



SERMON STUDY GUIDE
For the sermon preached on
1/31/2021:
“A Sure and Certain Hope”
Luke 7:11-17

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 to between 45 and 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?”

We continue our winter teaching series, “Finite Disappointment, Infinite Hope,” this week with a message from Pastor Ruthie about hope in the face of loss. The sermon is titled “A Sure and Certain Hope,” and the Scripture text is Luke 7:11-17.

Q – Our passage for this week begins: “Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, ‘Don’t cry’” (Luke 7:11-13).

- How do you interpret Jesus’s response in v. 13? What does it mean that “his heart went out to her”? What does this reveal to us about Christ?
- As you think about this passage, about the raising of Lazarus in John 11, and other passages in which Jesus speaks about or confronts death, how would you describe Christ’s attitude toward death? What does the Gospel teach us about death?

Q – Ruthie shared six myths about experiencing grief and loss, or examples of what *not* to say to someone who is grieving. She also spoke about how people often misunderstand or misuse Romans 8:28—“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”—to mean that if you have enough faith, everything will turn out fine.

- If you have experienced loss yourself, or been close to someone who has, what kinds of words and gestures from others have been most helpful?
- What Scripture verses have provided hope and comfort?
- What words or gestures might you use to comfort and encourage a grieving friend who is a believer? A nonbeliever?

Q – We know that many people have experienced the loss of loved ones due to the pandemic, and we also now that in this season, many people are also having to deal with death on a daily basis due to their professional roles. The central question this sermon explores is how we move from the crushing pain and disappointment of loss to hope, and what difference our Christian faith makes in this process.

- How do Christ’s life and teaching offer us hope in the face of loss?
- How does Christ’s resurrection offer us hope in the face of loss?
- What other truths and promises from Scripture come to mind as you think about moving from grief and loss to hope?

Let’s pray for those in our own circles who are grieving the loss of a loved one, for those who are sick and afraid, and for those who serve their communities by caring for the dying, the dead, and the grieving.