

MISSIO DEI: WEEK 3

THE MISSION OF GOD IN REDEMPTION



ICEBREAKER

What's a movie or book that stuck with you that includes a character who gets a second chance? (5-10 min)



RECAP

Have someone in your Life Group give a brief overview of the events from the previous stories. (2-3 min)



INTRODUCTION

Have someone in your Life Group read Matthew 5:1-20 out loud.



INTERLUDE

*Setting the stage for the Redeemer (the period between the Old and New Testaments).
(3 min)*

First the Babylonians, then the Persians, then the Greeks, and finally the Romans—for centuries these empires had deported, exiled, minimized, and enslaved God's people—and the Israelites' God didn't seem to do anything to stop them! Would God answer? Would He rescue? After all...

- He promised Adam He would send Someone to make things right.
- He promised Noah He would never destroy the earth.
- He promised Abraham that his descendants, the people of Israel, would be blessed.
- He rescued their ancestors out of slavery in Egypt.
- He blessed the Israelites and gave them the land through Joshua.
- He promised David his descendants would rule forever.
- He promised to rescue His people out of exile.

For more than 400 years, they had been waiting...longing...hoping for God to rescue them again.

At this time, God's people began looking for the Messiah, a man they knew God would send to be their King. Over and over, their hopes would rise with a great political figure or some powerful revolutionary. But over and over, the self-proclaimed, would-be messiahs failed. Over and over, their hopes were dashed.

Was God still on His mission?



REFLECT

Take a few moments to think about a place in your life where you're waiting for God to act. If you feel comfortable, share that area with your Life Group. (5 min)



THE STORY OF JESUS

A narrative based on the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). (10 min)

God was still on His mission. On a quiet night in Bethlehem, the same city King David had grown up in a millennium before, a little child was born. The child's name was Jesus, a translation of Joshua into the local language. Jesus means, "The Lord is salvation." On the night this child was born, a myriad of angels came to herald, or welcome, this child into the world.

These weren't pudgy little baby angels with harps. They were mighty warrior angels who had come to announce the arrival of the one, true King to the world. In complete worship, they proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest!"

The baby grew into a man. Around the time He was thirty years old, He began to tell people He was the King they had been waiting for. He told people, "There is good news! No more waiting, no more longing, no more hoping in false messiahs! Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand now."

Jesus began teaching people what life was going to be like in His forever Kingdom. He taught people how to live in this Kingdom and gave them a taste of what the Kingdom is like:

- In His Kingdom, there is no blindness. He gave sight to the blind.
- In His Kingdom, there is no sickness. He healed the sick.
- In His Kingdom, there is no sin. He forgave sin.
- In His Kingdom, there are no marginalized people. He befriended sinners.



THE STORY OF JESUS (CONT.)

- In His Kingdom, nature is at peace. He calmed the storm.
- In His Kingdom, there are no evil powers. He cast out demons.
- In His Kingdom, there is no death. He raised the dead.

Many people followed Jesus. They wanted to be a part of this kind of Kingdom. They were starting to believe He was finally God's answer to their longings. Of the many people who followed Him, He selected twelve disciples He would train to carry out His mission after He left. These men dropped everything to follow Jesus. They believed He was going to overthrow the Romans, set God's people free, and usher in a golden age of peace. They wanted to be near Him, so they followed Him. They loved Jesus. They learned from Jesus. They served Jesus.

But not everyone loved Jesus. To the Jewish leaders, He was a rebel, flipping the religious system they had worked hard to build upside down. To the Romans, He was a rebel—an insurrectionist. To make matters worse, He claimed He was God.

After three years of proclaiming the Kingdom and setting Himself up as the promised King and true Messiah, Jesus came into Jerusalem (the City of David) to celebrate the Passover. The Passover was the annual holiday where the people of Israel remembered when God rescued them out of Egyptian slavery centuries before.

Many people welcomed Jesus into the city, believing He was the King who would rescue them from the Romans, but some of the Jewish religious leaders made a plan to murder Jesus. They conspired with Judas, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, to determine exactly how it would happen. They turned Jesus over to the Romans, calling Him an insurrectionist. They demanded that He, the one and true King of the earth, be beaten and crucified. Crucifixion is one of the most torturous, humiliating, and excruciating deaths ever devised.



THE STORY OF JESUS (CONT.)

On a hill outside Jerusalem, they crucified Jesus. The one, true King of the world had been murdered. John, one of Jesus' beloved disciples, looked on in horror. The King willingly hung on a cross and died...but it was all according to plan.

According to plan? Surely not! Wasn't the plan that, as King, Jesus would ascend to a throne where every living creature would bow down before Him? God's plan couldn't possibly include Jesus hanging on a cross, wearing a crown of thorns while His enemies spit and cursed at Him.

The one, true King had become the crucified, dead King. He had become a victim of the rebellion in the Garden of Eden, just like the rest of creation. He seemed no different than the rest of humanity.

However, God was still on His mission. The cross wasn't outside God's plan to redeem and restore His creation. It was the center of it.

Three days later, a few women went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried. (Pause) He was gone! They told His disciples, who ran as fast as they could to the tomb. They found it empty. Soon they would learn that Jesus was indeed alive!

The crucified, dead King showed He absolutely was the one, true King. He did not succumb to the powers and effects of the original rebellion. He rose from the grave. He defeated death, conquered the curse, and crushed Satan's head in the process! It was just as it had been foretold in the garden.

Jesus was alive. The one, true King had decisively defeated the enemies of the Kingdom. A new day had dawned. What had been lost at Adam and Eve's rebellion in the garden was now starting to be put right.



RETELLING THE STORY *Based on the above reading. (5–7 minutes)*

Retell the story of Jesus as a Life Group, asking everyone to participate. See if you can summarize the events in order. Be sure to keep your participants on task to retell the story without leaning on previous knowledge of the narrative or getting ahead in the story.



DISCUSSION *Reflecting on the story. (10 minutes)*

- What is God's mission?
- What does a "taste of the Kingdom" mean? How did Jesus give the people a taste of the Kingdom?
- Why is the death and resurrection of Jesus significant?
- Share about a time you waited on God and saw Him show up.

ENGAGING IN THE MISSION OF GOD



1 Spend time considering what the Kingdom of God could look like in your community. Take a step towards bringing a taste of the Kingdom to your neighbors and networks (feed the hungry, pray for the sick, share the Gospel, etc.) You may have to go out of your way to find people who have obvious need, but it's worthwhile!

2 Option 2: Spend time praying over the area in your life where you are waiting on God to move. How does it bring you hope that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead can breathe life into any situation?

3 Come up with your own idea! Join God's mission of redemption in a way that's challenging/stretching for you.