



# 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.

**NEW this year:** These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

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## LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for the Sermon given on April 23, 2023

by Pastor Richard Rhodes

**"THE MISSION OF JESUS" - Luke 4:14-21, John 13:34**



Question: What is Jesus' mission?

Bottom Line: We fulfill the mission of Jesus when we love others as He has loved us.

Leading up to Easter, we just completed the sermon series about the I AM statements from the gospel of John where Jesus uses earthly, personal concepts like bread, light and a door to help us understand who he is. Last week Pastors Jon and Leah introduced us to the book of Revelation where Jesus says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” the God of the beginning and the end.” Recognizing Jesus as the Alpha and Omega gives clarity to our present circumstances because it gives meaning to our past and brings hope for our future.

This Sunday, Pastor Richard tells us about the mission of Jesus and how his radical love transformed his disciples and how we can share the love of Christ through community engagement.

Let’s begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

### **Main Scripture Reading:**

#### Luke 4:14-21

<sup>14</sup> Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. <sup>15</sup> He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

<sup>16</sup> He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,

<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

<sup>20</sup> Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. <sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

And let’s also read:

#### John 13:34

<sup>34</sup> “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

### **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Imagine yourself as one of the Jews in Nazareth that had witnessed Jesus reading and teaching out of Isaiah at the synagogue. Imagine you heard the words, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” What do you think your first thought would be? Would you lean towards believing in Jesus’ proclamation towards skepticism?

2. Of all the Old Testament passages to quote, why do you think Jesus quotes Isaiah 62 here?

*(For the Leader: Jesus is quoting Isaiah 62 to proclaim the foundational themes of the Kingdom he is bringing the ministry he is starting).*

3. Martin Luther King, commenting on Jesus' parable about the Good Samaritan said:

"On the one hand we are called to play the good Samaritan on life's roadside ... but one day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed."

Reaching out to help someone in need can be challenging and often it feels that changing the system feels daunting, and might even feel impossible begging the questions of 'why bother?', 'what can really change?' And 'why should we try?' Despite the complexity, what redemptive attitudes can we seek and what practical steps can we take to bring God's goodness, justice, and love to our world?

4. "Love your neighbor as yourself" is mentioned several times in the New Testament (Matthew 22:35-40, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:27).

The second greatest commandment comes from Leviticus 19:18: Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone amongst your people, but love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus says in John 13:34-35: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

How is Jesus' new command different than "Love your neighbor as yourself?"

*(For the Leader: There are several helpful answers. To help land this point you might point out that this new command Jesus gives is building on his teaching. Whereas before it was "love your neighbor the way you love yourself," now it's love others the way God loves you or the way Jesus has shown you. Jesus is teaching us about the powerful love of God.)*

5. Pastor Richard mentioned several examples of how members of our church have been demonstrating the love of Christ through engaging their communities. If you have been involved, please share these activities with your small group.

Also, consider joining some of the upcoming opportunities like Spring Serve (May 13), Discovery Day in Lexington (May 27) or Fostering Families.

6. As we close our time, let us reflect on the ways that Jesus' love has changed us and carried us through times of need and challenge. Let us also meditate on who Jesus might be calling you to show His love to in the coming days ahead.

### **Take Home Message:**

Jesus' mission, his plan for Community Engagement, is now our mission. We are all on mission to love as He has loved us. Not because we have to but because we get to. The most satisfying life is the one which is filled with love for others. And not a love that we work up but a love that flows from His love.

### **Homework Until Next Time:**

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

*We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

### **Let's Pray**

**Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).**

### **Teaching Points:**

- 3 things that Jesus is claiming as his anointed mission:
  1. Jesus was anointed to proclaim the good news to the poor
  2. Jesus was anointed with compassion for the sick and broken hearted
  3. Jesus claimed a commitment to justice
- The mission of Jesus was to proclaim the good news, show compassion for the sick and demonstrate a commitment to justice. This really is a call to Community Engagement.
- When you get to heaven and meet Jesus and he asks you, "Did you love others as I have loved you?" what will be your response?

## For Further Biblical Study:

### John 15:9-17

<sup>9</sup> “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.

## 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 Grace Lee from the Group Life team.