

LIFEGROUP STUDY
FOLLOW ME: THERE IS GRACE IN THE CALL
FEB. 28, 2021

LEADER NOTES

OVERVIEW

Welcome back to our LifeGroup study, Follow Me. Over the six-weeks leading up to Easter, we're looking at the invitation Jesus gives us – "Follow Me". On Sunday, Pete explored with us the account of Jesus calling Matthew, the tax collector. Through that teaching we discovered there is *grace* in the call. Jesus doesn't call the "healthy" or "righteous" but the "sick" and the "sinner". Like last week's story of Bartimaeus, we are blind and we need to see. For our LifeGroup study, we're going to dig into Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed. This parable gives us another important reminder that to follow Jesus, we need His grace to help us see. What obstacles might be getting in your way of following Jesus? Why is repenting so important when we respond to Him? These are some of the questions we'll look at as we move into today's study, "There is grace in the call."

ICEBREAKER Plant it and it Will Grow – I Hope!

When I was a teen, a friend and I decided we'd make money by renting a garden plot, planting potatoes and then selling the potatoes for a nifty profit. Easy, right? 😊 This introduction to vegetable gardening taught me a few things. Planting the seed doesn't mean you're going to have an amazing harvest. It takes a lot of hard work and perseverance along the way! Share a memory with your group about planting a garden when you were younger. What did you learn? Do you love gardening today or would you rather pick up your veggies wrapped and ready to go in the store? Share a gardening adventure (or misadventure) with your group!

STUDY

1. On Sunday, Pete pointed out that in order to follow Jesus, we must see ourselves in need of God's grace, a person who is "sick" and a "sinner". **What do you think of this idea?**

LEADER NOTE: This idea comes from the response Jesus gives in Luke 5 to the Pharisees and teachers of the law who were critical of His association with "tax collectors and sinners." "Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'" (Luke 5:31). To respond to Jesus' invitation, Follow Me, we must see ourselves in need of His grace. We are the "sick" in need of a doctor. We are the "sinners" who need to repent.

2. Jesus' invitation, Follow Me, includes a call to "repent". **What does it mean to repent? What has repentance looked like in your life?**

LEADER NOTE: On Sunday, Pete taught that repentance is a change in your thinking that leads to a change in your behavior. You were going the wrong direction in life and Jesus graciously invited you to turn around. You were going on a path that leads to death, and Jesus says, “Hey, follow me, and you’ll find life!” Some of your group members may have a dramatic and clear story of repentance. Others may have a difficult time identifying a time in their life they have repented. Sharing your stories with one another can help your group members see how repenting has been part of the way God’s grace has shown up in their life.

READ: Matthew 13:1-23 **The Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed**

3. Jesus’ disciples ask him why he uses parables when he teaches. **How does Jesus respond?** (see vs. 11-12)

LEADER NOTE: In the context in which Jesus was teaching, there were some in the crowd who believed in Him and others who refused to believe. When asked by the disciples why he taught in parables, Jesus responded that some are permitted to understand the secrets (mysteries) of the Kingdom of God and others are not. Those who believed in Jesus understood the parables. For those who did not believe, the parables only intensified their refusal to repent.

4. In his response to the disciples’ question, Jesus quotes part of Isaiah 6 (Matthew 13:13-15) and then some insights in verses 16-17 on the importance of “seeing”. **In these verses, how often does Jesus use the word “see”? What does “seeing” have to do with responding to Jesus’ call to follow?**

LEADER NOTE: In verses 13-17, Jesus uses the word “see” or “seeing” 8 times. “Seeing” is essential to responding to Jesus’ call. We must have our spiritual eyes opened in order to respond to Jesus’ call to follow. This is all about God’s grace, opening our eyes to see.

5. In verse 19, Jesus talks about “the message about the Kingdom.” **Why is the Kingdom central to Jesus’ teaching?**

LEADER NOTE: The central theme of Jesus’ teaching was the Kingdom of God. This term “the Kingdom” is used over 80 times in the New Testament, mainly by Jesus. It is about Jesus being King (Lord) in our lives. The message of the Kingdom goes out and people respond in various ways as represented by the soils Jesus describes. Jesus wanted his hearers to understand about this Kingdom that represented His rule in their lives. Responding to God’s Kingdom includes repenting from being lord of my life and asking Jesus to be my Life Leader and Sin Forgiver.

6. In verse 22, Jesus talks about some obstacles that can get in the way of our response to Jesus. **What obstacles does he describe? What might it look like to repent of these today?**

LEADER NOTE: In verse 22, Jesus talks about the worries of this life and the lure of wealth as obstacles that can choke out our faith. The worries of this life are things outside of God’s Kingdom priorities. To

“worry” is to devote the majority of our energy and attention to temporary things. The lure of wealth is about focusing our energy and attention on amassing wealth for our use, rather than investing in the Kingdom. The worries of this life and the lure of wealth are huge issues in our culture. They can impact our lives in ways we may not be aware of. Challenge your group members to think about how these two areas may be impacting their lives. Repenting is a turning away from one area and turning toward something new. In this case, repenting may involve choosing to stop pursuing an ambition that is not growing our faith in God and refocusing our energy on following Him.

7. To “see” and “hear” about the Kingdom, we need God’s grace. We need his grace to open our eyes and ears and to soften our hearts. **How would you explain God’s grace to someone who is caught up trying to behave their way to God?**

LEADER NOTE: God’s grace is the undeserved favour He has shown us in Jesus. There is nothing we can do to earn a right relationship with God. No religious inheritance or practice, no good behaviour and altruistic life can bring us peace with God. All of us are sinners in need God’s grace, given to us in His Son, Jesus. To experience God’s grace, we must repent of our efforts to earn right standing with God. Rather than refusing to respond to His voice, we must humble ourselves and allow Him to open our eyes to see.

8. **What has been a key takeaway for you from today’s study about what it means to Follow Jesus?**

NEXT STEPS

For our series, Follow Me, we invite you to take next steps to grow your walk with God by spending time with Him. Here are 3 ways you can do that.

- 1) Watch the Daily Devos from Creekside. <https://vimeo.com/showcase/devotionals>
- 2) Use S.O.A.P. – a method of spending time with God – explained in the Daily Devos.
- 3) Engage with others from Creekside about your experience
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3459966190810762>

PRAYER:

Creekside supports several career missionaries who serve in various parts of the world. Let's pray for them this week:

- Hannah Miller serves with Power to Change Digital Strategies, leading the Farsi online mentoring team. Pray for God's wisdom, guidance and strength for everyone involved with the ministry, and for more prayer and financial partners.
- Pray for Creekside Missionary families, the Niemeijers and the Cymbaluks. Currently both are here in Canada awaiting necessary visa paperwork in order to return to their fields of service. Pray for provision for their time here, and for the journeys ahead.