

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

NOVEMBER 25, 2018

Welcome to yet another Sunday set aside to allow Communities and/or small groups to meet.

For previous discussion material or for different approaches to small groups please refer any of the material as found under the “Communities” tab on the church website. (**Note:** sermons can be accessed online at ccrc.on.ca/sermons, however due to technical issues the November 18 sermons are not recorded.)

- I. **Some ideas for beginning your time together:** Please be sure that you begin your time together well. For ideas you can look back at the other guides that precede this one on the Communities page on the website www.ccrcc.on.ca. As you begin you may want to take the opportunity to spend some time in prayer thanking the Lord for the past week and for the things experienced. People of all ages can be involved in circle prayer.
- II. **Discussion Theme Introduction:** surprising and challenging stories from Scripture. Up to today the sermons have dealt with the story from Exodus 4 (God wants to kill Moses), Acts 4 (God actually kills Ananias and Sapphira) and II Kings 2 (bears maul 40+ children after their taunt of Elisha). Today, Pastor Betsy tackled Revelation 19 (Christ on the white horse). Below you will find 2 discussion guides based on the last couple of passages mentioned. Pick either one or both or pieces of both.
- III. **Discussion Guide – based on Pastor John’s sermon – November 18.**
 1. **Share:** Before even beginning with one of the passages share what story in the Bible you find perplexing or “strange” or “challenging”. Tell the Biblical story and tell why you find it perplexing, “strange” or “challenging”.
 2. **Scripture Reading: II Kings 2:19-25 (Note:** Some of the questions below were written by Shelly Kearns at Community Bible Church and are found on line at <http://cbcilderton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Elisha-A-Study-in-2-Kings.pdf>) Our text this week introduces two inaugural miracles, both somewhat obscure and, initially, both somewhat puzzling: the “healing” of Jericho’s water supply, and the dramatic confrontation with the mocking boys of Bethel. These often ignored narratives may strike Western readers as either trivial . . . or objectionable . . . So they are worth paying attention to because they push us into different ways of thinking from ones that come naturally to us (J. Goldingay).
 - a. What strikes you about these verses – what is the “perplexing” part of this story?
 - b. What is the context of these stories and why is that important to understanding them?
 - c. What did God call Elisha to do? What was his office?
 - d. What is the complaint of the people in Jericho? (v. 19) Ought this to surprise anyone? (see: Joshua 6:26 and I Kings 16:34)
 - e. How does the Bible ensure we credit God Himself for this “healing” miracle? (v.21) How does the curing of the water illustrate the truth of Deut. 32.39?
 - f. Why is the healing of Jericho’s (cursed) waters an appropriate inaugural miracle in Elisha’s ministry? How does it authenticate him as a genuine and worthy successor to Elijah (cf. 1 Kings 17)?

- g. What did the “youths” do?
- h. How did Elisha respond?
- i. What did the “youths” do wrong? Why was this so serious?
- j. Reflect: *Iain Povan observes that the modern reader has more difficulty [than the biblical author] here in coming to terms with the thought that young persons, as well as old, should be subject to divine judgment for their sins.* What do you think? Does his observation ring true?
- k. Elisha seems to have recognized that the ridicule of himself was actually the mockery of God. So rather than seek personal retaliation, he thrust the matter into God’s hands. Read Psalm 70. How do praying through psalms such as this assist us in relinquishing our desire for revenge? (OPTION: Read also Romans 12.17-21)
- l. What is the significance of this story? What message did this passage of Scripture send to the original audience?
- m. What does this passage say about God?
- n. What does a passage such as II Kings 2:19-25 say to us in 2018? Does this passage have any significance for us today?

IV. Discussion Guide – based on Pastor Betsy’s sermon – November 25.

1. **Share:** Before even beginning with one of the passages share what story in the Bible you find perplexing or “strange” or “challenging”. Tell the Biblical story and tell why you find it perplexing, “strange” or “challenging”.
2. **Read: Revelation 19:11-21**
 - a. Tell the story in your own words. What is going on here in Revelation 19? Who are the different characters and what are they doing?
 - b. What strikes you about these verses – what is the “perplexing” part of this story?
 - c. How does this passage describe Jesus?
 - d. Think about the Christmas story and how Jesus is depicted. How do you reconcile the “child in the manger” with “the rider on the white horse”?
 - e. Reflect: In two services now we have heard pastors talk about how we tend to “tame” God. Do you think that is accurate? How have we tended to “tame” God? Give examples.
 - f. How might the truth that Jesus is the rider on the white horse encourage those suffering for their faith to persevere?
 - g. If someone were to ask you as to what Revelation is all about, what would you say?
 - h. What sorts of questions do you have about the book of Revelation?

V. Closing time: Take some time to pray together.

Note: Today marks the last of the Sundays set aside for small groups for 2018. The next Sunday set aside for such purposes is January 13, 2019. The January – February sermons are under the theme, “God’s Love, Our Love” exploring such themes as: mission, creation care, stewardship, diakonia/mercy ministry, empathy and vocation. We bless the world with the blessing of God. Stay tuned for study material.