



SERMON STUDY GUIDE
For the sermon preached on
10/11/2020:
“Stopped in Our Tracks”
Luke 13:1-9

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 5 of our series, “Disrupted: Following Jesus Outside the Box.” This series has been looking at texts specifically from the Gospel of Luke and this one from Luke 9 is a bit complicated but if we look at it closely enough, we might see the disruptive point Jesus is making to the original audience and also see truth and a clear to repentance that will benefit us today.

¹ Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. ⁷ So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’

⁸ “‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

Luke 13:1-9 (NIV)

1. The context of this passage focuses on tragic events in Jesus’ time. In verse 1, Jewish worshippers on a spiritual pilgrimage are killed by Roman soldiers. In verse 4, a different type of tragedy is described – this one about a tower that collapsed and killed eighteen people. Pastor Bryan gave some perspective here when he said,

“Jesus doesn’t want them to get so caught up **dissecting the disruption** that they **miss the message**. The message is that the **world is terribly broken**; and so are **we**. Those **worshippers died** because people in power sometimes **abuse it** and do awful things. Those **eighteen people** died because a **tower was poorly made**. The world is **broken**, and **so are we**, Jesus is saying. And at **some point** we just need to **stop** in our tracks and **face it**.

You see, the **proper response** to **Disruption** isn’t to **fix it**, or **escape it**, or to **get back to normal** as quickly as possible. The proper response to Disruption is **Repentance**. It’s to **Pull off** the road, and **do business with God**.”

Even in the midst of tragedy, Jesus is calling his listeners to repentance. Not because they caused those tragedies but, thinking more big picture, because we are all part of this sinful, broken, tragic world. How do Jesus' words alter our understanding of both tragedy and repentance?

2. Reread the parable of Jesus tells in verses 6-9, what do you think it means?

(The simple explanation is that Jesus is giving a warning on repentance or risking spiritual demise and exile. The slightly longer explanation framed in the traditional understanding of this passage is that God the Father is the man who is frustrated by the fig tree that is not producing fruit. An intercessor, who could be understood as Jesus, has asked for one more year for the tree to bear fruit. To be clear, Jesus is issuing a warning and a call to repent, these are not theological statements on how the Holy Trinity functions in regards to each other).

3. Let's pause and receive the line that Bryan quoted from the theologian N.T. Wright, "All spiritual advance begins with a turning away from whatever is hindering our obedience."

There are many obstacles to repentance, but as we consider our modern idols, our self-reliance, the injustices around us and in us, let's also reflect on how we sincerely want to honor the Lord. May we mediate on the question Bryan asked towards the end of the sermon - What's one thing you are doing now, that if you stopped doing it, it would change your life for the better?

Moving Forward:

As a group, we have an opportunity to lean into the disruptions of this year, move in the upward spiral of re-formation and perhaps today we can spend some time considering our individual and collective repentance.

So let's spend some time in prayer here, a minute in silence together, and ask ourselves what is God speaking into our hearts? Someone can close in prayer and let's consider what's next for us as a group.

Also, might you consider as a Group to join us for one or all three of our All Church Prayer Calls. You can find more info at www.grace.org/prayer and you can share the Zoom link below to your group.

Topic: All Church Prayer Gathering - Repentance

Time: Oct 18, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://gracechapel.zoom.us/j/91371527412>

Meeting ID: 913 7152 7412

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