



# Small Group Ministry

Winter 2024 – Week 7

*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. Happy Family Day! What does being a part of a Church Family mean to you?

### 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.

Mark 1:9-15

### The Baptism of Jesus

<sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. <sup>11</sup>And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

### The Testing of Jesus

<sup>12</sup>And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup>He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.

### The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

<sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God <sup>15</sup>and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

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

|               |              |           |          |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| God           | Trinity      | Jerusalem | Blessed  |
| Soul          | Servant      | Messiah   | Death    |
| Life          | Resurrection | Teaching  | Identity |
| New Testament | Apostle      | Peter     | Paul     |
| Gospel        | Follower     | Jesus     | Disciple |

1 Peter 3:18-22

<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight lives, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup>And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

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

Prayer for Guidance and for Deliverance  
Of David.

- <sup>1</sup>To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.  
<sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.  
<sup>3</sup>Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.  
<sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O Lord;  
teach me your paths.  
<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.  
<sup>6</sup>Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.  
<sup>7</sup>Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!  
<sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the Lord;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
<sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right  
and teaches the humble his way.  
<sup>10</sup>All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.  
<sup>11</sup>For your name's sake, O Lord,  
pardon my guilt, for it is great.  
<sup>12</sup>Who are they who fear the Lord?  
He will teach them the way that they should choose.  
<sup>13</sup>They will abide in prosperity,  
and their children shall possess the land.  
<sup>14</sup>The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him,  
and he makes his covenant known to them.  
<sup>15</sup>My eyes are ever toward the Lord,  
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.  
<sup>16</sup>Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
for I am lonely and afflicted.  
<sup>17</sup>Relieve the troubles of my heart,  
and bring me out of my distress.  
<sup>18</sup>Consider my affliction and my trouble,  
and forgive all my sins.  
<sup>19</sup>Consider how many are my foes  
and with what violent hatred they hate me.  
<sup>20</sup>O guard my life and deliver me;  
do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.  
<sup>21</sup>May integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
for I wait for you.  
<sup>22</sup>Redeem Israel, O God,  
out of all its troubles.

### Focus Scripture: Mark 1:9-15

As always, the season of Lent begins with the story of the testing/temptation of Jesus out in the wilderness. As chapter 1 describes, 'immediately' after his baptism, Jesus is "propelled" out into the desert by the Holy Spirit (very strong grammar variously translated as 'driven', 'sent', 'compelled', etc.). It is interesting to note that the Holy Spirit 'descended like a dove' upon him during his baptism in verse 10 (the grammar hints at a gentle presence---one that note only 'lands' on Jesus, but 'enters into' him as well). In verse 12 this same Spirit that was so gently introduced, 'propels' him out into the desert (signifying a more violent and sudden send off out into the wild---the sense of the urgency of Jesus' mission is strongly evident).

As we might expect from the Gospel of Mark, the wilderness testing is a brief description but one that leaves you breathless with its driving sense of urgency. One scholar highlights, "the Gospel of Mark spends only two verses on an event that takes 11 verses in Matthew and 13 verses in Luke. The narrative sweep, like so much of Mark, is swift, and the details are sparse. But what details are (or are not) there are significant. Mark initiates the action with urgency, the baptismal Spirit driving Jesus "immediately" into the wilderness. Mark does not care at all to mention the three specific temptations from Satan."

The scholar continues, "What is significant here is that Mark's Jesus has crossed a border between what is tame and what is wild, between "civilized" society and the wilderness... Jesus will continue to cross such borders—commanding demons, touching lepers, speaking and listening to the Syrophenician woman—throughout his ministry, culminating in the tragic drama of the cross, where Jesus crosses the ultimate cosmic and human border of death. Even there he won't stand still for very long."

Jesus completed his mission (death and resurrection). But then proceeded (via the angel in the empty tomb) to re-call his followers back to Galilee and to the work at hand, and that work of the church is not yet finished (the work of the church, according to one author, means following the way of Jesus by "rejecting violence, pride, and selfishness, and pouring out your life for others in acts of service and love").

**In our busy and distracted culture, 'urgency' and 'busyness' are two very different things. How does this sense of urgency (a focussed and intentional and rapid movement toward the cross and resurrection) which is found in the gospel of Mark affect your faith? When we are distracted by other matters, how can this urgency propel us to consider more deeply the role and purpose of following Jesus Christ today? How might the sense of urgency awaken us from complacency of faith and help us to confess our complicity with the brokenness of this world? The goal of this confession is not so that we live in guilt, but quite the opposite, to see ever more clearly the redeeming and freeing love lived toward humanity by God through Jesus Christ, the Redeemer who keeps redeeming.**

**How can the group pray for you this week?**

**Musical Reflection: Even If – Mercy Me**

*In contrast to last week, this song reflects on our hope in God in times of trouble.*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6fA35Ved-Y&list=RDB6fA35Ved-Y&start\\_radio=1&rv=XCpbeVFgs4E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6fA35Ved-Y&list=RDB6fA35Ved-Y&start_radio=1&rv=XCpbeVFgs4E)

