



# 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 towards the end of the document.

- These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

## NEW THIS YEAR:

As we enter this new season at Grace Chapel in search for the next Senior Pastor, we invite you to consider the significance of this moment and to incorporate a time of prayer for the search.

## Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search
- IV. The Journey Resources
- V. Support for the Leader

## How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** 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.
4. **Ask Questions:** 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.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

*If your group meets over Zoom:*

- Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

**Group Leader Support:**

- Please reach out to your Campus Pastor 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 Ghali](#) or [Grace Lee](#) from the Group Life team.

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## LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for Sermon given on January 14, 2024  
by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson

### TURN – Mark 1:9-15



#### I. Introduction

Welcome to the second message in our new sermon series: *Kingdom Come – When God Does Something New*. We will be going through first three chapters of the gospel of Mark, focusing on the new things God was doing then and now through Jesus. Last week we learned that God is the God of new things, new beginnings. And that when God does a new thing, He always prepares the way. What we didn't talk about is how we're supposed to get ready for these new things. And that is exactly what I'm going to speak about today.

Questions: What can we do, specifically, to prepare for new things God is preparing us for individually and as a church?

Bottom Line: When God does something new, it always calls for repentance.

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

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***Main Scripture Readings:***

Mark 1:9-15

<sup>9</sup> At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

<sup>12</sup> At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, <sup>13</sup> and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

<sup>14</sup> After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near.

**Repent and believe the good news!”**

## II. **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Pastor Bryan began the message with a story about the impact one course had that shaped his life – the course was entitled *Inductive Bible Study*, taught by Dr. Joanne Cairns.
  - Can you think of one class or a teacher who had a profound influence on you? What was the class about? Who was the teacher? How did this course change your life, your character, and/or your career?
2. Pastor Bryan practiced the three steps of Inductive Bible Study with today's passage. The three steps are:
  - Observation:** What's happening?
  - Interpretation:** What does it mean?
  - Application:** What difference does it make?
  - Assuming not everyone in your group is aware of Inductive Bible Study or feels confident of studying the Bible by themselves, feel free to spend some time as a group to go through the steps and study the Scripture together. What observations are you making? What questions come to mind? Save sharing application for last.
3. Pastor Bryan draws the following conclusions based on what he observed:
  - 1) Something new and climatic was happening, and still is.
  - 2) Jesus was at the center of this new thing, and still is.
  - 3) Participation in the new thing required repentance, and still does.
  - Among these three conclusions, which one resonates most with you? or the least?
4. According to Mark, the new things we are hoping God will do in our lives can't happen unless we repent, unless we turn from old and hurtful ways to new and better ways of living and being. **Repent** means "to turn; it can also mean to turn from; to turn toward; to turn around."
  - Last week, Pastor Bryan asked us to consider what new things we wanted to do or be in the year to come. According to Mark, according to Jesus, those new things can't happen until we repent – turning from old and hurtful ways to new and better ways of living and being.
  - What do we need to repent of? What sins are ruining your relationship with God and with each other? Feel free to even consider the list of 7 deadly sins: *pride, greed, lust, envy, anger, gluttony, and sloth*.

5. Pastor Bryan shared his thoughts about *corporate sins* in the church at large, and at Grace Chapel. These included:
  - Racism/ discrimination against people different than ourselves
  - Consumerism or how our level of engagement is driven more by comfort and convenience rather than commitment
  - Self-righteousness or the need to be right all of the time
- How can the small group, or the church at large, be the community to provide accountability and encouragement in one's journey of repentance? Discuss some next steps that you can take to develop new habits and attitudes to show the love of Christ to the people around you.
- Consider taking a time of prayer to confess and repent – for personal and corporate sins. Pray for one another and for the church to turn toward Jesus.
6. As your group closes in prayer, ask yourself, and the Spirit, if there is something you need to repent of. Maybe it was already discussed or maybe it is something in particular the Lord brings to mind. Ask for forgiveness. Then ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into the new thing that God wants to do in and through you to bring His Kingdom here on earth.

### ***Take Home Message:***

Repentance isn't about turning from sin, **it is about turning toward Jesus!** "*Repent and believe the good news,*" he said. Jesus was the good news. He was the new thing God was doing. And he still is!

When you make a resolution, all you do is turn from one thing to another thing, **but when you repent, you don't just turn to another thing, you turn to Jesus!** Resolutions are all about our desire and our ability to do something new. **Repentance is about God's desire and God's ability to do something new in and through us.** He does this through our faith in His son, Jesus.

### ***Let's Pray***

### **III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search**

During this next ministry year as we navigate transitions, we invite you to secure time during your life group to pray over the search process. Click [here](#) to access the full resource of the prayer guide.

#### **Prayers for Preparation of the heart**

- Pray for God to reveal to you the condition of your soul or the work of God's Spirit within you, as you consider your feelings about the Senior Pastor search process.
- Prayer is not just an opportunity to make requests from God, but to listen to what God might want for us during this season of transition. Pause and listen for any invitation from God that he is asking you to enter into.

#### **Prayers for the Purposes of God**

- Pray that God will use the people of Grace Chapel in the fulfilling of his mission to further the Gospel message and for us to be people of peace and healing in a broken world.

#### **Prayers for the People of Grace**

- Pray that Grace Chapel will seek the Lord as we continue our vision to be a vibrant, growing, multicultural community of seekers and believers, discovering life with God for the good of the world. Pray that we will continue with our mission to make and mobilize more disciples for Jesus Christ in Greater Boston and beyond.

#### **Prayers for the Person God's calling**

- Pray that they will have a passion to continue the work the Lord is doing at Grace Chapel and that they will be excited about the opportunities here.
- Pray that the new pastor will have a clear vision for how to minister to the people of Grace Chapel and the surrounding community.

#### **Prayers for Discernment**

- Pray for God's clear direction in how resumes are examined and interviews conducted.
- Ask God to bring the right person to the attention of the committee.
- Pray for the Search Committee to have God's wisdom in all the questions and information they share with the prospective pastor.

#### IV. The Journey



*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 is 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.

#### Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

## V. 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 opportunities in the life of our church.

### **Teaching Points:**

- Inductive Bible Study:
  - Observation: What's happening?
  - Interpretation: What does it mean?
  - Application: What difference does it make in our lives?
- Something new and climactic was happening and still is
- Jesus was the center of this new thing, and still is
- Participation in the new thing required repentance, and still does
- Repent means to turn: to turn from, to turn toward, to turn around
- New things can't happen unless we first repent
- The 7 deadly sins: pride, greed, lust, envy, anger, gluttony, sloth
- Grace Chapel's corporate sins:
  - *Racism* – we have a tendency to stereotype, to overlook, to discriminate against, to other-ize people who are different from us. Let's turn towards justice, reconciliation, equity and inclusion, whenever possible
  - *Consumerism* – our level of engagement is driven more by comfort and convenience than by commitment. Let's turn from consumerism and toward commitment
  - *Self-righteousness* – having a certainty, especially an unfounded one, that one is totally correct or morally superior. We need to turn from certainty, and superiority, and judgmentalism, and to turn toward humility, teachability and grace