



**SERMON STUDY GUIDE**  
For the sermon preached on  
1/10/2021:  
“Our Troubled Nation”  
Selected Pasages from the Sermon

**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

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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?”

We believe that small groups rooted in Christian community ought to be a safe place where we come together after the disruptive events at the Capitol this past week. Our hope is that we can process appropriately, seek the Lord and pray together. We've adapted "Finite Disappointment, Infinite Hope," to both the teaching series and today's study and we will highlight texts that Pastor Bryan preached from.

It will be up to each of us to guard our time of study in a way that glorifies God and honors each other. Our time is more about recognizing that the Lord is with us in lament, repentance, and the next steps we take as Christ-followers and as His Church.

A few tips to help – speak personally and use first person language like "I felt" or "I saw" or "It's my observation ...." Second, receive what is being said versus responding to what is being said. Third, try your best to be brief so we can hear from each other. And lastly, appreciate that we might not be able to express ourselves with precise clarity so may we extend grace to one another and to ourselves. Again, this is a Jesus-centered time and we want to experience the Lord together in community.

Let us begin in prayer ....

**Q** – Pastor Bryan began the sermon by saying this might be one of those historical moments where people ask you where you were when you heard the news of what was happening at the Capitol. Where were you and what were your initial thoughts as the events unfolded in front of you?

**Q** – In the sermon, Bryan said that the first step in dealing with such troubling events is "Lament and repent of our brokenness." While this does not mean you and I were directly responsible for what happened at the Capitol, as those who seek a better way forward, we choose to take up the burden, discern our own complicity and lament and repent first so that we can be humbled before the Lord and be able to be used by Him. Bryan identified a few possibilities for our lament and repentance including divisiveness, idolatry (of any -isms), falsehoods, or silence. We see the need for lament in a book named after its importance.

Let's look at Lamentations and take the first step of the journey by lamenting the sin and brokenness in us and around us. After reading the two verses, what is the importance of lament to you and which of the four points of lament point you to self-examination? (The four divisiveness, idolatry, falsehoods, or silence.)

*Jerusalem has sinned greatly  
and so has become unclean.  
All who honored her despise her,  
for they have seen her nakedness;  
She herself groans and turns away.*

*Lamentations 1:8*

*See, O Lord, how distressed I am!  
I am in torment within,  
And in my heart I am disturbed,  
for I have been most rebellious.*

*Lamentations 1:20*

**Q** – Scripture is the most useful and most powerful tool to help us discover and return to the way of Jesus.

Ask volunteers to read the following:

*“Love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27*

*“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” Luke 6:27-28*

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...to set the oppressed free.” Luke 4:18*

*“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you....just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:25-28*

What do these words of Jesus say to you and how can we apply them today?

**Q** – The central point of the sermon was **“Remember that we are citizens of two kingdoms, but our Hope is in the King of Heaven.”** How does understanding both our spiritual and earthly citizenship give us perspective in these cultural moments?

Let's read one more passage and close our time in prayer:

*Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness....The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks Him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.*  
*Lamentations 3:22-26*