



SERMON STUDY GUIDE
For the sermon preached on
9/27/2020:
“Divine Encounter”
Luke 5:17-26

How to use the Study Guide During Virtual Online Group Meetings

Group life is even more critical during this incredible season. Over and over, group leaders are reporting that suddenly there is a new hunger to connect, share, pray, and meditate on Scripture together and so we are making these guides available weekly and suggesting a new format during this season.

As you know, our Group Life’s vision is to “practice the way of Jesus.” And while Jesus never had to lead a Torah study over Zoom, he was strategic in his teaching ministry, and we want to be as well.

There are a number of differences between meeting in person and meeting online, ranging from the obvious to the subtle. One is, given our attention spans for online meetings, we want to encourage you to limit the length of your call between 45-60 minutes and we are calling this “Check-In Plus One.” Meaning, spend a few minutes checking in with your group and see if there are any new needs with them (or even amongst their neighbors). The “One” is to spend time in study. As our virtual season continues, our desire for meaningful content and interaction will grow. Given our new format, the study guides based on Sunday’s Sermon will be designed to be more application based (as opposed to unpacking the text with the Inductive Bible Study method). You might consider sharing the passage beforehand with your group in hopes that they might spend more time with the Scripture before the gathering.

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do in practicing the way of Jesus in community.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim Ghali and Pastor Rachel Keeler on behalf of the Group Life Team

For the Leader: “Check-In Plus One”

Welcome everyone to the Zoom call and outline the goal of this call being 45 minutes. Spend 15-20 minutes checking in with one another, then move into a time of prayer, and then spend some time discussing the application of the Scripture passage.

A “Check-in” question might be, “How are you doing, and is there anything new that has arisen in your life or in your neighborhood that we can pray about?”

For the Group:

Our new ministry year keeps moving – welcome back to week 3 of our series, “Disrupted: Following Jesus Outside the Box.” This series will look at texts specifically from the Gospel of Luke, and today we will discuss the story of the paralytic who was lowered down through a roof by his friends in hopes that Jesus would heal him. As we read the text, consider the several disruptions that are taking place in this story.

¹⁷ One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹ When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ²⁴ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

Luke 5:17-26 (NIV)

1. Let’s focus on two disruptions: One is that Jesus is teaching in someone’s house and all of a sudden, people are breaking through the roof to lower their paralyzed friend down on a mattress so that he can hopefully have a divine encounter with Jesus! What amazing friends! They are causing a disruption for the sake of the friend. We see Jesus responding positively to this type of disruption. For one, it’s life-giving. Second, as we read in the text, it serves as a pronouncement for the Kingdom of Jesus (or another concept for the Kingdom is “the way of Jesus” - The way God does things).

There is another disruption – one that disrupts the religious order. This is the first time Luke introduces one of the primary antagonists in this Gospel – the Pharisees, who are part of the religious establishment deeply committed to upholding the “way of the Torah.” In looking at

verse 21, why are the Pharisees critical of Jesus and trying to identify the disruption that Jesus is creating for them?

(In short, Jesus is creating a profound disruption to the religious order of the Jewish community in pointing that He is ultimately the Son of God. This is why they accuse Jesus of blasphemy. Jesus was wrecking their box – small-town rabbi's don't heal paralytics, offer them forgiveness, and take on the religious establishment - not to mention all at once.)

2. As we appreciate the disruption Jesus is causing in this story, let us examine the disruption that we are all a part of today. The pandemic has revealed significant societal vulnerabilities: economic, educational, cultural, and medical to name a few. But let's put those legitimate concerns aside for a moment and think personally and consider the Victor Frankl quote Pastor Tom shared – "Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose." (pause).

For each of us seeking meaning and purpose, our inner world needs to be reformed. Now that we find ourselves in the midst of personal disruption, what opportunities, needs, and vulnerabilities have been revealed to us? Second, similar to the paralytic, what do we need Jesus to heal in us in the midst of this disruption. Consider that some of us may not have an obvious physical limitation, but perhaps we have an emotional need or spiritual limitation in the form of doubt, cynicism, our soul's restfulness or even our soul's paralysis. What do we need Jesus to heal in us?

3. It's important to remember that when Jesus heals and redeems, he is disrupting the natural broken order of things. This is good and needed disruption that often come in the form of divine encounters. What divine encounters have you experienced and how did it change you (maybe something you learned or a particular way you grew)?

Contemplative Prayer:

Lastly, we remember that this story is instigated by the paralytic's friends who caused the disruption of breaking the roof to bring their friend to Jesus. Is there anyone in our lives that we can bring to Jesus for healing? Let us finish our time together by identifying one friend who could use a divine encounter with Jesus and let us pray the Lord would help us find those opportunities to bring them near to Jesus.