



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!

If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions towards the end of the document.

- These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

NEW THIS YEAR:

As we enter this new season at Grace Chapel in search for the next Senior Pastor, we invite you to consider the significance of this moment and to incorporate a time of prayer for the search.

Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search
- IV. The Journey Resources
- V. Support for the Leader

How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
4. **Ask Questions:** Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with and see how the conversation flows.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

If your group meets over Zoom:

- Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

Group Leader Support:

- Please reach out to your Campus Pastor if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic.
- If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor [Tim Ghali](#) or [Grace Lee](#) from the Group Life team.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for Sermon given on February 11, 2024
by Pastor Rachel Keeler

GO TIME! – Mark 2:13-17



I. Introduction

Welcome to the final message in our sermon series, *Kingdom Come: When God Does Something New*. So as we come to this last week, let's review where we've been:

- When God does a new thing, *He always prepares the way*
- When God does something new, *it always calls for repentance*
- When God does something new, *it is always grounded in the compelling, disturbing, life-changing message of Jesus*
- When God does something new, *it always upsets the status quo*
- When God does something new, *it involves healing in seen and unseen ways*

Today we are going to learn that saying yes to follow Jesus doesn't happen just once, but it is a decision that we face every day because God is always doing something new.

Questions: Are you ready to follow Jesus?

Bottom Line: When God does something new, it calls for a decision

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Readings:

Mark 2:13-17

¹³ Once again Jesus went out beside the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd came to him. He began to teach them. ¹⁴ As he walked along he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus. Levi was sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him. Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵ Later Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples. They were part of the large crowd following Jesus. ¹⁶ Some teachers of the law who were Pharisees were there. They saw Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors. So they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷ Jesus heard that. So he said to them, "Those who are healthy don't need a doctor. Sick people do. I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me."

II. Group Discussion Questions:

1. Icebreaker Question: Pastor Rachel began the message by asking: *What type of decision maker are you?* Some of us are very thorough and deliberate, whereas others of us are quick and impulsive. Which one are you, or are do you fall somewhere in between?
2. Pastor Rachel said, *Any time I have been able to choose the way of Jesus over my own way, I have not only been the better for it but somehow, mysteriously, I have become a little bit more myself.* What is the connection between who Jesus is and who you are?
3. Mark 2:17 says: *I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners.* What Jesus is saying is that those who are self-righteous don't realize their need for salvation, but those who know their own brokenness do.
 - What is it about self-righteousness that prevents people from seeking Jesus?
 - How does this resonate with your life? Take a moment to reflect on a moment where you had a deep sense of awareness and conviction that you needed help and/or that you needed Jesus.
4. There is an ancient saying in the church: *To stand still on the road of God is to move backward.* Followers of Jesus are always on the move. So what is your next move in saying yes to follow Jesus? Consider these options from our Connections Pathways (be curious, grow with practice, find community, make an impact):
 - *Repentance* is a way of turning away from something old and turning to Jesus and making room for something new. Consider spending time in one of the 7 spiritual practices: prayer, scripture, meditation, searching, Sabbath, giving or fasting
 - *Finding community* by joining a Lent group, Alpha course, men's or women's group or life group
 - *Letting go of something old* to welcome something new into our lives
 - *Becoming agents of our own healing and in healing others* by making an impact on someone else's life

Share with your group where you think your next step might be.
5. There is an old adage: *You can have anything you want, but you can't have everything you want.* Saying yes to follow Jesus means that you are going to have to give up some comforts and habits for to make space for the new thing that God is doing.

- What from your old life will you take with you, and what will you need to leave behind? More importantly, what brand new thing, what new skill, or relationship, or attitude, or commitment will we need to pick up?
6. Are you struggling with deciding who Jesus is? What is it, specifically, that you are stuck on? What is holding you back from saying yes, and following Jesus today?

Seekers and believers are all at different points on their spiritual journeys. Ask members of your small group for guidance or suggestions about the next steps that you can take. There is a good chance that they have been where you are right now. Pray for one another that the Holy Spirit would empower each individual to take the next step of faith and courage.

Take Home Message:

The decision to follow Jesus is just the beginning. Because God is always trying to do something new in and through us, every day we are presented with opportunities to choose the way of Jesus over our own way. There is always a decision to be made, something old we need to let go of and something new to pick up. Becoming a disciple requires us to change, to grow and to learn new things.

Let's Pray

III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search

During this next ministry year as we navigate transitions, we invite you to secure time during your life group to pray over the search process. Click [here](#) to access the full resource of the prayer guide.

Prayers for Preparation of the heart

- Pray for God to reveal to you the condition of your soul or the work of God's Spirit within you, as you consider your feelings about the Senior Pastor search process.
- Prayer is not just an opportunity to make requests from God, but to listen to what God might want for us during this season of transition. Pause and listen for any invitation from God that he is asking you to enter into.

Prayers for the Purposes of God

- Pray that God will use the people of Grace Chapel in the fulfilling of his mission to further the Gospel message and for us to be people of peace and healing in a broken world.

Prayers for the People of Grace

- Pray that Grace Chapel will seek the Lord as we continue our vision to be a vibrant, growing, multicultural community of seekers and believers, discovering life with God for the good of the world. Pray that we will continue with our mission to make and mobilize more disciples for Jesus Christ in Greater Boston and beyond.

Prayers for the Person God's calling

- Pray that they will have a passion to continue the work the Lord is doing at Grace Chapel and that they will be excited about the opportunities here.
- Pray that the new pastor will have a clear vision for how to minister to the people of Grace Chapel and the surrounding community.

Prayers for Discernment

- Pray for God's clear direction in how resumes are examined and interviews conducted.
- Ask God to bring the right person to the attention of the committee.
- Pray for the Search Committee to have God's wisdom in all the questions and information they share with the prospective pastor.

IV. The Journey



We're all on a journey. Where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it is good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus. It comes from putting them into practice.

Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The **with-God life** of our personal habits and routines;
- The **with-others life** of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The **for-the-world life** that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

V. Support for the Leader

These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and opportunities in the life of our church.

Teaching Points:

- God is *always* doing something new
- Inductive Bible Study:
 - Observation: What's happening?
 - Interpretation: What does it mean?
 - Application: What difference does it make in our lives?
- Using your imagination when reading Scripture, putting yourself in the shoes of main characters, can help your interpretation and application to your own life
- The disciple who Mark calls "Levi" is called "Matthew" in the Gospel of Matthew
- Everywhere Jesus went, he provoked a decision about his identity
- When we make a decision about who Jesus is, that always implies a decision about who we are as well
- Our decision to follow Jesus, our recognition of Jesus identity, and our awareness of our own identity are all intimately connected
- Those who are self-righteous don't realize their need for salvation, but those who know their own brokenness do