



Small Group Ministry

Winter 2024 – Week 4

Opening Prayer: (Common to all Groups)

Lord, we thank you for today and for this time to gather as friends in faith. We pray for our church and our community. Guide us and help us to deepen friendships and seek to grow in faith together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Opening Discussion

1. How is everyone? Highs and lows from the week?
2. What is one thing you have a great deal of patience for? What is one thing you struggle to be patient with?

What is a Small Group?

- Faith Exercise - Intentionally deepening our relationship with God.
- Building Community - Intentionally deepening our relationship with others in faith.
- Common Interest – Intentionally celebrating common ground.

Group Parameters:

- Gatherings will begin with Prayer & Scripture to unify this ministry across the groups.
- Members will remain courteous and ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to share.
- Thoughts and feelings shared are private and should remain confidential.
- You are encouraged to share news but cautioned about crossing into the territory of gossip.
- Grow in friendship, faith, and community with one another through this experience.

1 Corinthians 8

Food Offered to Idols

⁸ Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.² Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge,³ but anyone who loves God is known by him.

⁴ Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists” and that “there is no God but one.”⁵ Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

⁷ It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ “Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat and no better off if we do. ⁹ But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So by your knowledge the weak brother or sister for whom Christ died is destroyed. ¹² But when you thus sin against brothers and sisters and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never again eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Mark 1:21-28

The Man with an Unclean Spirit

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. ²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴ and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

L W U O F Y R U E K L N B T Q
 A U T H O R I T Y O T R I D U
 O I W C D M P E J C R R N K I
 L F J W G G E E C E I D E X E
 N U A M A Z E D O P S I E F T
 S A B B A T H X S P R U Y R N
 N E V A Z Y K Y R H L S S O S
 Q Y Y K H Z X L S Q S E I V V
 S G A L I L E E H K S G I P Y
 P S Y N A G O G U E E P E O Z
 R V P O K N E W S R K Y R D H
 E I H B Q L I O O O L T D C G
 A G O E H K A H O I S L A L W
 D G L Y I Y D H V E N E R P H
 W K Y N P X S E D Q T A R B D

REGION	SPREAD	JESUS	PEOPLE	NEWS
SHRIEK	SYNAGOGUE	SHOOK	DESTROY	AMAZED
QUIET	HOLY	GALILEE	ORDERS	SABBATH
AUTHORITY	OBEY	EVIL	TEACH	SPIRIT

Therefore welcome one another as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. – Romans 15:7



Focus scripture: Mark 1:21-28

Jesus is revealed as one who has absolute authority over the physical realm and the spiritual realm. What this authority is, and how it is enacted, consume the rest of the Gospel of Mark. One scholar writes, "... Jesus and his newly called disciples enter Capernaum. On the Sabbath Jesus enters the synagogue and begins teaching. The people who heard him teach were astonished, "for he taught them as one having authority (Greek word - exousia), and not as the scribes."

The scholar continues, "'exousia' is the "sovereign freedom" of one who acts without hindrance. Jesus' teaching in sovereign freedom is contrasted with the teaching of the scribes. The difference is that the scribes' teaching authority depends on their knowledge of and adherence to tradition—especially the traditional interpretation of the Torah. However, Jesus teaches with an independent authority—or rather, on the authority of God (cf. 11:28-33). Whereas the scribes are bound to tradition, Jesus is relatively free—free in the way that only one who lives directly from and to God's authority is free."

In the next section (Mark 1:23-28), the focus on Jesus' authority continues. One scholar notes, 'We have here a typical exorcism story... Apparently, Jesus' powerful exorcism is a confirmation of his teaching authority. What Jesus teaches is new (kaine)—unlike the scribes who teach the "same old stuff"—and his (divine) authority to teach is attested by his deeds of power."

A different scholar offers some reflections on how Jesus used this authority. "Yet Jesus did not use his incomparable authority the way we humans tend to use our little sprigs of authority... For many humans, authority becomes merely a means of enriching oneself, of getting one's own way, of suppressing the truth, and of getting and holding the power to keep doing those things. Witness the parade of totalitarian regimes, corporate executive, government and ecclesiastical scandals, tyrannical parents, bosses, teachers, government officials and the like."

To put it simply, even though all authority in heaven and earth resided in Jesus, he chose to enact his authority through serving and sacrifice.

What does this authority of Jesus mean to you? How do we (the church - the body of Christ) enact (live out) this authority today? When do we get it right? When do we get it wrong?

How can the group pray for you this week?

Musical Reflection: *Authority – Elevation Worship*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sX1xXzAO0E>



Psalm 111

Praise for God's Wonderful Works

- ¹ Praise the Lord!
I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
- ² Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.
- ³ Full of honor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.
- ⁴ He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.
- ⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.
- ⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.
- ⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.
- ⁸ They are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and
uprightness.
- ⁹ He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is his name.
- ¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good
understanding.
His praise endures forever.



BLAST Kids Club is learning about the Fruit of the Spirit.
This week we are exploring Peace.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Therefore welcome one another as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. – Romans 15:7