

Study Guide

Sermon Series: Greater is He Who is in You Than...

Scripture Passage: Mark 14:32-36

March 15th, 2020

Review

This was the first week in what will be—for the time being—the new norm. It was such an encouragement to see so many of you connected through Facebook Live! I particularly loved how we were still able to pass the peace of Christ, and respond to the “This is the Word of the Lord...Thanks be to God.” Though this week was a departure from our Matthew series, the theme carries forward. Jesus Christ who is in you is greater than Corona and greater than economic insecurity. But Jesus is also not detached and disconnected from our physical world with the worries, struggles, and vulnerabilities we face.

Introduction

Knowing that his fate was to go through the cross, Jesus invites a few disciples to come away with him and pray. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus experiences agony, the agony of crying out to God. Jesus was worried, pleading with God: “if there be another way, Father.” But the answer returned not how he prayed. Sometimes God answers our prayers with “yes;” and sometimes that answer is “no;” and sometimes that answer is silence. How do we respond when we don’t get the answer we’re looking for?

Read: Mark 14:32-36; Psalm 90

Discussion Questions

1. Think about a time when you prayed for something but didn’t get the answer you were hoping for. In hindsight, can you see ways that God was at work in that situation that were not known to you then, but are known to you now?
2. Jesus is both fully God and fully human, how does this passage—one in which he is pouring his heart out in prayer (literally sweating blood)—provide comfort and encouragement to us in difficult times?
3. The discipline of trusting God and growing in faith when we don’t get the answer we hope for can be the most deepening of experiences. As we learned on Sunday there are myriad reasons why the answer to us may be “no.” For your own growth, for someone else’s growth, or for the greater good of all. How can that experience help lead us through this period of great uncertainty? Begin to think about opportunities you might have to transform what seems like a hopeless situation into one that brings new life to those around you.
4. God’s “no” to Jesus was ultimately his “yes” to the world in the forgiveness of our sin through the cross of Calvary. This paradox of the gospel being bad news before it is good news is at the heart of our Christian identity (we can only know the depth of God’s work of salvation when we grasp the depth of our separation and sin). Spend time in prayer with God meditating on how God’s rescue comes after the point of his greatest distress (willingly, lovingly, self-inflicted).

Pray

Sovereign Lord, when our minds, our eyes, and our ears are particularly attuned to scary new threats, remind us that in you there is peace. Moment by moment, day by day draw our attention back to faith. You were in the beginning, you have guided our lives and this world thus far, when things were at their most bleak you came into the world to rescue it, in your life, your death, and your resurrection. Remind us Lord Jesus that all things hold together, and at times fall apart, by your omnipotent hand. In this time, let your justice and mercy rule our minds, our decisions, and our actions, for the sake of your kingdom. Amen.