

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of April 21-27, 2024

“SIGNS OF THE TIMES”

GETTING STARTED

To the facilitator: Use this section to introduce the topic. If possible, give a brief recap of the sermon.

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

How would you describe yourself in one word and why?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 24:1-14. (Keep in mind that the Olivet Discourse is also found in Mark 13 and Luke 21.)

1. The disciples were in awe at the grandeur of the temple and Jesus' response predicting its destruction. But what does Jesus say about the temple's destruction? What were the questions that the disciples asked?
2. How does this early exchange prompt you to reflect on the fleeting nature of worldly structures and the impermanence of material possessions? Can you name certain things that people tend to hold on to (that's not necessarily bad) but causes them to lose sight of what's to come in eternity? Which ones do you relate to the most?
3. Consider the signs Jesus mentioned, such as false messiahs, wars, and natural disasters. How do these resonate with current events, and what lessons can we draw from them? How does a Christian keep a balanced of these things and not go to extremes (i.e. being alarmist or apathetic)?
4. In verses 9-14, it would seem that believers would experience persecution and tribulation. How do you respond to these? What questions arise when you think about them? Would it matter whether the Christian goes through persecution and tribulation or not?
5. Read Matthew 24:32-35. What is the significance of Jesus using the analogy of the fig tree to illustrate his point about recognizing the signs of the times? How can we cultivate a mindset of watchfulness and readiness for Christ's return in our daily lives?

6. Jesus emphasizes that "heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). What does this statement reveal about the authority and reliability of Jesus' teachings? Consider how you can anchor your faith and hope in the unchanging truth of God's Word amidst the uncertainties of life.

7. What realizations did you get from the sermon?

NEXT STEPS

We cannot be prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus until we have truly embraced his First Coming.

- I will stay alert, watchful and not be deceived by false teachings and false messiahs by grounding myself in the Word of God.
- I will rely on the Holy Spirit so that I can endure persecutions and tribulations.
- I will anchor my hope on the Lord and not on the passing things of the world.
- I will do my part in spreading the gospel to all nations.

Don't forget to:

- Go through the devotionals every day this week.
- Have a regular daily time of prayer and reading of God's Word.

CLOSING THE SESSION

Close the session by taking the time to pray for one another. Consider the following as you pray:

- Pray for a heart that understands the urgency of the times and a readiness for Christ's return, living each day with a kingdom perspective and a kingdom focus.
- Pray for relationships to grow with other Christ-followers, that you will encourage and care for one another.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends, and loved ones.
- Pray for protection, provision, healing and comfort for everyone who's going through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual pain.

BIBLE READING GUIDE

April 22 Matthew 24:1-14

April 23 Matthew 24:15-28

April 24 Luke 21:29-38

April 25 Mark 13:32-37

April 26 Revelations 22:12-21

April 27 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

April 28 Psalms 130