well, may help.)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, true love, as Jesus taught and modeled it, is not mushy feelings, but thoughtful, disciplined action. Teach me to better imitate the "great commandment" life Jesus lived. Amen.

Family Activity: God wants everyone to share His love with all people! Encourage your child or youth to invite someone to church. (You can invite someone, too!) Create special invitations asking the guests to accept the opportunity to enjoy fun, fellowship and faith with your family. Maybe the friend could come over for a slumber party on a Saturday night then attend worship the next morning. Consider inviting a youth to join your family on a Wednesday night for a simple meal, then attend rezlife. If your guest would enjoy serving others, invite him or her to Serve Saturday on a Saturday morning, then enjoy lunch together afterwards. Pray for each invited person, asking God to open their hearts to experience the love of God!

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer

Prayers of peace and comfort for:

Winky Bergeson and family following the death of Robert Bergeson (Husband), 7/9/2019

Margery Mealman and family following the death of Raymond Mealman (Husband), 7/13/2019