

Centred Discussion Guide



Part 6: Centred Journey

Matt Thiele, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Buderim - April 5th, 2020

INTRODUCTION

You might like to start with one or two of these questions:

- *What has brought you joy this week?*
- *What has been hard this week?*
- *What's the best journey you have ever been on?*

Please start with prayer because “everything starts with prayer.”

IF FAITH IS A JOURNEY WOULDN'T YOU LOVE A MAP?

Throughout Christian history faith has almost always been thought of as a journey, a way, a road, a path. Many theologians and teachers have attempted to come up with maps for faith. Here are a few that were mentioned in the Sunday sermon...

- *What do you think of the following maps of faith growth?*
- *Which is your favourite?*
- *What can you see in common?*

JOHN FOWLER'S SIX STAGES OF FAITH

1. Instinctive Faith (a baby trusts or distrusts)
2. Inherited Faith (we all inherit faith somehow from someone)
3. Literal Faith (everything entirely literal and has no nuance)
4. Questioning Faith (from teen and young adult on)
5. Mature Faith (where our faith has integrated into who we are)
6. Transcendent Faith (where eternal truth permeates everything)

WALTER BRUEGGEMANN'S THREE STAGES OF FAITH

1. Simplicity (Jesus loves me, this I know)
2. Complexity (Jesus loves me, but sometimes it doesn't feel that way)
3. Informed Simplicity (I wrestled with doubts, but Jesus still loves me!)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS TWELVE STEPS

1. Admit powerlessness.
2. Trust a greater Power.
3. Decide to give life to God.
4. Fearlessly examine ourselves.
5. Admit our wrongs.
6. Submit to God to remove faults.
7. Ask for God to grow us.
8. Make a list of those we hurt.
9. Say sorry and make amends.
10. Continue to admit our sin.
11. Prayer, meditation, knowing God's will.
12. Share our awakening with others.

JOHN CLIMACUS (579-649AD) THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

1. Give up on the world
2. Detachment
3. Exile
4. Obedience...
29. Resurrection
30. God's love.

MEDIEVAL MYSTICS

- Purgation (weeding your life)
- Illumination (receiving sight)
- Union (becoming one)

THE LIFE OF JESUS IS OUR MAP

There is only one map for our journey of faith - actually it's far more than a map - it's a pattern. It is the life of Jesus. Reflect quietly on the following Bible passages.

Matthew 16:24

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me..."

Hebrews 12:2

Look to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

2 Timothy 2:11-13

*If we died with him, we will also live with him;
If we endure, we will also reign with him!*

Romans 6:4

We were buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

- Which speaks to you? What did you hear?

THREE PARTS OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

EXTERNAL JOURNEY (JOHN CH. 2- 12)

This section of John's Gospel is called "the book of signs". It describes seven great outward visible signs of who Jesus is. It's action and discussion of the action! It finishes with the great parade as Jesus enters Jerusalem. But it ends this way:

John 12:37.

Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in front of them, they still would not believe in him.

INTERNAL JOURNEY (JOHN CH. 13- 19)

In chapter 12 there is a distinct change. Jesus moves from doing great signs and miracles to a more private mode. His heart is exposed to us and we are taken on a

journey of his inner life! The section ends with his suffering and death - an inner battle against sin, death, and Satan!

John 12:24. "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed..."

John 12:27. Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?'"

John 12:36. Jesus went away and hid himself from them...

John 14:28. I am going away....

John 14-16. Jesus teaches in secret...

John 17. The 'High Priestly Prayer.' A prayer just between Jesus and God...

ETERNAL JOURNEY (JOHN CH. 20-21)

After Jesus rises, his theme is peace. He is no longer constrained by the limits of this world. He has lived externally, battled and won internally, and is renewed!

John 21:21 "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

- Too often Christians get stuck only in the 'external journey'. We are busy doing, achieving, helping, serving. What's the problem with a faith journey that is mainly external?
- In this time of crisis we are being called to an 'internal journey' but it will never happen if we keep the internet bubbling in our minds. That will continually call us to the external.
- What part of the journey have you noticed lately?
- Where do you feel drawn?
- Which part of the journey is hardest for you?

GROUP ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK

Make a pact as that you will each sit quietly with no distractions for a period of time at some point this week (or even each day). Then ask each other what that was like!