



**grow. pray. study.**

**May 3, 2020 HOPE “Order, Disorder, Reorder”**

Scripture: Matthew 4:17, 6:31-33, 9:20-22, 22:37-39

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.

### **Launching a hope-filled ministry of reordering**

#### **MONDAY 5.4.20 Matthew 4:17-24**

Jesus launched his public ministry, Matthew said, by announcing “the good news of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23). The “present tense” character of Jesus’ message is important for those of us who’ve tended to think of God’s Kingdom solely in future terms. To pray “thy kingdom come” is not just a wispy, wistful dream of an idealized future. It is a claim of our true citizenship here and now, and a way of bowing to God as our true king.

- Translators often render the Greek behind “Change your hearts and lives” as “repent,” but the Greek meant “turn around,” not just “regret.” “This is a call not merely for us to feel sorry for our sins or even just to accept forgiveness for them, but to choose a different and wiser course of living.” \* Can you identify one or two ways belonging to God’s kingdom has reordered your life? Are there parts of life in which the call to reorder brings you hope, not uneasiness?
- Jesus didn’t call his first apprentices from his day’s “seminaries.” “They were, in today’s language, small businessmen, working as families not for huge profits but to make enough to live on and have a little left over....why did they give it all up to follow a wandering preacher? The same question faces people today....The answer can only be in Jesus himself, and in the astonishing magnetism of his presence and personality.” \*\* What draws you to follow Jesus and let him reorder your life?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you call me to change my heart and life, to reorder my priorities and actions in ways that make my life better. And you call me to “fish” for others who need your hope, too. Amen.

\* Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, study note on Matthew 4:17 in *The Renovare Spiritual Formation Bible*. HarperSanFrancisco, 2005, p. 1799.

\*\* Wright, N.T., *Matthew for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-15* (The New Testament for Everyone) (pp. 31-32). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

### **Letting the light of God’s hope shine**

#### **TUESDAY 5.5.20 Matthew 5:13-16**

The current pandemic crisis has given us a chance to focus on who we are, why we are here, and what our goal is as Christ followers. Jesus said God calls us to be “the light of the world,” people through whom God’s love shines to light up the dark, hurting places around us. We are here to live lives led by the Holy Spirit in which God’s light reaches beyond the walls of our church. As people find hope and reordering through what we do, we want them to praise, not us, but our God.

- Jesus said, “A city on top of a hill can’t be hidden.” In what ways will our choices about how we bring hope to those around us make our “city” of faith impossible to hide? Jesus also said we are to let our light shine for a specific purpose—so that people who see what we do will praise God. How does that

purpose shape the ways we make our faith visible differently from a PR campaign meant to pursue fame or money?

- On a personal level, who has been a light in your life? What have you learned about living as a channel for God's reordering light and hope from their example? Who do you know whose world you have an opportunity to brighten? Pray about this and choose one specific step you can take to bring the light of God's love and hope into their life this week.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, sometimes my love for you stays all too hidden. Help me to live like that city on a hill, not so that I look good, but so that you do. Amen.

### **Trust reorders life: "Don't worry...desire God's kingdom"**

#### **WEDNESDAY 5.6.20 Matthew 6:25-34**

Jesus warned against worry, though not against planning. He used hyperbole to make a point (as in "That bag weighs a ton"). That's why today's passage may feel radical, against common sense. That may have been even more true for Jesus' first hearers. "Jesus' audience would have been ordinary peasant people who had to worry about their next meal all the time, yet Jesus tells them not to worry about anything. He asks them instead to view the world with new eyes, in order to see all around them evidence of God's care and provision." \*

- Jesus said having our values straight is an antidote to worry. How easy or hard do you find it to "desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness"? Are there wishes or dreams that matter so much to you that (if you're honest) you might want them more than God's kingdom and righteousness? What choices have you made (or do you want to make) to reorder those wishes and dreams?
- Jesus' teaching anticipated modern research. He asked, "Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life?" (verse 27) We know worry shortens our life! What inner arguments, if any, do you make about why it "makes sense" for you to worry, why it would be "irresponsible" not to worry? How can you reorder needs from wants, so you can make plans without worrying?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you modeled a life of peace and trust. Help me to keep learning how to live a reordered life in which my energy can focus on your purposes rather than my fears. Amen.

\* Eugene Eung-Chun Park and Joel B. Green, study note on Matthew 6:25-34 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 17 NT.

### **Reordering (as promised) for Romans and Israelites**

#### **THURSDAY 5.7.20 Matthew 8:5-17**

A Roman centurion, part of a foreign occupying force, commanded 100 soldiers. He understood and practiced authority. This one obviously accepted Jesus as an authority in this matter. He sensed that Jesus' power reached beyond all boundaries and could heal all hurts. Peter's mother-in-law (with whom he and his wife lived) was in bed with a fever, "common and (in the case of malaria) often severe and recurrent." \*

Jesus' healing power worked simply and quickly: "He touched her hand."

- When we (or people we care about) are in danger, we look at once for the most powerful authority available (a manager, a teacher, the police). The centurion did that. When you are struggling, to whom do you turn? God often works through people. What does (or would) it look like for you to trust Jesus as your supreme authority for healing and help, even when Jesus sends that help through doctors, researchers, counselors, pastors and the like?
- Too often, Christians either focus their ministry to God's world exclusively on spiritual reordering (eternal salvation through Jesus), or else exclusively on social reordering (making the broken conditions of life in

our world better). Jesus clearly did both. How can studying Jesus' pattern of ministry help you to avoid trying to make a false choice between spiritual and social action?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you were a healer whether the illness and its healing were physical or spiritual. I sometimes need both, and so does the world around me. Grow me into a servant who lives out your holistic mission. Amen.

\* HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Location 219440). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

## Reordering from storms on the lake and the shore

### FRIDAY 5.8.20 Matthew 8:23-34

Jesus' followers (who'd fished Galilee for a living) knew severely strong storms could blow up on that inland lake. Hebrews believed only God could restrain the sea's stormy chaos (cf. [Jeremiah 5:22](#)). In a storm, Jesus slept in the boat. Awakened, he amazed the disciples by calming the storm. Landing, they met two terribly strong, unstable men. (Note: [Mark](#) and [Luke](#) only wrote about one man in this story.) Jesus reordered their disordered lives by calming their inner storms, just as he had the sea.

- Most of us are feeling the current Covid-19 plague and shutdown conditions as a huge "storm." As you face this stormy life season, have you had any sense Jesus is "in the boat" with you? Scott Krippayne sang, "Sometimes He calms the storm, And other times He calms His child." \* In which of those ways has Jesus most been with you in this storm? However much longer this goes on, how can you trust God to bring new order out of the disorder of this difficult time?
- Has the outer crisis created any inner storms for you, perhaps giving you insight into feelings and attitudes for which you'd value healing and hope? Do you believe Jesus' power is available for you, directly or through human instruments, as it was for the men in today's story? Are there any ways God is calling you to become a channel of hope to others facing life's storms? How might a deeper involvement in God's healing mission bring new freedom and purpose to your life?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, sometimes my emotions feel like one of the thunderstorms that blow through our area. Thank you for always offering me peace, and help and healing if the storm threatens to last. Amen.

\* Lyric from "Sometimes He Calms the Storm." Songwriters: Benton Kevin Stokes, Tony W. Wood © Universal Music Publishing Group, Capitol Christian Music Group.

## Jesus: caringly reordering life physically and spiritually

### SATURDAY 5.9.20 Matthew 9:9-13, 20-22, 35-38, 11:28-30

In today's readings, we see Jesus' heart, yearning to reorder and set right all the disorder in the world. He was, literally, "a man on a mission." He worked tirelessly to reorder people's lives to physical, emotional and spiritual wholeness. He invited everyone, in his day and in ours, to bring our frantic, frustrating, disordered lives to him. He offered rest, not in self-seeking idleness but in reordered living built around his compassionate, restoring mission. He said the greatest commandments that guide that life are, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, [Deuteronomy 6:5] and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'You must love your neighbor as you love yourself [Leviticus 19:18]."

- How did Matthew express the reason for Jesus' compassion when he saw the crowds? To what extent do you think some of your neighbors, co-workers, maybe even people you know from church are "troubled and helpless...sheep without a shepherd"? How much do you care about their well-being? Most people in Jesus' day despised and shunned tax collectors as traitors. Jesus' readiness to accept Matthew (and his friends) must have been an incredibly healing, reordering moment. How can Jesus' pattern of extending love and kindness to everyone help you see others not through filters of judgment,

prejudice or fear, but through Jesus' eyes? Jesus didn't say, "Come to me and try really hard to find rest." How can you "try" less on your own, and trustingly open your life more to the Holy Spirit's reordering presence in your life?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I love you, and I really want to love my neighbors. Thank you for the multiple stories of the ways you reordered people's lives. I invite and welcome that reordering power to work in me, too. Amen.

**Prayer Requests** – [cor.org/prayer](http://cor.org/prayer) *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

**Susan Larson** and family following the death of **Tom Boyd** (father), 4/23/2020