



[Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions below the discussion questions.]

FROM FEAR AND CYNICISM TO TRUST

April 3, 2022

This Lent, as we journey toward Easter, we're walking through the events of Holy Week, the last week of Jesus's earthly life before his death on the cross—a week that changed the world. Each week in our sermon series, Changemaker, we're looking at how Jesus brought about change: How did he treat people? How did he take care of himself? What did he prioritize? How did he respond to conflict? And most importantly, how can the life and death of Jesus change us, and our approach to changing the world around us? So far we've learned that Jesus changed the way we think about leadership, power, religion, and stress. This week, Pastor Adam leads us through Jesus's response to fear and cynicism.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q – Let's begin by reading John 18:1-3, and as we do, let's try to think about the various things that could have caused Jesus, his disciples, and the religious leaders in this account to feel fear. *[Invite someone to read John 18:1-3 out loud.]*

- As Jesus enters the garden, what fears might he have been facing?
- What about the disciples? As this scene unfolds, what do they have to fear?
- What might Judas have feared?
- What about the religious authorities? What fears might they have been experiencing?
- Finally, what might the Roman soldiers have feared?

Q – We'll continue with vv. 4-9. *[Ask another group member to read John 18:4-9.]*

- What words and phrases in these verses demonstrate that Jesus is in full control of this moment?
- Now let's look at Peter in vv. 10-11: “¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, 'Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?'"
- How does Peter's response to this situation differ from Jesus's? What emotions do you think were operating in Peter at this moment?

Q – Reflecting on these verses, Pastor Adam noted that “Jesus's night of prayer had moved him from overwhelming stress and anxiety about this coming moment to a calm, assured submission to God's plan for him. The disciples, on the other hand, had been sleeping. They were groggy, surprised, angry, and frightened.”

- Have you had an experience in which you spent focused time in prayer before you had to face a difficult situation? What difference did prayer make? In what way did it prepare you to face the challenge?
- Have there been times when you wished you had prayed before facing what you knew would be a challenging situation?



Q – As the narrative continues, Jesus is questioned, slapped, and then bound at the house of Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest; denied by Peter three times; questioned, flogged, and mocked by Pilate and his soldiers; rejected by the crowd, who shout out for him to be killed; and finally handed over by Pilate to be crucified. Adam reflected that if it were him, he “would be done with each and every one of these people if [he] managed to get out of this situation alive.”

- How do we tend to respond to experiences of rejection?
- How does Jesus respond?

Q – Adam points us to Psalm 22, the first line of which Jesus quotes from the cross (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34), to help us understand how Jesus was able to respond in the way he did. Let’s read verses one through eleven of that psalm together now. *[Invite one or more people to read Psalm 22:1-11 for the group.]*

- What do you notice in these verses? What does King David say about his ancestors’ trust in God (vv. 4-5)?
- In what ways does Jesus demonstrate trust in God through all the events of Holy Week?
- What is an area of your life in which God is calling you to grow in your trust of him?

Invitation to prayer: Invite each member of the group to share, in just a word or two, an area in their life in which God might be calling them to greater trust (e.g., “my finances,” “my relationship with my children,” “my career,” etc.). Lead the group in praying for God to increase our trust in him, in each of these areas.

HOW TO USE THESE STUDY GUIDES

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- 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.
- 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.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach 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 or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team.

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