



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE

for the Sermon given on May 22, 2022

“Pray in the Crux of the Moment” – Matthew 14:14-21



We are in Week 2 of our new spring series, “The Good and Beautiful Life.” In the coming weeks, we will be examining five missional practices that Jesus modeled for us and that the early church adopted as well. We’ll be using the acrostic BLESS – which represents “Begin in Prayer,” “Listen with Care,” “Eat with Others,” “Serve in Humility,” and “Share Your Story.”

Today we focus on the missional practice of “Begin with Prayer” and will be looking at the popular story of Jesus feeding the 5000. For many, it’s a familiar story but today we want to focus on the role prayer plays in this miracle.

Group Discussion Questions

Q – Let’s begin my reading Matthew 14:14-21. If this is a familiar passage of Scripture to you, what is that you like about it? If this is a newer story for you, what features of the story capture your attention.

Q – It is essential that we understand that Jesus does not bless the food out of tradition, or out of some form of superstition but in gratitude to the Father and to acknowledge that it is God who gives power for such miraculous moments.

The 3 points of the sermon were “We begin in prayer ...

1. By Directing our Attention to God.
2. By Seeking Power from God.
3. So that we can be a blessing to those Around Us.”

We see each of these points in the moment of Jesus praying over the bread and fish before the food is distributed to the masses of people. Which of these do you feel you need to deepen in your prayer life?

Q – Pastor Tim told a story of a man who approached him in the lobby after a previous sermon on prayer and that this man shared that despite his love for Jesus and his affirmation of prayer, he felt a mental block towards prayer. This block was formed over years of what felt like unanswered prayer and disappointing outcomes of life among other aspects he shared. Can you relate to any struggle or have suffered any type of spiritual slump in your prayer life? What have you done to find your rhythm again and is there anything you need to do now to restart or deepen or your prayer life?

Q – An important point of this message is that because we have been blessed by God, we have the opportunity to be a blessing to others. How can we make sure we do not burn out by our strength and what specifically can we pray for from God so that we can bless others in the name of God? A wonderful detail to the story of the feeding of the 5000 is that there were twelve baskets of leftovers. In a way, this is the Jesus proclaiming that the good and beautiful life in God’s Kingdom provides the needs of all people abundantly. What does this spiritual truth mean to you?

Q – Pastor Tim made the point that in a series called “The Good and Beautiful Life,” how do we experience that in a world that floods our newsfeeds of evils such as violence, racism, and extraordinary acts of selfishness? Second, in a time that feels tense and complicated, how can followers of Jesus be intentional in showing hope, love, and blessing today?

As we consider how we can bless the world near us and far from us, let us begin again in prayer – let us lament together, let us acknowledge the goodness of God, let us seek his power, and let us ask the Lord for the courage and strength to confront the evils of this world and the selfishness in our heart.

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.