

Thanksgiving

November 22nd, 2020

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

DISCUSSION

Opening Prayer: (1-2 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.

Thank the Father for loving us so much that He came to us in the person of Jesus to sacrifice Himself on our behalf while we were still sinners! Pray that as we navigate the chaotic waters of our cultural moment that we would humbly listen and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we seek to love one another, just as you have loved us. Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to remind us of the spiritual victory we have over sin in Jesus Christ! Pray that the Spirit would help us find the right words to speak, new opportunities to serve our neighbors, and continue to transform us into the likeness of Jesus!

Discussion: (45-60 minutes)

What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Butch, led us into our Thanksgiving sermon! Pastor Butch draws our attention to *Joshua 3-4* and the story of the Israelites crossing the Jordan river in order to discuss how we ought to remember God's blessing and seek to practice "thanks living." Pastor Butch gives us several practical recommendations based on the story of Joshua so that we might approach troubling situations practicing thanks in order to fix our mind on what God has blessed us with instead of pointing to our complaints

"Thanksgiving is good! Thanks *living* is better!" – Pastor Butch Monk

Suggested Questions

Check-In: *Icebreaker* – What is one of the most unique Thanksgiving traditions that you have?

Study Tip: **Water** is a very intriguing biblical image. We know that water is instrumental to nurturing life! Water plays a pivotal role in keeping plants alive in a garden, keeping the human body hydrated, and housing a wide variety of life in the ocean. Whenever we look west towards the Pacific, we also realize how destructive and chaotic water can be. In fact, we see water depicted this way in the opening scene of the Bible. In Genesis, we are told that creation is considered formless and empty when there is only darkness and waters. Yet, on Days 2 and 3 of creation, God controls the waters to form the sky and bring forth the land. Genesis is telling us that God is the one who controls the seemingly chaotic waters by turning them into a source of life! On Day 5, God fills them as an oasis of life full of sea creatures! Genesis 2 reveals that in the midst of the Garden of Eden was a spring that turned into four rivers giving life to surrounding nations. Therefore, we should not be surprised that when God's image-bearers – who have been tasked to maintain God's order – manufacture chaos, that the wicked generations of Noah's era are destroyed by water. If creation signal God bringing order out of chaotic waters, the flood symbolizes man bringing chaos back to God's order. *What can be done to bring back God's order and life into our lives?* Consider how God uses water with Israel. God miraculously orders the Red Sea for Israel, then allows the chaotic waters to engulf the Egyptian arm. God brings water from a rock to quench the thirst of his people in the dryness of the desert. God uses water to orderly cleanse His people and Holy utensils so that the chaos of sin would be atoned for. This week, God splits the Jordan for Joshua to remind the Israelites and their new leader that He will continue to breathe life and speak order into the chaos of the Canaanites! As we reflect on the story of Joshua, pay attention to how God wants to bring you out from the chaotic waters of your situation, your sin, and even death into new life quenching your spiritual thirst with the living water that Jesus comes to offer!

Objective #1: Identify the troubling waters God is calling you toward and your resistance to obey!

Primary Texts: *Joshua 3:1-17* – Pastor Butch points out that like the Israelites, God may command us to walk into troubled waters. When this happens, we should obey knowing that God has already gone before us even though we may experience difficulty before God provides an answer to our problem. **What are the “troubling waters” that God is calling you toward in this difficult season? How is God calling you cooperate with Him rather than resist Him? What parts of the Joshua 3 story encourage you as you face this tension?**

Objective #2: Explore practices of *thanks living* and how they may help you obey the Lord!

Primary Texts: *Review Joshua 4:1-18; Psalm 95:1-11; Romans 1:21* – Next, Pastor Butch points out that just as Israel set up a memorial to give thanks to God for bringing them across the Jordan, we too ought to practice *intentional thanksgiving* when we experience God's work in our lives! Pastor Butch encourages us to *intentionally* spend our time focusing on our blessings instead of our complaints so that we can make a habit of calling out to God with a voice of Thanksgiving! **How does Joshua 4 challenge you to count your blessings? How do you think making a habit of thanksgiving could affect your desire to obey God's call to your “troubling waters”?**

Objective #3: Search for a next step in your journey and pray for the tough decisions of your group.

Primary Texts: *Joshua 4:19-24* – Finally, Pastor Butch reminds us that establishing rhythms of thankfulness is not only a way to remember God's past blessings, but it is also an inspiration for future generations to depend on! **Who around you might be depending on you to be thankful this season? How might you be able to share your thankfulness for what God has done for you?**

Supporting Texts: *Ps. 136; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Phil. 4:6, Col. 3:15-17; Heb. 12:28*

Closing Prayer: (5-10 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.

Thank our Heavenly Father for sending His son to die for our sins and release us from the bondage of our spiritual enemy! Ask that the Holy Spirit would continue to equip us to live, love, and be thankful in the various situations we may face over the Holiday season. Finally, pray that we as a church would unite as a people who are *known by* our love for one another as we humbly seek to resolve our internal issues and learn how to grow closer to you through them.

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

- **Fall 2020 Daily Reader:** Interested in diving deeper? You can spend the next 8 weeks walking with us through the entire Bible as you to put on your kingdom lens through this difficult season! You can find the daily reader at [3Crosses.org/fall2020](https://3crosses.org/fall2020)

-**Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities:** Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://3crosses.org/coronavirus). If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

- **Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week!** Pray that the members of your group would begin to give thanks!

-**Community Group Fall 2020:** For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org