

PILGRIM HOME GROUPS

The smaller groups in our church community are inside our homes where we go deeper, build friendships, and walk out the Christian life with each other.

HOME CHURCH/SMALL GROUP/CLASS GUIDE

- + “Breaking the Ice” question (group facilitator)
- + **CHECK-INS:** Introduce yourself if new/new people in group, check-in with each other. What’s been happening in your week(s) since we last met?
- + **CARE:** Needs in the group; name these needs and have sentence prayers (just short sentences/open ended, not long-winded) at end of the gathering time
- + **COMPASSION:** What compassion work is the group planning? Are you inviting your neighbors to join in?
- + **GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS** (church-wide and group-only)
- + **DIG IN:** Any reflections, discernments, disagreements from last week’s teaching (or since you last met)? Look at the Bible passage(s) again and read some of them out loud in the group (and other verses that may have been mentioned). What jumps out at you? Discuss some of the questions as a group.
- + End and Homework: Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you spent any time in wilderness areas? What was it like? How long did you stay? With friends or family or alone? Other experiences?
2. What do you think drew people into the wilderness to hear John? What does the text tell us?
3. What would draw you into an intentional time of seeking God’s guidance and voice? What is your comfortable place that keeps you numbed and distracted from deeper reflection and tuning your mind to the Spirit’s voice through the Scripture and prayer? What are action steps you can take in the new year or now to enter the wilderness state?
4. Read through the passage as a group pause and reflect at the breaks supplied in the notes side. This can be most of your discussion.
5. In smaller group wrestle with naming attitudes and actions you need to say outloud (confess) and repent of, change direction with. You may find this difficult if it’s new to you. But press on the NT tells us we have power to receive and give forgiveness which is the start of changing behaviours.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

December 16, 2018

PILGRIM CHURCH ADVENT INTO THE WILD

LUKE 3.1-6 (7-20), ISAIAH 40.1-11

OPENING: John the Baptist

THE WILDERNESS STATE

God is always preparing the way for people to respond to Jesus. The wilderness is a state we must enter into with the Holy Spirit to prepare to receive or share Jesus.

Through the Bible Passage

Preparatory Ministry of John (3:1-20) Garland

- i. Introduction of John as a Prophet (1-6)
 - a. Political context (1-2)
 - b. Preaching of a repentance immersion (3)
 - c. Fulfillment of Scripture (4-6)
- ii. Example of John’s Preaching (7-17)
 - a. Bear fruits worthy of repentance to avoid coming judgment (7-9)
 - b. Nature of those fruits (10-14)
 1. The crowds, “What should we do then?” (10-11)
 2. Tax Collectors, “What should we do?” (12-13)
 3. Soldiers, “What should we do?” (14)
 - c. Question about the coming Christ, who will immerse in Holy Spirit and Fire (15-17)
- iii. Summary (18)
- iv. John’s imprisonment by Herod (19-20)

1-6

TAKE OUTS:

Enter the wild led by the Spirit, prepare, and then expect to be challenged to change. Call others into the wilderness state to experience Jesus and learn to live differently.

7-9

+ Spirit works to pave the way for Jesus. John is led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always preparing the way for people to respond to Jesus. The wilderness is a state we must enter into to prepare to receive or share Jesus.

10-14

+ Christianity is not a mystery or allegorical religion. It is fixed in real human history. Luke gives us verifiable and falsifiable details. Learn to ask better questions than those who want to deny Jesus was a historical person.

15

+ Political rulers - Four are involved in Jesus' death. They have power, but it's finite and not the real power. They are influenced by spiritual forces of wickedness and God's wisdom works through them, too. 1 John 5:19. Political power corrupts those who hold it in many if not most cases. The more concentrated power (political, economic, and/or spiritual power) are often guilty of pride against God and of injustice against the poor and the weak.

16-18

+ Repentance precedes new life and spiritual power.
- Sometimes we need to hear it straight with negative emotion.
- Learn to turn, a life of repentance, decisions become habits, habits become character, character becomes our being.

19-20