



# 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 28, 2024

by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson

### NEW WINE, FRESH FIRE – Mark 2:18-22



#### I. Introduction

Welcome to the middle of our winter sermon series, *Kingdom Come: When God Does Something New*. Sticking with our theme for the ministry year, *New Beginnings*, we are walking through Mark's gospel, paying particular attention to how and why God does new things.

Today I would like to prepare the way for a new era of ministry here at Grace. I am going to focus on why change and disruption are necessary when God does something new, and also why it's so important for us to open our hearts to embrace the new opportunities God has planned for our congregation. Looking ahead, we will be holding a One Church Sunday, on May 12<sup>th</sup> at Lowell Auditorium, where all the campuses can worship together. If all goes well, we'll be able to welcome our new senior pastor.

Questions: What can we learn about how and why God does new things? Why is this disruption necessary? Why is Jesus always pushing the envelope?

Bottom Line: When God does something new, He upsets the status quo, and sends fresh fire.

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

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***Main Scripture Readings:***

Mark 2:18-22

<sup>18</sup> Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. <sup>20</sup> But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

<sup>21</sup> "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. <sup>22</sup> And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."

Isaiah 43:19

<sup>19</sup> See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

## II. Group Discussion Questions:

1. Change is hard. It requires effort and risk. It often feels like loss; the loss of something familiar, and comfortable, and even meaningful.
  - Think about a time a major change happened in your life. Reflect on the circumstances surrounding the change - When did it happen? What was going on in your life at the time? What were your reactions? What was lost? What was gained?
  - Share with the group one key lesson you took away from that situation.
2. Read the following verses back-to-back to provide context for today's passage: feel free to divide the group to two smaller groups to make observation about each verse.

Read Mark 1:45  
Read Mark 3:6

  - What do you observe about the people's responses/reactions to Jesus? How would you compare them?
  - In what way do you resonate or empathize with these responses?
3. Take a moment to revisit Mark 2:18-22. In Mark chapter 2, Pastor Bryan observes that when God does something new, it always upsets the *status quo*.
  - What disruption do you observe Jesus causing?
  - What was Jesus' point on fasting and why did this cause such disturbance?
4. Read Mark 2:22

<sup>22</sup> And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."

  - Explain what this means in your own words.
    - o Pastor Bryan explained that if people were not prepared to embrace the NEW things God was doing, they risked losing not only those systems and structures, but the very FAITH they were meant to contain.
5. Carey Nieuwhof, pastor of Connexus Church in Ontario said, "Churches that love their methods more than their mission will die." Pastor Bryan shared his own observations of what happened to churches that failed and others that thrived in the face of changing times.
  - Considering the changes or growing pains you have observed/experienced at Grace Chapel or other churches that you had previously attended, what

revelation is the Holy Spirit highlighting to you? What call to action is the Lord asking of you?

6. If you want something new in your life, you're going to have to give something up or let something go to make space for it. Pastor Bryan gave some examples:
  - If you want to spend more personal time with God each day, *you may need to get up earlier or give up some screen time*
  - If you want to get more involved in the life of the church, *it may add an evening to your week, or complicate your weekend plans*
  - If you choose to become more generous with your finances, *it might cut into your spending or savings habits*
- Is there something that you need to lay down or leave behind in order to create space for God to start something new in your heart?
7. As you close in prayer, ask the Holy Spirit if there something God wants you to give up or let go of in order to make room for the new way he wants you to go this year.

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

If you want something new in your life, you'll probably have to let go of something old, something familiar and comfortable. But the new wine that God offers is always worth it.

#### **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:*

- Change is hard for anybody, and any organization, especially churches
- When God does something new, it always upsets the status quo
- Contemporary churches and Christians often make the same mistake – confusing the means with the end, or the method with the mission. We fall in love with our forms and structures, and forget the purpose behind them
- When we insist on holding onto old, familiar forms that were fruitful in their time, and refuse to be open to new and innovative forms that might be fruitful in a new time, we risk losing both the form and the fruitfulness