



*[Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions below the discussion questions.]*

## Week 4 - "Stress Test"

**March 27, 2022**

This Lent, as we journey toward Easter, we're walking through the events of what we call Holy Week, or Passion Week, the last week of Jesus's earthly life before his death on the cross—a week that changed the world. Each week in our sermon series, Changemaker, we're looking at how Jesus brought about change: How did he treat people? How did he take care of himself? What did he prioritize? How did he respond to conflict? And most importantly, how can the life and death of Jesus change us, and our approach to changing the world around us? This week we want to look at how Jesus handled enormous stress and how our lives can be served in our times of anxiety and hardship.

### GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q – Pastor Bryan introduced the message with the report of the American Psychological Association's annual survey findings on American's level of "stress." Bryan concluded with this summary quote:

"The number of adults who say they are significantly stressed over these events is stunning relative to what we have since we began the survey in 2007. Americans have been doing their best to persevere over these two tumultuous years, but these data suggest that we're now reaching unprecedented levels of stress that will challenge our ability to cope." Arthur Evans Jr., APA

- What is your reaction to Arthur Evans Jr's quote?
- Understandably, these past two years have taken a toll on all of us. What have been the helpful ways you have coped with the stress? And what have been some of your challenges?

Q – As we consider the context of Holy Week, including the hostility with the religious and political establishment, his coming betrayal, and his knowledge of his coming arrest, trial, punishment, beatings, and crucifixion – you can understand why Jesus feels this way in the text Matthew 26:36-38.

- What comes to your mind as you read these words and consider the context?
- Has it ever bothered you that Jesus displays this type of vulnerability and if so, and how do you see it now?
- Bryan concluded a section of thought with, "However stressed out you might be feeling these days, or at ANY time in your life, know that Jesus has been there. He's able to sympathize with us in our weakness, the Bible says, and has been tested in every way, just as we are. Gethsemane leaves no doubt about that" What encouragement do you draw from that? And how might it change how you see Jesus and stress?



Q – Read Matthew 26:39-40. Bryan identified four practical suggestions in praying in times of stress, “Find a time. Find a place. Find a posture. Find friends. And finally, find words.”

- Which of these are the most natural for you to find, and which one or two are the most challenging?
- Is there anything else that you have found to be helpful in praying in times of stress?

Q – Each week we have identified a change that Jesus modeled and the change we can live out. Today we want to consider the message’s big idea - “Change happens when we pray our way from self-reliance to surrender.”

- The disciples feel asleep when Jesus asked them to pray while he sought comfort and strength in his own prayer. Contrast what happens when we lean on our strength versus the power that can only come from the Lord in prayer. What can we be reminded of or what can we learn new today from Jesus’ model of prayer in times of stress?

## HOW TO USE THESE STUDY GUIDES

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don’t feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team.

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