

SMALL GROUP GUIDES - 2024

MARCH 24TH – DO JUSTICE

SUMMARY

Phil is continuing his series on the Mission of Jesus, answering the question: what did Jesus come to do? How are we supposed to continue that mission in the world today?

SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLE STUDY

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

- The physician and Christian missionary named Luke wrote a two-part series. The first part is a biography of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The second part is the story of the apostles, how they continued their Master's mission.

READ ACTS 6:1-7 AND DISCUSS THESE PROMPTS:

- Luke tells us that "the number of disciples was increasing." When the church grows numerically, what challenges face church leaders?
- Luke tells us about Hellenistic Jews and Hebraic Jews. "Hellenized" means to be influenced by the Greek culture, language, and customs. "Hebraic" means to prioritize Jewish culture. What problems might exist between these two groups?
- Luke tells us that the Jewish widows of Hebraic influence were "overlooked." Why might they have been overlooked? What do you think that means?
- There is a "daily distribution of food" to the widows. How could that be possible in such an early stage of the church? (See Acts 5 for the explanation.)
- The Twelve apostles take charge, gather, and delegate responsibility. Why is it so important for us to have leaders who can respond to new issues?
- The Twelve prioritize "prayer and ministry of God's word" for themselves. Do they think they are "above" service? Why or why not? What's their point?
- The apostles require that these seven men be "full of the Spirit and wisdom." Why is it important that they have *spiritual requirements*, not just logistical skills?
- What Bible stories do you remember that involve *delegation* of important tasks?
- Nicolas from Antioch is a convert or "proselyte," meaning he was a Gentile, became a Jew, and now follows Jesus. Why might he be good for this role?
- Delegation led to the spread of the word of God and *Jewish priests* become followers of Jesus. What does this fact teach us about the apostles' choice?
- The entire story came from a problem of justice. What does this story teach us about the church today?
- What groups of people are being "overlooked" in the church today?

Prayer

SERMON-BASED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Phil preached on Christ's sermon in his hometown in Nazareth. Jesus quoted Isaiah and said the passage was "fulfilled in their hearing today." Why is it such a big deal that Jesus claimed to fulfill the Old Testament?
- He was sent to "proclaim good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recover sight for the blind, set the oppressed free, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." In what ways do we see Jesus fulfill those promises?
- Do you interpret these promises in a spiritual way, a physical way, or both? What evidence do you have to see these as spiritual promises? What evidence in the Gospels show us that Jesus fulfilled these promises in a physical way?
- After the sermon, the Galilean Jews do not react positively when Jesus says that the Gentiles will be included in His mission. Why did the Jews have understandable frustration with the Gentiles that built up over centuries?
- If you and your people were oppressed by the Romans and Jesus told you to do justice to the Romans, how might you react?
- Last week, Phil said we cannot fully follow Jesus without opposing the devil and his work. This week, Phil said we cannot fully follow Jesus without opposing injustice. Why is it a shame when Christians ignore victims of injustice?
- One of the most important stories in the Old Testament is the Exodus. What does that story tell us about justice?
- The Lord passes by Moses and describes His own character in Exodus 34:5-7. What does that revelation tell us about God's concern for justice?
- The Jewish prophets brought God's messages against Israel for their failure to do justice. God wanted them to "set the oppressed free," "share food with the hungry," and "provide the poor wanderer with shelter." In what ways do we see the Church already proactively doing these acts of justice?
- The Old Testament reveals a God who is concerned for the "stranger," "widow," and "orphan." Why does the Lord keep pointing out these groups?
- Many Christians can feel overwhelmed by the injustice of the world and become paralyzed. How do we resist this passivity and become more proactive?
- Do Christians have the power to rid the world of all injustice? If not, what's the point of trying to fight for justice?
- The prophet Jonah once complained that God was "gracious" with Nineveh, implying that He was not just and should have punished them. Why do we want God's grace for ourselves and God's justice for our enemies?
- The Jews in his hometown are so mad that they try to kill Jesus. The last verse of the story tells us that he "walked right through the crowd." Have you ever considered this miracle? What is its meaning? What does the crowd's anger tell us about ourselves?

CHALLENGE FOR DISCIPLESHIP:

- Pray and ask God for *one matter of justice* to which you want to contribute.