

Awkward Conversations.

(something needs to change)

SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM / WEEK TWO

SCRIPTURE: Luke 4:38-44 – Healing Simon's Mother-in-Law
BIG IDEA FOR THE SERIES: Jesus desires dramatic change in the status quo.
THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA: It will take an army to change the world.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Setting: Capernaum, a town sequestered along the Sea of Galilee.

For a glimpse of the area go to: www.bibleplaces.com/capernaum.htm.

The Scene: Jesus has just finished teaching at the local synagogue and presumably goes to have a meal at the home of Simon (also known as Peter in the Scriptures). Simon's mother-in-law, who also lives there, is terribly ill. After Jesus heals her, he lingers at their home. By sunset, a crowd begins to form outside the house.

The Sabbath: The Jewish day of rest actually began at sunset on Friday evening and concluded sundown on Saturday. During the Sabbath Jews were not permitted to carry a burden or travel more than .66 miles (1km). According to the context, once the Sabbath ended people streamed in to see Jesus; they could then carry their sick and trek to Capernaum from surrounding villages.

Miracle Worker and Teacher: In Jesus' day there were both miracle workers and rabbis, though rarely were these roles combined. Yet, Jesus takes up the two with rare authority. He both heralds and sets in motion the Kingdom of God.

A Lonely Place: Solitude was a challenge to come by. People packed into homes, living with extended family. The houses faced each other making private areas minimal. So, it was only in the margins of the day (early morning or late at night) that solitude could be found.

BIBLICAL INTENT/IMPLICATIONS

In Luke 4 we get snapshots of Jesus' mission and ministry in vibrant motion. Jesus articulates his mission in Luke 4:14-29 and then Luke gives us the first stories of his healing ministry in Luke 4:31-44. Jesus declares the intent of the Kingdom of God and then demonstrates living it out.

The teaming together of teaching and miracles marks Jesus' ministry. If Jesus had focused on one without the other, our understanding of the Kingdom of God would be lacking. While he could have stayed in Capernaum and healed everyone in the region—and likely would have gained great fame in that area—Jesus knew that the “good news of the kingdom” must be proclaimed to many more.

Throughout Jesus' ministry he faces scenarios that could distract him from his mission. Yet he continues to have a sturdy sense of focus. The fact that he stole away for solitude and quiet communion with God, his Father, no doubt buoyed his focus.

Series Outline:

Week One: The Homecoming (4:14-30)
> **Week Two: The Moving On (4:38-44)** <
Week Three: The Centurion (7:1-10)
Week Four: The Funeral (7:11-17)
Week Five: The Parable (8:1-15)
Week Six: The Prayer (11:1-13)
Week Seven: The Obstacle (18:18-30)
Week Eight: The Return (24:13-35)

HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

Encourage members to read the Scripture before group; if they weren't at Warehouse on Sunday they can download the mp3 at www.warehouse242.org. During group read the passage together. Have extra Bibles available to ensure that everyone has a copy. The goal of Scripture—and of this discussion material—is not information expansion but rather increased intimacy with the Father, Son and Spirit. It's God who enables that to happen, so be sure to pray for divine insight as you move through Scripture.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

> How would you describe the “good news of the kingdom of God?” How does that good news get declared and demonstrated in your small group?

> How do we as a Warehouse community experience Jesus as Rabbi and Jesus as Miracle Worker? Do we as a community emphasize one aspect of Jesus' ministry over another? If so, why do you think that is?

> How do we live out the “good news of the kingdom of God” amongst our neighbors, co-workers and family members who are not yet followers of Jesus? How do we live it out amongst the poor and marginalized in our city?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

> How do you relate to Jesus? Do you experience him both as a Teacher and a Healer? If so, how? Spend some time this week asking Jesus what he might want to teach you and how he might want to heal you this year.

> If Jesus needed solitude to commune with God, how much more must we? If you don't already have a rhythm of solitude, pull out your calendar this week and schedule time for it this year. (Perhaps it's for a couple of hours once a month, or a day retreat once a quarter. You'll likely have to be creative and cut out other activities, yet the high cost is sure to be recouped over time as you get spiritually renewed.)

“Solitude: The creation of an open, empty space in our lives by purposefully abstaining from interaction with other human beings, so that, freed from competing loyalties, we can be found by God.” From *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Talk through how you might encourage each other in practicing spiritually meaningful solitude this year.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Read: “Moving from Solitude to Community to Ministry” by Henri Nouwen

This article explores the dynamic between the inward journey of solitude and the outward expression of service. [warehouse242.org/resources]