

# AN INVITATION TO A JOURNEY



## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



### HOW DID IT GO? (10 MINUTES)

How did you encounter God this week? Did you try any of these suggestions?

- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you are struggling with forbearance and forgiveness. Ask Him to show you what is keeping you from it (Pride? Hurt? Fear? Lack of understanding? A spirit of offense?) so that you might confess, repent, and allow Him to help you grow in this area.
- Each day, pray for a right spirit and to be sensitive to His leading, so that when you are confronted with conflict, offense, or hurt, the Holy Spirit will have prepared your heart to respond well.
- Give thanks and remember God's forgiveness and unconditional love for you.
- Think of those to whom it is hard for you to show love. Pray for your own heart towards them and pray for *them*.
- Strive to exercise forbearance and grace in your interactions with others, including social media, emails, and conversations.
- Share about a time that you saw the good fruit that came from showing (or receiving) godly love in the form of forbearance and forgiveness. Share a testimony of forgiveness and forbearance that impacted your own faith.
- Any other way God stirred you to put this passage into practice?

OCTOBER 24

### SERMON TITLE:

A Church Full of Miracles

### SCRIPTURE:

Colossians 3:12-14  
John 21:15-17

### Scripture Passages

**Colossians 3:12-14** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

**John 21:15-17** When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, LORD," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

He answered, "Yes, LORD, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, *Do you love me?* He said "LORD, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

## HEAD (15-20 MINUTES)

### Read aloud the passages for this week.

1. Why do you think Jesus asks Peter three times in John 21:15-17 if Peter loves Him and then publicly commissions him three times? *Note: This encounter takes place after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Where has the number three previously played a huge role in Peter's relationship with his Lord?*
2. Jesus' commission of Peter is given three times in this passage. However, each instruction is slightly different: "Feed my lambs," "Take care of my sheep," and "Feed my sheep." What is the difference between lambs and sheep in the context of this passage? Do they require the same kind of food and the same level of care, or different levels of intervention? Is Jesus calling Peter to be an evangelist, a pastor, or a discipler of other believers?

## HEART (15-20 MINUTES)

1. The word "love" plays a prominent role in both passages. In the John passage, Peter's public reinstatement and commission hinges on one thing: his love of Jesus. In Col 3:14, love is described as the glue that "binds together" all of the other Christ-like virtues mentioned in the passage. How would you personally answer the question, "Do you truly love Jesus?" What does that mean in terms of how you live your life?
2. In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard J. Foster writes (p. 143), "At the heart of God is the desire to give and to forgive." It is in God's very nature to forgive. In Col. 3:12-14, Paul says we must "put on" this nature. How might you pray about that?
3. A popular contemporary country Christian song, "Less Like Me" by the artist Zach Williams, refrains a prayer that brings to mind the name of this sermon series:

"Lord, help me be

A little more like mercy, a little more like grace

A little more like kindness, goodness, love, and faith

A little more like patience, a little more like peace

***A little more like Jesus, a little less like me.***

Have some of these words - mercy, grace, love, patience - taken on a new or expanded meaning for you in the context of this sermon series?

## HANDS (10 MINUTES)

### Reaching Upward: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- ❑ Watch the official music video of "Less Like Me" by Zach Williams on YouTube. Pray about each of these attributes. Ask God to help you be more like Him.
- ❑ John 21:15-17 paints a word picture of God's "radical grace" and the power of forgiveness. Peter sinned terribly against the Lord on the night Jesus was arrested. Peter was surely devastated. Scholars believe (based on Luke 24:34 and 1 Cor 15:5) that after the resurrection, Jesus met privately with Peter and forgave him. Now Jesus publicly reinstates Peter to ministry. Peter must have felt that this was a miracle! Col. 3:13 calls us to extend forgiveness as Christ forgave us. Imagine a church in which this sort of miracle occurs every day. Pray that God will remove whatever restraint is holding you back from extending and seeking forgiveness

### ➤ Head

Observe the text and the author's main points.

### ➤ Heart

Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

### ➤ Hands

Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for practical ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others.

### Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- Whom can you seek out and forgive for some perceived (or real) transgression that has caused a strain in your relationship? Extend that forgiveness.
- Whom can you seek out in order to ask forgiveness for a wrong you may have inflicted? Go to that person and ask.

### Reaching Beyond

- Any other way God is stirring you to put this passage into practice?

### ▶ Neighbor

Anyone in your life—whether a friend, colleague, family member, classmate, or literal neighbor—to whom you can show God's love.

