

So Now What? Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What's one big decision you have made over the past few years?
2. If your ordered food at a restaurant and it did not come out how you like, would you send it back or would you just eat it anyway?

Read the following passages: Acts 1:1-9; Luke 4:16-21.

After was raised from the dead, there was an obvious question: "So now what?" The disciples assumed that Jesus was going to establish his kingdom and that they would immediately start reigning with him. That's why they asked the question, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" But Jesus had a different plan. The kingdom of God was not just about establishing God's reign; it was also about rescuing people from every nation. And that's the mission that Jesus gave to his disciples: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

So how do we prepare for this mission? According to Luke, Jesus continued to teach his disciples about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God was not a new topic for Jewish people in the first century, but it was critical for Jesus's disciples to share Jesus's perspective on the kingdom. And if we are going to be ready for the mission, there are some key realities about the kingdom we need to embrace as well. 1) Love is the most fundamental ethic. 2) Our battle is not with flesh and blood. 3) The kingdom of God has a king. 4) Every person has to make a choice.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Read Genesis 1:26-28. How do you see the big theme of the kingdom of God emerging in these verses?
2. According to Luke 4:16-21, how does Jesus understand his mission? What does that mean in our current context?
3. How might recognizing that, in one way or another, everyone around us needs healing impact how we interact with others?
4. Read 1 Peter 4:10. What does it mean to be steward's of God's grace?
5. How should the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) affect how we engage the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)?

6. Read Matthew 5:38-42. How does Jesus's teaching here connect to the mission he has given to us?
7. Consider the following commitments concerning our interactions with people who are treating us as their enemies. Do these commitments describe how you are interacting with others? Explain.
 - I'm not going to pursue revenge.
 - I'm not going to slander you.
 - I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt.
 - I'm going to look for common ground.
 - I'm going to pray for you.
 - I'm going to forgive you for the ways you have wronged me.
 - In the middle of a conflict, I'm going to look out for your interests.
 - I'm going to look for some way to be a blessing to you, even if you have no interest in blessing me.
 - I'm going to treat you how I would want you to treat me.
8. What would you say to someone who says, "I believe in a Higher Power, I'm just not into Jesus"? Explain how the categories of deity, death, and resurrection are important for recognizing the significance of Jesus.
9. Have you made a personal and public decision to follow Jesus? If so, when did that happen and what led you to that decision?
10. What does it look like for you to be part of Jesus's rescue mission in this season of your life?

Pray