

Sent. This word defines those who are following Jesus. We are sent by Jesus to share his message of love. This is one of the most basic components of our calling. Jesus reveals this in Matthew 28:18–20, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”*

Never has there been a greater need to share Jesus’ message of love. The good news concerning Jesus’ life, death and resurrection is the solution to people’s biggest issues and concerns. It is the one thing that can bring lasting freedom and change. And yet, never has there been so much apprehension about sharing Jesus with other people.

Some of this apprehension makes sense. After all, talking openly about Jesus is a step of faith, and taking a step of faith makes us uncomfortable. If it didn’t, it wouldn’t be faith. But here’s the thing: *Isn’t the message of Jesus’ love important enough for us to withstand a little discomfort? Isn’t the reward of seeing people find freedom and change worth the risk?*

The good news is there are antidotes to most of our apprehensions and fears. There are things we can learn to help us talk more freely and confidently about Jesus. There are answers to questions like: *How do I discuss Jesus with friends? How can I overcome my fears and insecurities? How do I find boldness and compassion to share Jesus’ love? What is the essential message I am sent to share?*

This next series at Faith is about finding antidotes to our apprehensions about evangelism. In this series we are going to look at the example of Jesus and his early followers because they teach us how to overcome fear and communicate the message of Jesus with compassion and clarity.

The end goal of this series is that you embrace your calling to be sent by Jesus. At Faith, we are passionate about every single Christian finding their place in Jesus’ plan to rescue and redeem this world. And the good news is you have a place in that plan. Jesus has sent you to share his love with other people.

As we go through this series, remember: sharing Jesus with others is a matter of love. If you love Jesus, you will want others to love him. So evangelism isn’t the imposition of a religious point of view, but rather the overflow of love. So keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Remain in his love and you will bear much fruit. In many ways being sent is that easy.

Every Blessing,
Pastor Charlie for the Preaching Team

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INTRODUCTION TO SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

No one is born into this world with a theology. So each generation must rediscover the truths of Scripture for itself.

Preaching the Bible is one of the primary tools God has given the church for this to take place.

Small groups are the place where the preaching at Faith is applied and where our church is encouraged to live out God's word. Members of Faith's small groups take time each week to discuss the previous Sunday's sermon, share specific insights from the Bible, and care for one another so that, as a church, we grow up to maturity in Jesus.

This study guide has been put together to give you an overview of our current sermon series so that you know where we are going and so that you are prepared for great discussions in your small group.

Here is an overview of what you will find for each week in this study guide:

Main Passage – This is the passage the teaching pastor will preach from.

Secondary Passages – These passages help to unpack and explain the main passage.

Passage for Memorization and Meditation – This is one passage to memorize and meditate on throughout the week so that at all times you are giving Jesus an opportunity to work in your life.

Overview – This is an overview of what will be discussed in small group this week.

Opening Question – This is a general question meant to spark conversation.

Discussion Questions – These are questions related to the Bible passages.

Application Questions – These are questions and ideas for applying the Bible to your life.

Table Time With Kids – These are questions and ideas for families with young kids.

These materials are not meant to be a rigid formula for your small group, but rather a means for intentional study, discussion and life application so that ultimately, as a church, we grow together to maturity in Jesus.

We hope you find this helpful.

What is a small group?

Small groups at Faith are small gatherings of people from Faith that meet regularly for friendship, prayer and Bible study.

Each small group is unique because it is shaped by the people who attend. However, at the heart of each small group is a desire to see a tight-knit community form that is marked by a growing love for Jesus and for the other people in the small group.

Why should I join a small group?

We are made for friendship with God and others. When we are not known and loved by others, we suffer because we are not experiencing all that God created us to experience. Additionally, life is too difficult to journey alone. Therefore, small groups are a place where we can connect in friendship with other people through the ups and downs of life.

How do I get connected to a small group?

The easiest way to get connected to a small group is to go to www.faithchurchfortcollins.org/smallgroups. You can also sign up on Sunday by filling out a Connect card. Finally, if you would like to join a small group, you can call the church at 970-226-2095.

Title: All Authority

Main Passage: Matthew 28:16-20

Secondary Passages: 2 Corinthians 5:20-21; John 15:1-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Matthew 28:18

Overview: Who has the authority to call the shots in your life? Who gets to tell you where to go and what to do with your life? That's a pretty basic but important question to answer.

The culture you grew up in and your stage of life impacts how you answer that question. If you are a child, you might say your parents have authority. If you grew up in a communist country, you might see the government as having authority. If you grew up in a democracy, you might believe the individual person has the authority to choose what is best. If you grew up in a tribal culture, you might see your family as having authority.

Christians believe Jesus has all authority. This includes authority over our individual lives. There is no bargaining here. By definition Christians do not belong to themselves.¹ They belong to Jesus, and their only option is to do his will.

Jesus never exercises his authority over our lives in a way that is manipulative. He never forces himself upon us in a way that takes away our dignity. He does not shame or bully people into action. In fact, we find Jesus asking people permission and inviting them to surrender to him. Jesus asked the paralytic, "*Do you want to be made well?*"² Jesus asked Peter, "*Who do you say that I am?*" and "*Do you also wish to go away?*"³ This reveals that Jesus always exercises his authority in a way that preserves our freedom. So he will not force us to make disciples. Instead he invites us to surrender to his authority, so that we find our life in him.⁴

Understanding and embracing Jesus' authority is foundational to effective evangelism. For the Christian, there is no room in the heart for an attitude that says, "I love Jesus, but I don't want that relationship to be known." We are not saved for ourselves. We are saved to be in relationship with Jesus, and things inevitably happen when we surrender to his authority and rest in his love.⁵

Opening Question

- What three words best describe how you feel about evangelism as you start this series?

1 1 Corinthians 6:19

2 John 5:6

3 Matthew 16:15 and John 6:67

4 Matthew 16:24-26

5 John 15:5

Discussion Questions

- Read Matthew 28:16-20. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- What mission does Jesus give to his disciples in this passage?
- Why do you think Jesus emphasized his authority when he called his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations?
- How might Jesus' words disrupt the disciples' plans for their lives?
- What things keep Christians from making disciples?
- Read John 15:1-17. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- What does Jesus say about bearing fruit in John 15:1-17?
- Staying connected to Jesus is absolutely necessary to bear fruit. How can we stay connected to Jesus?

Application Questions

- How do you respond to the idea that Jesus has authority over your life?
- What fruit have you seen in your life as you have been abiding in Jesus?
- What is one thing from the study this week that you will apply to your attitude to evangelism?

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud Matthew 28:16-20. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Who has all authority in this world? *Jesus*
- What does Jesus ask his disciples to do? *Jesus asks his disciples to go into the world to help people know and follow him.*
- ***Parents, this week help your kids understand that Jesus has authority over their lives and he wants to use them to help other people know and follow him. As a family come up with a few people who do not know Jesus. As you go through this series commit to praying for those people.***

Title: The Heart Of The Gospel

Main Passage: Ephesians 2:1-10

Secondary Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God ...

Ephesians 2:8

Overview: The message we share in evangelism is the good news of how God took upon himself our sin and shame so we might be saved through faith in Jesus. This message is the most liberating news to ever grace this planet. When the first Christians heard it, they were overcome with a sense of wonder and excitement. They wanted everyone to hear it, and they risked their lives to share it.

Often we struggle to share the message of Jesus because we have lost sight of how good it is. So this week we are going to dive deep into the message we share so that our hearts again see God's amazing goodness and grace.

Opening Question

- Apart from the gospel, what is some of the best news you have ever received? How did it make you feel?

Discussion Questions

- Read Ephesians 2:1–10. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- What does Ephesians 2:1–10 reveal about God?
- How does Paul describe life before we are saved by grace through faith?
- How does Paul describe life after we are saved by grace through faith?
- According to Ephesians 2:1–10, what is the message we share?

Application Questions

- Who first shared the gospel of God's grace with you?
- What was your life like before salvation?
- How is God changing your life?
- What emotions do you feel when you hear Ephesians 2:1–10?
- Personally, why is Ephesians 2:1–10 good news?

- If you were asked to explain the gospel briefly, would you be able to do it? What aspects of the message are most important to communicate?

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud Ephesians 2:1-10. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- What was life like before salvation? *Before God saved us, we were dead in our sins.*
- Why did God save us? *Because he is full of mercy and love*
- Can we save ourselves? *No. Salvation is a gift from God.*
- What do we have to do to be saved? *We believe in Jesus.*
- What happens when we believe in Jesus? *God forgives our sins and empowers us to love and live like Jesus.*

Title: The Heart Of A Christian

Main Passage: Acts 17:16-34

Secondary Passages: Luke 15:1-2, 11-32

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Mark 2:17

Overview: What do you feel about unbelievers who have messy lives? How do you treat people who reject your beliefs? How would you respond if a family member was living in sin? Would you reach out with compassion and care, or would you respond with a judgmental spirit?

This week we are going to explore God's heart for sinners. Without a doubt, God's heart is for sinners. He longs for them to return to him. He goes out of his way to seek and to save them. The prayer this week is that God works to make our hearts more like his.

Opening Question

- Think of a time you lost something valuable. How did you feel? Was it ever found? If so, describe your feelings.

Discussion Questions

- Read Acts 17:16-34. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- How would you describe Paul's heart for sinners in this passage?
- How does Paul show respect for sinners in this passage?
- How does Paul show a commitment to truth in this passage?
- What impact does Paul have in Athens?
- Look at Luke 15:1-2, 11-32. Why does Jesus tell this parable?
- Name everything that the father does in Luke 11-32.
- From Luke 15, how would you describe God's heart for sinners?

Application Questions

- Jesus taught that sinners are precious to God, and he is so loving in nature that he longs for them to be redeemed. The Father wants the lost son to become a member of the family again, and he wants this to happen immediately. Additionally, he is so thrilled by the son's return that he throws a massive party. How does this view

of God's heart towards sinners square with your heart towards sinners?

- Why do you think the older son was cold to his younger brother? What was wrong with his understanding of his father's heart?
- To whom are you tempted to be cold and hardhearted?
- Why is a judgmental and critical spirit so detrimental to evangelism?
- How can you show respect and compassion for sinners?
- Is there an unbeliever in your life whom you struggle to love?

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud Luke 15:1-2, 11-32. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Why does Jesus tell the story of the prodigal son? *Because people are upset that he is eating with sinners.*
- The father in the story of the prodigal son represents God. So what do you learn about God's heart toward sinners from the story? *God loves sinners and wants them to come back to him.*
- What does God do when sinners come back to him? *He celebrates.*

Title: Realistic Expectations

Main Passage: Mark 4:1-25

Secondary Passages: 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

Overview: It would be great if every time we shared the gospel we got to see the miracle of conversion, but this isn't a realistic expectation. Sometimes the same truth that softens one heart hardens another. In other words, our efforts to share the message of Jesus will result in a variety of responses.

Here is something else to keep in mind. We don't have any control over how someone responds to the message of Jesus. God is the one who is responsible for the miracle of conversion. He gives the growth. He softens the heart.

So what is our job? Our job is to share the message of Jesus with the people around us, and our job is to leave the results to God. We can fail to leave the results to God in two ways. One way is to force people to trust in Jesus. The other is to not share Jesus at all because we don't think it will do any good. So this week is all about having realistic expectations when it comes to evangelism.

Opening Question

- Talk about a time when you had an unrealistic expectation. How did that unrealistic expectation impact you?

Discussion Questions

- Read Mark 4:1-25. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Describe the different types of responses to the gospel found in this passage.
- What keeps the first three kinds of people from responding more fully to the gospel?
- According to verse 25, what happens to our spiritual discernment each time we respond positively or negatively to God's word?
- Look at 1 Corinthians 3:5-9. According to this passage who brings spiritual growth?
- How are you encouraged knowing it is God's job to bring spiritual growth?

Application Questions

- When have you been discouraged by poor response to your efforts in evangelism?

- Have you ever seen someone respond to Jesus and then fall away? How did it make you feel?
- Spiritual growth is often described in the Bible in terms of crops growing. What does this reveal about the nature of conversion?
- How do the passages that you read this week affect your expectations in sharing the gospel?
- From this parable we learn that the condition of the soil matters. What are ways you can improve the condition of the soil for those who don't know Jesus?
- What happens in your life when you don't have realistic expectations about evangelism?
- What happens in your life when you forget that it is God's job to bring spiritual growth?

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud Mark 4:1-25. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Will everyone respond positively when you share Jesus with them? *No. Some people will be hardhearted and indifferent.*
- Who brings spiritual growth? *God is the one who brings spiritual growth.*
- How does knowing that God brings spiritual growth make you feel?

Title: Talking With Strangers

Main Passage: Acts 8:26–40

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. And he rose and went.

Acts 8:26

Overview: There are strangers all around us. They are at our workplace, in our classrooms, at the mall, in our neighborhood, at the coffee shop and on the hiking trail. And here is the amazing thing: *God is working in their lives and he wants to use us to continue that work.*

Some people are really good at talking to strangers about Jesus. But most of us have some room to grow here, so this week is all about sharing Jesus with people we don’t know. This week we will learn a simple tool to use in sharing Jesus with other people. If you need a refresher of this tool there is an overview at www.lifeonmissionbook.com/conversation-guide.

Opening Question

- When you meet a stranger, how do you typically feel?

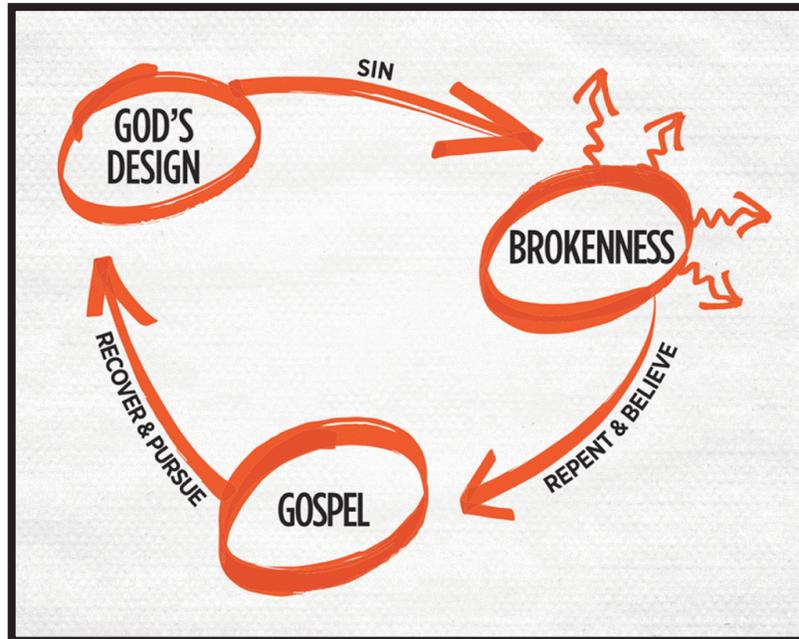
Discussion Questions

- Read Acts 8:26-40. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Was Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian an accident? What does this reveal about our encounters with strangers?
- Was God working in the Ethiopian before Philip arrived? What does this reveal about God’s work in the lives of people we don’t know?
- How would you describe Philip’s evangelism strategy?
- Most of us do not receive the kind of direct guidance described in verses 26 and 29. How might the Holy Spirit indicate to you that you should share Jesus with a stranger?
- What did Philip know about the Ethiopian? How did he gain this information?
- Why do you think making observations and asking spiritual questions is important in evangelism?

Application Questions

- How do you personally feel about sharing Jesus with strangers?

- What keeps you from listening carefully to other people?
- What helps you remember that God is orchestrating your encounters with strangers?
- What did you think about the three circles example from Sunday?
- As a small group practice going through the three circles. If you need a refresher, head over to www.vimeo.com/158982114.



As a small group, spend some time in prayer tonight asking God to give you a sense of courage, wisdom, and urgency to share the message of Jesus with the people around you.

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud Acts 8:26–40. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Did Philip know the Ethiopian before he shared the message of Jesus? *No. The Ethiopian man was a stranger.*
- Is God working in the people around you? *Yes. He is working in this world to draw people to Jesus.*
- How does God want us to respond to the work he is doing in people's lives? *He wants us to be involved.*
- ***Parents, this week help your children share Jesus' love with a stranger. For them this could mean taking some bread to a neighbor or helping a family in need. Help them to see this week that God is working in people they don't know.***

Title: Talking With Friends And Family

Main Passage: John 1:35-51

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

John 1:45-46

Overview: Sadly some Christians think, "I can't share Jesus with my friends and family. If I do, it will ruin the relationship." Nothing could be further from the truth. Sharing Jesus with the people closest to us doesn't ruin relationships. It strengthens them. It allows us to be known by the people who love us.

Also, sharing Jesus with our friends and family doesn't need to be strange. We simply share what we have discovered, and we invite them to come and see. If they are interested, great. If not, they are still our friends and family.

Opening Question

- What are some reasons we may find it difficult to share Jesus with the people who know us best?

Discussion Questions

- Read John 1:35–51. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Based on this passage, how did the gospel go forward?
- Look at verses 40–46. How would you describe Andrew and Philip's attitude about Jesus?
- What was Andrew and Philip's strategy for sharing Jesus with other people? Where did they learn this strategy?
- Look at verses 46–51. How does Jesus interact with Nathanael? What does this teach you about interacting with family and friends who are skeptical about Jesus?
- The people in this passage embraced Jesus as God's promised Messiah, but it took them longer to embrace him as God. Jesus gives them many months before Peter says, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"¹ Why is it important to give friends and family time to make a decision for Jesus?
- Evangelism helped the relationships in John 1:35–51. What does this teach you about sharing Jesus with the people closest to you?

Application Questions

- Did any close friend or family member introduce you to Jesus?

1 Matthew 16:13-20

- What keeps you from sharing Jesus with friends or family?
- How can you help your unbelieving friends and family members to “come and see” Jesus?
- In this passage we see that effective evangelism happens when Jesus is shared with excitement. If we have taken the gospel for granted, how can we recover the excitement and wonder of it?
- Think about your present sphere of influence, including where you live, where you work, where you go to school, the people in your family, your friends and your relatives. How do you think God wants you to impact the lives of these people with the message of Jesus?

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud John 1:35-51. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Based on this passage, how did the gospel go forward? *People encountered Jesus and then told their family and friends about Jesus.*
- ***Parents, this week brainstorm with your kids some fun ways that your family can reach out to their friends. Maybe put together a play date and invite their friend’s parents over as well. Ask the Holy Spirit to help your family share the love of Jesus with other people.***

Title: Singing Through Trials

Main Passage: Acts 16:16-40

Secondary Passages: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Philippians 4:5-9, 1 Peter 3:14-15

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

1 Peter 3:14-15

Overview: Tough times are huge opportunities for evangelism because when everything is stripped away, the source of our hope shines out the brighter. This doesn't mean that we should seek trials or hardship, but it does mean that when we experience them we have a unique opportunity to reveal to others that our trust is in the Lord.

When Paul and Silas were in prison they could have given in to despondency and despair. They could have shaken their fists at the Lord and said, "God, you are so unfair." But they didn't. Instead they sang glad songs of praise to their God, and God used their joy to bring others to salvation. God wants to do the same through us, so this week is all about learning to sing through trials.

Opening Question

- What are various ways people respond to trials and hardship?

Discussion Questions

- Read Acts 16:16–40. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- According to this passage, what was Paul and Silas' strategy for evangelism?
- How is Paul and Silas' confidence in the Lord revealed in this passage?
- What are other ways Paul and Silas could have responded to their imprisonment?
- What was the impact of Paul and Silas' trusting in the Lord?
- Look at 2 Corinthians 1:3–4. What does this passage reveal about what God is doing through difficult times?

Application Questions

- What trials have you experienced in your life?
- How have you seen those trials create opportunities to share Jesus with others?

- In what ways have you seen God comfort you? What opportunities does this create for you to comfort or serve other people?

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud Acts 16:16–40. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- What does God want us to do when we face hard times? *He wants us to trust him.*
- What happens when we trust God in hard times? *Other people see our trust in God.*
- ***Parents, this week help your kids identify a difficulty in their lives. Help them process what it looks like to trust God in the midst of this trial.***

Title: The Providence Of Your Position

Main Passage: Acts 17:26-27 and Luke 5:27-32

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.”

Acts 17:26-27

Overview: Rest assured you are where you are because you are meant to be there. God never gets the address wrong. This means you are God’s appointed strategy to reach the people around you, and at the end of human history you will give an account to Jesus of what you did with this great opportunity.

So a huge question is how do we impact the people around us with the gospel? According to Luke 5:27–32, hospitality is a huge part of the strategy. After encountering Jesus, Levi threw a huge party so that his friends, co-workers and neighbors could meet Jesus too.

Rosaria Butterfield writes this about the evangelistic power of hospitality:

Radically ordinary hospitality—those who live it see strangers as neighbors and neighbors as family of God. They recoil at reducing a person to a category or a label. They see God’s image reflected in the eyes of every human being on earth. They know they are like meth addicts and sex-trade workers. They take their own sin seriously—including the sin of selfishness and pride. They take God’s holiness and goodness seriously. They use the Bible as a lifeline, with no exceptions.

Those who live out radically ordinary hospitality see their homes not as theirs at all but as God’s gift to use for the furtherance of his kingdom. They open doors; they seek out the underprivileged. They know that the gospel comes with a house key.¹

This week is all about discovering the evangelistic power of hospitality.

Opening Question

- What comes to mind when you hear the word *hospitality*?

Discussion Questions

- Read Acts 17:26-27. What does this passage reveal about your place in this world?
- Read Luke 5:27–32. What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What was Levi’s strategy for evangelism?

1 *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*, by Rosaria Butterfield

- What was the impact of Levi's strategy?
- Why is a dinner party a great way to introduce people to Jesus?

Application Questions

- Our culture faces a crisis in loneliness. What might this mean for you as you think about sharing Jesus with other people?
- What are important elements to hospitality?
- In her book on hospitality, Rosaria Butterfield writes the following:

Imagine a world where every Christian practiced radically ordinary hospitality. Imagine a world where every Christian lived intentionally below our means so that we had enough to share. Imagine a world where we moved into neighborhoods that needed us. Imagine a world where neighbors said that Christians throw the best parties in town and are the go-to people for big problems and issues, without being invited. Imagine a world where every Christian knew his neighbors sufficiently to be of earthly and spiritual good. Imagine a world where you know the names of your neighbors, and you play cards with them and eat meals together, praying for the children in the neighborhood and lending a helping hand before you are asked. Imagine a world where no one languishes in crushing loneliness, where no abused woman or man or child suffers alone, where people take their real and pressing problems to Christians who have the reputation of being helpers, and where victims are not swept away, lost, or forgotten. Imagine a world where the power of the gospel to change lives is ours to behold. This is the world that the Bible imagines for us. This is the world that Jesus prays for us to create in his name.²

- After reading that quote, what inspires you about hospitality?
- What would it look like for you to open up your house to people who do not know Jesus?

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud Luke 5:27-32. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- **As a family, put together a fun way to engage your neighbors this week.**

2 *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*, by Rosaria Butterfield

Title: Facing Our Fear

Main Passage: Joshua 1:1-9

Secondary Passages: Romans 1:14-17 and Colossians 4:2-6

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:16

Overview: Perhaps the biggest thing that keeps us from sharing the message of Jesus is fear. We fear what people will think of us. We fear we won't know what to say. We fear we might be misunderstood or mistreated.

Fear is never far from those who are following Jesus. After all, we are called into a relationship with a person who is set on saving the world. So sometimes our marching orders push us outside our comfort zone and only make sense in the context of following a living God.

Because of this, every time I'm afraid, I like to reflect on the passage in the Bible where Joshua is tasked with leading God's people. At that time God's people numbered over a million, and sometimes they were pleasant, but at other times they were hard to manage. Additionally, Joshua wasn't leading God's people into a time of peace; he was leading them into a season of struggle. So the task in front of Joshua was nothing short of scary.

It was at this time that God spoke these words to Joshua: *Be strong and very courageous.*

These words called Joshua to be brave. To say yes to God's plans. To live his life aware of God's presence and power. To lean in to the story unfolding before him.

God's words to us are the same. You see, God wants us to stand on the edge of what he is calling us to. He wants us to jump into the story of salvation that is unfolding before us. So he says, *"Be brave! Be very courageous! I am with you!"*

Opening Question

- Talk about something that makes you afraid.

Discussion Questions

- Read Joshua 1:1-9. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- In what ways could fear have kept Joshua from embracing the task God had given to him?
- What qualities did God say Joshua needed in order to obey God's call on his life?

- How were these qualities cultivated?
- Look at Romans 1:14–17 and Colossians 4:2–6. How did Paul cultivate courage?

Application Questions

- What fears might take hold of us when we share our faith?
- Based on Joshua 1:1–9 , Romans 1:14–17 and Colossians 4:2–6, what can you do when you are afraid?
- Have you ever said no to sharing your faith because you were afraid? What was that experience like?
- Have you ever overcome your fears and followed God in faith and obedience? If so, what was that experience like?
- Close your small group by confessing your fears and areas of unbelief and praying that the Lord would give you courage and clarity as you share the message of Jesus with other people.

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family, read aloud Joshua 1:1-9. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Is following God sometimes scary? *Yes. We don't always know where he will lead us.*
- What helps us to be brave? *Remembering God's word to us.*
- ***Parents, this week pray that your children will grow up to be brave men and women who listen to God and follow where he leads.***

