



## SMALL GROUP LEADERS NOTES: Mission and the Story of God – week 4

This week we are going to focus on Jesus. He is the greatest missionary and our finest example to follow, as we seek to engage in missional living. After all, if it were not for Jesus, we would not be having this conversation! As you explore the gospel together, think about what surprises you the most; was it Jesus choosing of unlikely candidates to start his missionary movement? Or was it that Jesus chose the way of sacrifice and surrender rather than an army of angel to establish his kingdom?

**RECAP:** Over the last 4 weeks we have been exploring the Story of God. Spend a couple of minutes sharing what has stood out for you about who God is, what God has done, who you are and how you get to live from the story so far?

**THIS WEEK:** Read Act 4 – Redemption

### REDEMPTION (SHARE OUT THE READING OF THIS STORY):

On a quiet night in Bethlehem, the same city King David had grown up in a millennium before, a little child was born. The child's name was Jesus, a translation of Joshua into the local language. On the night this child was born, a myriad of angels came to herald, or welcome, this child into the world. These weren't pudgy, little baby angels with harps. They were mighty warrior angels, who had come to announce the arrival of the one and true King to the world. All they could say in utter worship was, "Glory to God in the highest!"

That baby grew into a man. When He was thirty years old, He began to tell people He was the King they had been waiting for. He told people, "There is good news! No more waiting, no more longing, no more hoping in false messiahs! Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand now."

Jesus began teaching people what life was going to be like under the rule of this true King, in His forever Kingdom. He not only taught people how to live in this Kingdom, but He gave them a foretaste of what the Kingdom is like:

- In His Kingdom, there is no blindness. He gave sight to the blind.
- In His Kingdom, there is no sickness. He healed the sick.
- In His Kingdom, there is no sin. He forgave sin.
- In His Kingdom, there are no marginalized. He befriended sinners.
- In His Kingdom, nature is at peace. He calmed the storm.
- In His Kingdom, there are no evil powers. He cast out demons.
- In His Kingdom, there is no death. He raised the dead.

Many people followed Jesus. They wanted to be a part of this Kingdom. They were starting to believe He was finally God's answer to their longings. Of the many people who followed Him, He selected twelve disciples He would train to carry out His mission after He left. These men dropped everything to follow Jesus on His way to the throne. They believed Jesus was going to overturn the Romans, set God's people

free, and bring in the golden age of peace. They wanted to be near. So, they followed Jesus. They loved Jesus. They learned from Jesus. They served Jesus.

But not everyone loved Jesus. To the Jewish leaders, He was a rebel, flipping their religious system upside down after they had worked hard to build it. To the Romans, He was a rebel, an insurrectionist. To make matters worse, He claimed He was God. Needless to say, not everyone loved Jesus.

After three years of proclaiming the Kingdom and setting Himself up as the promised King, the true Messiah, Jesus came into Jerusalem (the City of David) to celebrate the Passover. The Passover was the holiday when the people of Israel remembered God's great saving act of rescuing them out of Egyptian slavery centuries before. Many people welcomed Jesus into the city, believing He was the King who would do the next great saving act of rescuing them from Roman slavery.

Some of the religious leaders planned to murder Jesus. They conspired with Judas, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, in how it would happen. They turned Him over to the Romans, calling Him an insurrectionist. They demanded He, the one and true King of the earth, be beaten and killed—not just killed, but crucified. Crucifixion is one of the most torturous, humiliating, and excruciating deaths ever devised.

On a little hill outside Jerusalem, they crucified Jesus. The one and true King of the world was murdered. Hanging on a cross was the One many had been hoping, waiting, longing for. John looked on in horror. The King willingly hung on a cross and died . . . according to plan.

According to plan? Surely not! How could that be? Wasn't the plan that, as King, He would ascend to a throne and wear a crown of jewels, and every living creature would bow down before Him? The plan couldn't possibly have been Jesus hanging on a cross, wearing a crown of thorns, and having His enemies spit and curse at Him.

The one and true King was now the crucified and dead King. He had become a victim of the rebellion in the Garden of Eden just like the rest of creation. He seemed no different.

However, God was still on His mission. The cross wasn't outside of God's plan to redeem and restore His creation. It was the white-hot centre of it.

Three days later, some women went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried. He was gone! They told His disciples, who ran as fast as they could to the tomb. The disciples found it . . . empty. Soon they would learn that Jesus was indeed alive!

The crucified and dead King showed He absolutely was the one and true King. He did not succumb to the powers and effects of that original rebellion. He rose from the grave. He defeated death! He conquered the curse! He crushed Satan's head in the process!

Jesus was alive. The one and true King had decisively defeated the enemies of the Kingdom. A new day had dawned. What had been lost at Adam's rebellion in the Garden was now starting to be put right.

**RETELL THE STORY:** In a few minutes retell the story as a group, see if you can retell the events of this story in the order they happened.

**Observe:** WHO IS GOD?

**Reflect:** WHAT HAS GOD DONE?

**Discuss:** WHO ARE WE?

**Act:** HOW DO WE GET TO LIVE?

Question to stimulate discussion:

1. Why do you think the way Jesus entered the world was so important to his mission?
2. What is the gospel? If a friend asked you to explain why you believe in Jesus, what would you say?
3. If the life, death and resurrection is so central to mission how is this reality evidenced in your life and community of faith?
4. Think about your friends, family or colleagues, how can might you be able to speak the gospel into their felt needs?
5. What does it mean for Jesus to be King and why does this matter for mission?

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