

Week 3: Fear God. Do Not Fear Man.

Week of May 3, 2020

Takeaway: The Lord gives us confidence, provides safe refuge, and is the fountain of life.

Opening Question: What is your biggest fear?

Opening Thought: Fear has a negative connotation, but it is not always a bad thing. Fear can be a healthy response to an unhealthy situation. But what does it look like to fear God? Is that healthy or unhealthy? In this passage, Jesus outlines three reasons why disciples of Jesus should not be afraid of humans but have a healthy fear of God. First, he says that the truth will prevail over the false teachings that were being spewed by opponents (Matt. 10:26). Opposition will come to the believer, but we need not be scared, because the truth of Jesus will win out. Second, Jesus says that the only one to fear is God. Man can bring physical harm, but it's harm in the spiritual sense that should cause us to fear God. When we proclaim the name of Jesus, then we can live in confidence that God is with us. If we deny Jesus, God will deny us, and the punishment is much worse than anything humans can do to us. Third, Jesus assures us that God cares about the tiniest details, so we can be sure that he cares about our lives. This week, we're going to explore what it means to have a healthy fear of God.

Text: *Read Matthew 10:26-33* What stood out to you in the passage?

Questions:

1. Read Proverbs 9:10 and 29:25. What do these verses tell us about fear? How is fear of God the beginning of wisdom?



2. What causes a fear of people? How does that affect your day-to-day life? What can you do to combat that fear?

3. How has God been a source of comfort when you have been afraid?

4. In Jesus' time, the sparrow was one of the smallest creatures and the penny, the smallest unit of currency. Despite their value, nothing happens to them outside the will of God. What assurances does this give to you? How have you seen God work in the little things?

5. Read Proverbs 14:26-27. How does this further your understanding of fearing God?





Application Question: John 1:4-5 says: “In him (Jesus) was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” How can you shine the light of Jesus through your life into the darkness this week?



Week 4: The Second Mile

Week of May 10, 2020

Takeaway: Serving others by going above and beyond is exactly what Jesus modeled for us

Opening Question: Who in your life has been a model of a humble servant?

Opening Thought: We have all found ourselves in situations where we have been wronged and want revenge for the pain or discomfort that was inflicted upon us. Our sinful state of mind would have us exact the same amount of pain back upon the one who hurt us, however, we are not good arbiters of judgement. Jesus tells his followers that when they are wronged, they should not look to revenge as a source of judgement, but to serving and going the extra mile as a demonstration of grace. This week, we're going to take a look at how Jesus calls us to go the second mile and the fruit that comes from that.

Text: *Read Matthew 5:38-42; 44* What stood out to you from the passage?

Questions:

1. Why can't people be trusted to carry out fair judgement?

2. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "do not resist the one who is evil" (v. 39)?
What are the implications of this statement?





3. How is revenge a poor representation of the gospel?

4. Read Proverbs 20:22 and Romans 12:19-21. How do these passages expand on what Jesus teaches?

5. How did Jesus model the idea of “going the second mile” on the cross?



Application Question: Who can you go the second mile for this week?



Week 5: Deny Yourself

Week of May 17, 2020

Takeaway: Denying yourself leads to a more fulfilling life in God

Opening Question: Do you think self-centeredness is celebrated in today's culture? Why or why not?

Opening Thought: Culture tells us to look out for ourselves, to help ourselves, and that we should really come first before anyone or anything else. There's even a whole industry (self-help) that caters to looking out for number one. That is not the Kingdom mindset however and it is not what Jesus calls us to. When we become Christians, we are effectively dying to our old sense of self, one that was trapped in sin. When Jesus comes into our lives, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and it is God living in and through us, not ourselves. When we give control of our lives over to God, he works in incredible ways, far more wondrous than we could ever think or imagine. It is quite difficult though to break free from our old patterns of living. This week, we're going to look at what Jesus says about denying ourselves and turning to him.

Text: *Read Luke 9:23-27* What stood out to you from the passage?

Questions:

1. What does it look like today to "carry your cross"?



2. How have you tried to save your life in this world? What does it look like to lose it for Christ?
(V. 24)

3. How is gaining the whole world a bad investment for your soul?

4. What does it mean to be ashamed of something? How have you experienced that? Have you ever experienced that of God?



5. How does this passage challenge you in your walk with Jesus?

Application Questions: What does it look like to “deny yourself” this week?



Week 6: Bring In The Poor

Week of May 24, 2020

Takeaway: Jesus calls us to serve those who cannot repay our kindness

Opening Question: What does generosity mean to you?

Opening Thought: Serving is one of the hallmarks of following Jesus. We are called to be generous with our service to others and to Jesus, but we want to be sure we are serving in all aspects that Jesus calls us to. Jesus came to serve everyone, regardless of social status or ethnicity or gender. We must be sure to follow suit in our walk with him and aim to serve everyone, not just those of whom it is convenient for us. Service and convenience do not typically go hand-in-hand. Serving requires sacrifice and an expectation that we will not be repaid. After all, that's the kind of service Jesus modeled for us on the cross. This week, we're going to take a look at what Jesus has to say about serving without expectation of repayment and the nature of generosity.

Text: *Read Luke 14:7-14* What stood out to you from the passage?

Questions:

1. Jesus' preferred method of teaching was through parables, or stories that illustrated the teaching. What lessons do you gather from this parable?





2. How are repayment and serving on opposite ends of the spectrum?

3. Biblical scholar Darrell Bock writes, “the best hospitality is that which is given, not exchanged.” How have you seen that at work in your life?

4. Read Ephesians 4:32-5:2. How does this expand your understanding of what Jesus is teaching here?



5. From this parable, how does Jesus view generosity?

Application Questions: How can you step out of your comfort zone to serve someone this week?

