



SERMON STUDY GUIDE
For the sermon preached on
2/14/2021:
"A Tale of Two Sinners"
Luke 7:36-52

How to use the Study Guide During Virtual Online Group Meetings

Group life is even more critical during this incredible season. Over and over, group leaders are reporting that suddenly there is a new hunger to connect, share, pray, and meditate on Scripture together, and so we are making these guides available weekly and suggesting a new format during this season.

As you know, our Group Life's vision is to "practice the way of Jesus." And while Jesus never had to lead a Torah study over Zoom, he was strategic in his teaching ministry, and we want to be as well.

There are a number of differences between meeting in person and meeting online, ranging from the obvious to the subtle. One is, given our attention spans for online meetings, we want to encourage you to limit the length of your call to between 45 and 60 minutes, and we are calling this "Check-In Plus One." Meaning, spend a few minutes checking in with your group and see if there are any new needs with them (or even amongst their neighbors). The "One" is to spend time in study. As our virtual season continues, our desire for meaningful content and interaction will grow. Given our new format, the study guides based on Sunday's sermon will be designed to be more application based (as opposed to unpacking the text with the Inductive Bible Study method). You might consider sharing the passage beforehand with your group in hopes that they might spend more time with the Scripture before the gathering.

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do in practicing the way of Jesus in community.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim Ghali and Pastor Rachel Keeler on behalf of the Group Life Team

For the Leader: "Check-In Plus One"

Welcome everyone to the Zoom call and outline the goal of this call being 45 minutes. Spend 15-20 minutes checking in with one another, then move into a time of prayer, and then spend some time discussing the application of the Scripture passage. A "check-in" question might be, "How are you doing, and is there anything new that has arisen in your life or in your neighborhood that we can pray about?"

This week we close out our winter teaching series, “Finite Disappointment, Infinite Hope,” with Pastor Bryan preaching a message reflecting on times when we disappoint ourselves, when we are the ones who fail to live up to expectations. The message is called “A Tale of Two Sinners,” and our Scripture passage is Luke 7:36-52.

Q – The passage begins: “When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner’” (Luke 7:36-39).

- How would you describe the woman’s attitude and actions toward Jesus, in your own words? What do you think made her weep?
- How would you describe Simon’s attitude and actions toward Jesus?
- What are the differences between how Jesus saw the woman, and how Simon saw her?

Q – In verses 41-42, Jesus tells Simon a short story: “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

- What message does Jesus seem to be conveying to Simon with this story? Why do you think Jesus wanted Simon to hear this message? What did Jesus want Simon to realize?
- How does Simon respond? What do you think Simon might have done next?

Q – Pastor Bryan challenged us: “Before we’re too hard on Simon, let’s remember that most of us are more *like* him than we care to admit. We’re upright, God-fearing, law-abiding people. And like him we’ve gotten pretty adept at pointing out *other* people’s sins; especially certain kinds of sins, especially sexual sins, and doing it in a way that somehow makes us feel better about *ourselves*.”

- In what ways do you think we as a Christian community have become adept at pointing out other people’s sins? Why do you think this is so easy to do?
- In what ways might you struggle with the sin of spiritual pride, or with the temptation to point out other people’s sins?

Q – At the end of the sermon, Pastor Bryan asked: “Has this past year exposed some moral or spiritual failure in your life? Something you feel badly about, ashamed of, even, but can’t seem to get past? Or is there some sin you’ve been carrying around with you for a long time, feeling as though not even God can forgive you for it?”

- Why do you think we sometimes find it so difficult to bring our sins before Jesus?
- How can we as a community encourage one another to receive Jesus’s forgiveness?

Let’s pray for one another, that each of us will have the courage to bring our own sins and failures to Jesus, and for the grace to look on other people’s sins with Jesus’s eyes of mercy.