**LifeGroup Study**

**THERE WILL BE TESTS**

**The Mountain and the Donkey**

**2022-04-10**

**Leader Notes**

**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome back to our series, There Will Be Tests. In this final week of our series and as we anticipate Good Friday, we’ll explore the test Jesus faces as He moves from the Transfiguration to riding a donkey, and then hanging on a cross. This was a path that He struggled to embrace and yet He fully embraced it. Jesus’ example shows us we can trust God even during the crushing time. A key question we need to ask is, “Am I willing to leave the mountain to ride the donkey?” Am I willing to pick up my cross and follow Jesus?

**ICEBREAKER:** My Easter Memory/Tradition

The home I grew up in had several Easter traditions. One, probably my favourite at the time, was the Easter baskets waiting for me and my sister Easter morning, complete with a chocolate Easter bunny. Our family often had Easter lilies in our home during this season. Today the scent of Easter lilies reminds me of those times. Most of all, my parents emphasized to us the meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection. How about you? What early memories do you have of Easter? **Share your Easter memory/tradition with the group!**

**STUDY:**

1. On Sunday, Pete talked about the tests Jesus faced as He went from the Transfiguration to riding a donkey, and then hanging on a cross. **What key idea have you been thinking about from what Pete taught on Sunday?**

**THE MOUNTAIN**

READ: Luke 9:28-36

1. In this passage we read about how Jesus was transformed (transfigured) on the mountain. **Why would God create this moment?**

LEADER NOTE: In the Transfiguration, Jesus’ “inner circle” of disciples saw Him in his glory. God created this moment to give evidence of the deity of Jesus. This event helped give the disciples hope when they heard the news of his upcoming death. When John reflected back on this day, he wrote, “We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only.” John 1:14. Peter wrote, “We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes when he received honour and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.’ We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.” 2 Peter 1:16-18

1. There are moments in life we might describe as a “mountain top” experience. When you think of your faith, what moment or event would you say has been a mountain top experience for you? **Share your mountain top experience with the group.**

LEADER NOTE: Examples of a spiritual mountain top experience your group members might share could be their baptism, a retreat or missions trip, an program such as Alpha or a key moment when they came to faith. Think about a mountain top experience you have had that you can share with the group to get things started.

1. **How can mountain top experiences help us face a test?**

LEADER NOTE: Mountain top experiences can bring us assurance when we face a test. This is what happened in the lives of the disciples as they thought about Jesus’ death and remembered His transfiguration. Mountain top experiences can bring us confidence. For example, when we face a test of our faith, remembering the experience of our baptism can bring us confidence. Mountain top experiences can bring us hope to see through to the other side of our test. For example, the mountain top experience of our salvation can help us see through the test as we look ahead in faith to Jesus’ final saving act of bringing us home to be with Him forever. (see John 14:1-3)

**THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**

READ: Luke 19:28-40

1. In this account we read about the triumphal entry of Jesus as he rode a donkey into Jerusalem. **What is the significance of this event?**

LEADER NOTE: At the Triumphal Entry Jesus made public his claim to be the Messiah and King of Israel, fulfilling OT prophecy (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus rides into Jerusalem as King, not an earthly ruler but one whose heavenly kingdom would never end. (see Luke 1:33). The Triumphal entry was a loud proclamation that Jesus is Lord and is worthy of our praise!

1. Humility also plays a big role in the Triumphal entry. Instead of riding into Jerusalem on a white horse, as earthly kings did, Jesus rides a donkey. **Why was Jesus’ humility such a significant part of the Triumphal Entry?**

LEADER NOTE: The fact that Jesus rode a humble donkey rather than a war horse shows the purpose of His mission, to bring reconciliation and peace (see Zechariah 9:9-10). Jesus’ Triumphal Entry is a powerful symbol of humility that spoke to those who witnessed it then and to us today.

READ: Philippians 2:1-8

1. What strikes you from these verses about what it means to be humble like Jesus?

LEADER NOTE: Following Jesus means growing a humble attitude like He had. This works out practically in our lives as we strive to agree with one another, love one another and work together with one mind and purpose (vs. 2). Humility grows in our lives when we reject selfishness and trying to impress others, when we look out for the best interests of others (vs. 3). Jesus emptied himself and gave up everything to become one of us and ultimately die for us on the cross. He is our example.

**THE TEST OF THE CROSS**

READ: Luke 22:39-46

1. In these verses we see Jesus facing the test of the cross as prays to the Father. **What do you notice about how Jesus faced this test?**

LEADER NOTE: Jesus faced his test with prayer. He asked others to pray for Him and He prayed to the Father. Jesus faced his test with surrender. He said to the Father, “Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” (vs. 42) Jesus experienced agony. Our Saviour knows what it’s like to struggle in the test.

1. A significant theme from Sunday was the idea of “crushing.” Jesus allowed himself to be crushed by the test of the cross. (see Isaiah 53:5). Imagine Jesus asking you this question – “Will you allow me to crush you? Will you let me make your story one like my Son’s, a story of sacrificial love?” **How would you respond?**

LEADER NOTE: Just as crushing grapes brings the beauty of new wine, so a spiritual crushing can bring the newness God wants to work out in our lives. This idea of being crushed is at the core of what it means to follow Jesus. The process of growing more and more like Jesus is going to involve sacrifice and crushing of our flesh (that part of us that wants to live for ourselves rather than for Jesus). But that crushing process, even though it hurts, will produce in us a love for God and for people that brings glory to our Saviour.

**EXPERIENCE GOD:**

Responsive reading can be an impactful way to experience God and His work in us. In the Heidelberg Catechism we find a question and an answer that speak powerfully to the idea that I am not my own.

Have the Group Leader read the question out loud and then the Group Members respond together.

**THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM**

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| Q. | What is your only comfort in life and death? |
| A. | **That I am not my own,**  **but belong with body and soul,**  **both in life and in death,**  **to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ**.  He has fully paid for all my sins  with his precious blood,  and has set me free  from all the power of the devil.  He also preserves me in such a way  that without the will of my heavenly Father  not a hair can fall from my head;  indeed, all things must work together  for my salvation.  Therefore, by his Holy Spirit  he also assures me  of eternal life  and makes me heartily willing and ready  from now on to live for him. |

After you read this out loud, ask this question –

**“What does it mean to me that I am not my own, that I fully belong to God?”**

**PRAYER**

This week let’s pray for our local outreach initiative, our “Eats for Easter” food drive.

* Please pray that Creeksiders would give generously as we collect food in the coming weeks. Check out details here <https://www.creeksidechurch.ca/eatsforeaster/>
* Pray that those who receive the food would sense God’s love and be drawn to Him.
* Looking for a way to serve as a group? Get your LifeGroup together for a Food Packing Party! Help us box and deliver food from our Easter food drive to Ray of Hope. Will take place at Creekside Waterloo on April 19th or April 20th (at whatever time works for your LifeGroup). Contact Sarah Geiger for details [sarah.geiger@creeksidechurch.ca](mailto:sarah.geiger@creeksidechurch.ca)