

Apostles Houston
Life Group Study: Matthew 28:16-20

Love and Laughter

Creating a Sacred Space

Welcome→ Embrace→ Refresh

Remembering Our Purpose

Why Do We Do Life Groups? *(feel free to communicate this in your own words)*

In Acts 2, we read how early Christ followers devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. In Life Groups we follow their example with the hope of becoming more like Jesus, the goal of our salvation.

Being Known

Story Telling

We believe that loving God and others begins by being known.

In 5-7 minutes, what do you want us to know about yourself (~5Hs)?

Pray and Celebrate

Be sure to honor whatever is good or beautiful about their story, and ask one or two people to pray over those who just shared.

Following Up

Responding to God's Word

Last week, we were encouraged to discern God's call to leave something behind in order to follow Him more fully. What did God ask you to leave behind? Have you taken steps to do so?

Hearing the Word

Hearing: (Read "Context" and then Matthew 28:16-20. Then pray for God's grace to understand.)

- Before we dive in, what are some big themes that stand out to you as significant in this passage? Or from the sermon this past weekend?
- Look at v 17 again, and notice that upon seeing him alive, Jesus' disciples worshiped him. It's from this context of worship that they are then told to go out and make disciples (i.e. given a mission.) What is the relationship between worship and mission? What's at risk if we seek to make disciples apart from worship? Have you ever experienced that?
- In vv 19-20, Jesus tells us to make disciples and spells out what that means: baptizing and teaching them to obey his teaching. Why are both important? What is the relationship between baptism and obedience (i.e., following Jesus)? How has your baptism enabled you to obey God in ways beyond your natural ability? How can we as a LG encourage one another to follow Jesus more fully?
- The directive to the disciples also applies to us. We are also called to make disciples of all people. If someone asked you to disciple them, how would you respond? Would you feel qualified? Why or why not? Taking into account the discussion from the previous questions, where would you start? What steps would you take?

Obeying (application):

- Take some time this week and worship Jesus. As you do, reflect on your answer to the previous question. *If you don't feel qualified* to disciple someone, ask God to help you identify why and what you can do to change that. Then, take the first step. *If you do feel qualified*, ask God who He is calling you to disciple. Remember, Jesus is already working in their lives, so just ask the Spirit how you can partner with him in that person's discipleship journey. (Ex: share your testimony with them, invite them to worship, or urge them to go deeper in their obedience.)

Soul Care

Prayer Requests

Spend time in prayer of gratitude and supplication as a group, confident of Jesus' presence.

Announcements

- Next Week: Ash Wednesday!

Teacher's Notes

Context

Our passage from today is the ending of Matthew's Gospel. It comes on the heels of Jesus' resurrection and appearance to Mary Magdalene and the "other" Mary earlier in the chapter. In Matthew's narration, it is Jesus' male disciples' first encounter with him since his death. As we read, notice how they respond to seeing Jesus. As you listen to Jesus' words to them, consider his words as addressed not only to his First Century followers but also as words meant for us today.

Specific Insights

- Though they are not the same thing, worship and mission always go together. As we worship God, we become more like God: we become people marked by self-giving love. As people marked by such love, we are compelled to give to the world what we have freely received in Christ. **In other words, worship always leads to mission.** The danger of seeking to mission apart from worship, is that we risk making disciples in our image, and not the image of God (i.e., Christ). We must be conformed to his image—by worship—if our efforts in mission are to bring Him glory.
- Baptizing those who would follow Christ is important because that is how we become members of the body of Christ (i.e., part of God's family), and how God empowers us by the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything Christ has taught is important because, on the one hand, that is how we please God: through trust and obedience. On the other, it is also how we reflect God's creative and redemptive love to the world around us. Our obedience to God/Christ is an obedience to love. The relationship between the two is that one makes possible the other: baptism makes possible obedience. Since, as Paul argues in Romans 6, before we were baptized into Christ, we were slaves to sin. But not that we have been buried with him in baptism (and empowered by the Spirit), we walk in newness of life (free to obey and to love).
- As discussed, discipleship means baptism and teaching to people to obey Jesus, in the context of worship. So, when God calls you to disciple someone, the best place to start would be by bringing them to worship, encouraging them to be baptized, and inviting them to study God's Word in community (e.g., Life Group).

