

# Bring It

## “Bring to Him Your Doubt”

### Week 4 – November 12, 2023

#### Scripture: Matthew 11:1-15

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

**Share:** Can you think of a time in your life that was painful, but as a result you experienced growth or a healthy outcome? Share your experience.

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

#### Discuss the following context:

One powerful moment of doubt, born out of disappointment, happened with John the Baptist. He was the cousin of Jesus, first to be made aware of who Jesus was, and the one who baptized Jesus. Designated to be the forerunner announcing Jesus' coming, John would seem like the least likely person to struggle with doubt, and yet, near the end of his life John would question whether he had misplaced his faith in Jesus as Messiah and Lord. That would seem like a destructive level of doubt, one that would ruin the relationship. Yet when John brought that doubt directly to Jesus, he wasn't met with criticism or excommunication, but encouragement, along with a reminder that the evidence speaks for itself. John's doubts were welcomed, the truth of Jesus was made clear, and John was invited to grow in trust even through the pain of disappointment and confusion.

#### Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. “God will never give you more than you can handle” is a commonly quoted phrase – in sermons, books, Christian songs, and people even say it to each other when going through hard times. It is not biblical and could lead some people to walk away from their faith in Jesus because it is built on a false understanding. Discuss your experience with this statement and how it could be hurtful or helpful. If we believe this statement, what happens when God gives us more than we can handle?
2. Doubt is often viewed as a villain, but faith with no doubt allows no room for God to move beyond what we understand, what we expect, or what we can create ourselves.
  - a. Have you ever felt a level of doubt that was so strong it made you rethink everything you were previously convinced of?
  - b. How could doubt actually help us in our spiritual journeys?
3. Jesus' response to John the Baptist (**Matthew 11:4-6**) is important for us to understand, because His answer contrasts what many of us have been taught about the nature of God. Jesus' response tells us that an easy, and happy life isn't His desire for us, and He will in fact give us more that we can handle, and doubt will set in.
  - a. *Doubt teaches us to depend on God's presence.* Has God ever invited you back into relationship with Him through difficulties in your life? How?
  - b. *Doubt teaches us to depend on God's strength.* How could it be freeing to find peace in personal limitations instead of trying to be stronger and more self-sufficient?

**Pray together:** Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He calls us to have confidence in Him, and not in whether our circumstances will change. Thank Him that Jesus can be our rock, even if our situation never becomes what we ask or long for. Jesus welcomes our doubts and invites us to grow among the pain, disappointment, and confusion we experience – ask Him to meet you there.

# Bring It

## “Bring to Him Your Curiosity”

### Week 3 – November 5, 2023

#### Scripture: Luke 11:1-13

*Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!*

**Share:** Have you ever wanted to have a relationship with someone who did not want the same type of relationship you were looking for? Share your experience.

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

#### **Discuss the following context:**

There is a relationship to be had with God that is unlike anything we experience on earth. Jesus modeled what that relationship looks like. One of the many lessons we learn from His life is how important prayer is. Talking with God was a priority in Jesus' life.

While Jesus was on earth, He frequently slipped away from not only the crowds, but also the disciples to spend time in prayer with the Father (**Luke 5:16**). There was something about the way Jesus prayed that made His followers want to learn to pray like Him (**Luke 11:1**). His prayer life was magnetic because it demonstrated what relationship with the Father was like. Jesus' use of the term “Father” which was significant. Jews in that day would not use the term Father because it was considered too intimate. This phraseology is very important as Jesus is not only teaching about prayer, but the type of relationship God wants with us. One where we can come to Him with anything in our life. A relationship where we can approach Him with boldness and confidence that we are heard, we are seen, and we are loved. Our Father loves us and wants to give us good gifts (**Luke 11:13**) and the way we find this kind of life and relationship only happens through prayer.

#### **Share your thoughts about the following questions:**

1. Prior to Jesus, prayer was viewed as very formulaic with elaborate and drawn-out statements asking God for divine help. Jesus threw a wrench into that thinking. He did not care if you had a big vocabulary, or prayed long prayers to let others know how wonderful your prayer life was. Prayer was not to be a show. What is your experience with prayer? Do you now, or have you ever, regarded prayer as so complicated that it puts God out of reach for you?
2. The most meaningful relationships are built on genuine intimacy, which develops gradually over time. Similarly, our connection with God deepens through regular moments spent with Him—moments where we share our everything. God designed prayer as a way for us to cultivate this intimacy with Him. Prayer, at its core, is about fostering a profound connection with God. What is one thing you can do this week to connect with the Father in prayer?
3. What if prayer is a means through which God guides us to tap into His presence inside of us, shaping our lives in profound ways? Imagine the transformative impact on our lives. Discuss how gaining access to the wisdom of God could enrich our understanding of what happens in our lives.

**Pray together:** Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that prayer is an invitation to sit with Him, be in His presence, and become more aware of who He is. Ask Him to help you develop your prayer life: If we desire to pray in deeper better ways, we must be willing to engage God in prayer, and only when we do that will we grow.

# Bring It

## “Bring to Him Your Pain”

### Week 2 – October 29, 2023

#### Scripture: Luke 8:40-48

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

**Share:** Everyone has a pain story. Perhaps it was a sports injury, a terrible trip to the dentist, or falling off a bike – 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:

Pain happens. It demands our attention, but it attracts God's compassion, and ultimately compels us to seek relief. Relief that can only be found in Jesus. We see this so clearly in a story in the gospel of Luke simply known as the bleeding woman. This woman tried everything and approached Jesus with desperate faith. When she was healed her faith paved the way for others to experience healing too. Jesus invites us to come to Him and bring our pain. **Matthew 11:28-30** says, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

#### Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. **Luke 8:40-48** tells the account of a woman whose pain had become her whole life. Who do you know that lives in daily pain? Perhaps it is physical, financial, cultural, or relational pain. Have they attended to their pain? If yes, how?
2. Pain demands our attention and attracts God's compassion. If you break your leg, you don't keep walking. If you break a relationship, the resulting pain implores you to repair it. *“Pain insists on being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world”* – C.S. Lewis
  - a. How does God move toward human pain? Consider how Jesus is “moved with compassion” when He encounters human suffering throughout the Gospels.
  - b. How does God himself understand pain?
3. Pain must go somewhere. Discuss other places people take their pain instead of taking it to God – the places that are merely Band-Aid's and do not heal us. (Addiction, compulsive purchases, codependent relationship, alcohol, poor eating, Netflix, etc.)
4. The bleeding woman did more than reach out in desperation to be healed. She believed, maybe even before most people, that Jesus was the Messiah. This woman risked much to reach out and touch this famous Rabbi from Nazareth. If He were merely a man, her touch would have made Him ceremoniously unclean, and she could have been stoned to death for her infraction. This is probably why Jesus made a big deal about her touching Him. He wanted EVERYONE to know that she had done this and that He did not become unclean – she became clean (healed). What is today's “risk” in touching Jesus? What could be a first step towards bringing Him our pain right now?

**Pray together:** Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God He is a God of compassion. Thank God we are invited to bring Him our pain. If we are weary, bring it. If we are addicted, bring it. If we are embarrassed, just bring it. Praise God that we can find healing and rest in Him.

# Bring It

## “Bring to Him Your Small Things”

### Week 1 – October 22, 2023

#### Scripture: Luke 18:15-17; Luke 4:18-21

*Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!*

**Share:** Good news makes us feel happy and hopeful. Share about the last good news you received – it could be that your Amazon order was delivered, your flight is on time, or a baby was born, etc.

**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 invites us to come to Him and bring Him our everything – nothing and no one is off limits. This good news invites us to experience the transformation of Jesus in our lives. To come to Him, just as we are, with no fear, no restrictions or no hinderance. We can come to Him and bring Him the seemingly small and insignificant things, our pain, curiosity, our doubts. Bringing to Him what we sometimes push aside or overlook as inconvenient matters to Jesus. And when we do come to Him, He reveals His heart and character to us, we get to know Him better, and we experience transformation in our lives. And transformation compels us to tell others about the good news of the God who loves them.

#### **Share your thoughts about the following questions:**

1. In Jesus' day, young children held the lowest status in society, they were seen as insignificant and inconvenient. Read **Luke 18:15-17**. How does Jesus respond? What is revealed about what Jesus values?
2. When it comes to our lives, we sometimes assume the small things don't matter to Jesus because we think there are a lot more important things for Him to care about. Instead of bringing Jesus our small things, we push them aside or cover them up feeling embarrassed or ashamed. Where have you seen this in your own life?
3. Read **Luke 4:18-21**. Jesus came as the fulfillment of this scripture. He never pushes aside or overlooks someone because of their status, label, or whether or not culture deems them as important. Jesus invites everyone to come to Him, to experience restoration, new life, and transformation.
  - a. When we bring Jesus our small things, we experience His love in our lives. When we experience His love, we become more like Him, and reflect His love in our lives. What one step can we take towards this?
  - b. What could it look like to love those who are marginalized and oppressed? Read **1 John 3:17, Proverbs 31:8-9, Isaiah 1:17** and discuss.
  - c. What barriers in our lives prevent us from caring for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the marginalized people around us?

**Pray together:** Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God His heart is for those who our culture says are insignificant and unimportant. Thank God they matter to Him and ask Him to help you care and love for them like He does. Praise God that He invites us to come to Him with everything – nothing and no one is off limits – because the good news of Jesus is for everyone.