

Question For You

"Why Are You So Afraid?"

Week 3 – September 25, 2022

Scripture: Matthew 8:18-27

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Is there something that gives you the heebie-jeebies? Maybe it's spiders or millipedes, or the sound of a balloon popping. Share with the group!

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Jesus asks his disciples why they are afraid. Their fears paralyze them from the opportunities found in their faith and community. Jesus often talked about people being afraid and reframes their thoughts around truth instead of fear. We notice that when we allow fear to drive us, we isolate or distance ourselves from one another instead of leaning upon one another in difficulty. Jesus rebukes the difficulty and invites his disciples to embrace their season ahead with greater trust, faith, and less fear.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Fear is real. This message is not: "Do not fear because fear isn't real", or "if you have enough faith, you won't fear", or "if you trust in Jesus, fear won't arise". Instead we ask the question "how do we navigate fear when fear arises?"
 - a. Jesus' disciples were committed to following him, but when disaster hit they were fearful (Matthew 8:18-27). How can you relate to this?
 - b. Has there ever been a time when you thought you were ready for a tough situation only to find yourself fearful when it hit? Share your experience.
 - c. Have you ever run to God in desperation only to have him respond in a way you did not expect? Share this experience too.
2. Jesus sees the same storm we see, but he shifts the focus. Instead of focusing on the storm he moves beyond the situation. What could change if we focused on the bigger story, instead of just the current storm?
3. Our fears are tied to things lurking in the shadows...lack of control, missing love, pain from baggage carried, for example. Jesus wants to cut the "strings" connecting our storms to our fears. It is not "faith over fear", but rather *faith in Christ amidst the fears of this world*. Discuss how we can build deeper faith in Christ by focusing on his love and community:
 - a. Letting love rule our lives is important because "perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love" (1 John 4:18). Jesus fights for us with love.
 - b. Community who encourage and support us are vital because "if one person falls, the other can reach out and help" (Ecclesiastes 4:10). We are communal beings who need each other every day, especially when fear comes.

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that he invites us to build our faith in him amidst the fears of this world. Thank God that he loves us and gives us a better way to navigate fear. Ask him to help us release our fears and expectations.

Question For You

“Do You Want to Get Well?”

Week 2 – September 18, 2022

Scripture: John 5:1-15

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Can you think of a time you got frustrated about something that was in your control but didn't do what was needed to change the situation? Share your story.

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Jesus meets a man who was sick for 38 years and asked him if he wanted to be healed. Jesus asked, “Do you want to get well?” The man immediately shared with Jesus why he was not healed. The man thought he was answering Jesus' question, but he missed the question. Jesus wasn't asking *why* he wasn't healed but *if* he wanted to be healed. Often we can find ourselves searching for healing and being left dissatisfied, yet Jesus is calling us to experience his healing, hopes, dreams and peace. This is the tension- are we just waiting for the healing that we know or are we willing to embrace a healing that we may not know but truly need?

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Sometimes we can get stuck in a cycle of dissatisfaction and suppress emotions, decisions, fears, failures, hopes, and avoid what is actually needed. What does Jesus offer to us in these moments?
2. The pool of Bethesda was well known in ancient Israel; it was a cultural place of healing and people gathered there out of desperation and longing. The man did not see Jesus as a potential healer because his mind was stuck on the healing powers of the water. How do we do the same? Sometimes we think in terms of “if-then”. For example: If I go on a vacation, then I will be rested. Where in our lives do we come up with the answers for the “way it should go”?
3. Consider where you could experience the healing power of Jesus in your life. Who in your life can walk with you? Who can talk with you? There is power in community. Spend some time thinking about how your community can help you experience God's healing power, or if you do not have this kind of community, what will you do to find it? Share what God places on your heart about your community.

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that he is our healer. Ask him to be our solution for loneliness and relationships, loss and frustrations, anxieties about the future. Jesus sees each of us and knows our exact hurts and needs. Praise God that he meets us in our present pain and offers us a new potential.

Question For You

"Who Do You Say I Am?"

Week 1 – September 11, 2022

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-19

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: What words might others use to describe you that you might or might not use to describe yourself?

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Throughout Jesus ministry, he asked people many questions about what they believed, what they longed for, and how they saw the world. It was Jesus who would ask most of the questions of others, and there were a small handful of questions he would answer. Over three weeks we will look at three questions Jesus asked.

"Who do you say I am?" This question is one of the most important questions we can wrestle with in this life. Jesus asks this question while at Caesarea Philippi. This was a place of pleasure-seeking debauchery, yet Jesus uses this place to reveal he is the Messiah.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. The true identity of Jesus was debated during his public ministry here on earth. Jesus is the Christ. He can't be the Christ. Read and discuss some of the doubt or controversy found in the gospel accounts.
 - a. John 7:40-43
 - b. Matthew 13:55-57
 - c. John 10:19-21
2. Jesus himself posed the question to his disciples, his closest followers and friends who had respond three years earlier to his invitation, "follow me". The conversation between Jesus and his disciples recorded in Matthew 16:13-19 could be a conversation between us and God today. How have you wrestled with the question "Who do you say I am"? Why is this important for each of us to contemplate this question?
3. Peter came to the conclusion that Jesus was the Christ, not on his own, but because of the work God did in his heart over the three years of following Jesus. Peter's part was to come to Jesus, to listen, to observe, to be taught. And in the process, God pursued Peter and drew him closer, so that the eyes of Peter were opened and he could see that Jesus was indeed God incarnate.
 - a. It is nobody's job to convince you that Jesus is God. You are invited to "come and see" (John 1:46). How have you considered what "come and see" means?
 - b. How can we be a loving community where people can explore faith in a safe and supportive environment?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that he is our Messiah, the Son of the living God. Ask him to pursue us; we desire to draw close, to listen, to observe, to be taught. Mediate on the question "Who do you say I am?" and pray for clarity.