



SERMON STUDY GUIDE
For the sermon preached on
10/18/2020:
“Unlikely Disciples”
Luke 10:38-42

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?”

This fall, we've been following an upward spiral leading us from Disruption to Discovery. This is Week 6 of our series "Disrupted: Following Jesus Outside the Box." We're looking at the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10 this week, and Pastor Ruthie and Taylor co-preached a message called "Unlikely Disciples."

This week's passage is relatively short, so you might want to begin your discussion by reading it aloud together:

Luke 10:28-32

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Q – Taylor talked about a different way of understanding Martha's reaction to Mary, one focused more on Martha's cultural expectations for her sister and herself than on division of labor. She framed the story by describing the ways Jesus's ministry broke cultural expectations and crossed cultural boundaries. Taylor then invited us to consider:

- How have cultural norms or other people's expectations shaped the course of your life?
- Can you think of a time when you felt boxed in by other people's expectations of you?
- How might your identity as a disciple of Jesus Christ challenge cultural norms and boundaries, or other people's expectations of you?

Q – Martha and Mary's initial encounter with Jesus was just the beginning of a process for each of them of developing relationships with him. Ruthie and Taylor reflected on the fact that these relationships ultimately led Martha and Mary to see themselves differently and to do life differently.

- What are some of the ways we as Christians encounter Jesus? What can we do to make ourselves available for a fresh encounter with him?
- What expectations or responsibilities tend to distract you from focusing on opportunities to encounter Jesus?
- Is there anything that you are feeling called to do differently right now as a disciple of Jesus, either in response to a divine encounter, or in relation to the season in which you find yourself, as a parent, as a spouse, a son or daughter, a friend?

At the end of the sermon, Taylor led us in a prayer called the Prayer of Examen. You might consider leading your group through a version of the Examen again, pausing after you read each prompt to give people time to pray (feel free to adapt these prompts to suit your group):

- Invite people to quiet themselves and remember that they are in the presence of God. Take a moment to center yourselves in God's presence.
- Spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big or small, that you have received the past few days.
- Ask God to show you a significant challenge you've faced recently. Give God time to show you what has been most challenging, whether it's spiritual, professional, physical, emotional, financial....
- Take a moment to ask God to help you look honestly at how you met that challenge, or how you are meeting it at the present moment, if the challenge is ongoing.
- Watching together with God, replay the scene in your mind. Ask God to show you what really matters about the challenging situation.
- Did you respond from the desire to be a faithful, hopeful, and loving person? Or did you allow fear, selfishness, anger, or other emotions and temptations to get the better of you? What were the consequences of your response?
- If you feel called to do so, give thanks to God, or ask for forgiveness, or ask for healing and guidance.
- Look with God at where your spirit is at this very moment in regard to that challenge. Talk to God about this and listen for any response from Him.
- Ask the Lord to show you what grace or virtue you may need to meet this challenge in the future, and to help you be open to receiving that grace from this moment forward.
- Try to sense God quietly filling you with this grace. Praise God for the graces He bestows on you.
- Bring your Examen to a close in some way.

(Adapted from *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen: Fresh Ways to Pray from Your Day* by Mark E. Thibodeaux, SJ)

Consider debriefing for a few minutes about how people found the prayer experience, before closing by praying together for one another's needs, the needs of the church, and the needs of the world.