



## **GROUP ICE BREAKER**

If you had to choose a new animal to be the Easter mascot, which one would you choose and why?

## **REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS**

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week? How did it go?

- I will reflect on how I view the Bible and how I understand the authority of the Bible for my life.
- I will self-evaluate how my understanding of the Bible influences how I read the Bible and how often I read the Bible.
- I will re-evaluate how much time I spend reading and meditating on the Bible.
- I will commit to spending time with God, actively engaging in Bible reading and exploration.

## **MESSAGE SUMMARY**

We see in the creation story that God had a tender love for His creation, hovering over it like a dove hovering over her young. In all of creation, humans were the only ones to receive breath directly from God. There's a Hebrew phrase, *Tikkun Olam*, and it meant "to fix the world" - to help the world realize its full potential. This was God's plan, to partner with man to bring the world to its full potential. But in the fall of humanity, despair entered the human experience, and creation itself fell under sin's curse. After the fall, the human race goes into exile.

The Prophets in the Old Testament repeatedly write about a connection between exile and the sinfulness of God's people - and the promise of the forgiveness and cleansing of sin and return from exile. The writers of Scripture say over and over again when sin has been forgiven, then will come the return from exile, then will begin the *Tikkun Olam* - the fixing of the world. But until then, the exile goes on.

But there was a hope Jesus and his followers had, a hope that changed everything. Jesus brought the reign and rule and presence of God to earth. It doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done - you can live in the kingdom of God right here and right now. The good news is the kingdom of God is available to everyone now because of Jesus' resurrection. And you can live in it if you want to. Put your hope in God. Hope will bring energy, endurance, creativity, and the ability to deal with whatever life throws at you.

## KEY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Scripture memorization is a valuable spiritual practice in a Christ-centered life. Spend a few minutes each day committing this verse to memory.

- “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”  
1 Corinthians 15:20-22

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At creation, God breathed into the man the breath of life, and only human beings, of all living things, received breath/spirit directly from God. What stands out to you about this fact of His creation?
2. Read Genesis 3:1-8. What was the temptation in the Garden of Eden? Is that still the temptation we face today?
3. As a result of the original sin in the Garden of Eden, there is now a “gap” between God and humanity, which the Old Testament primarily refers to as an exile. How would you describe that exile to someone not familiar with the story of the Bible?
4. Read Mark 1:9-15. What is the good news? What’s one way the good news has impacted your life?
5. The couple Jesus talked with in Luke 24 had lost hope because of the crucifixion, but, “Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him.” How does this statement resonate with a loss of hope you’ve experienced and how your eyes were opened to Jesus?
6. What was it about the reality and power of the resurrection that made a group of believers with no resources, no money, no power and no soldiers an unbeatable force in the ancient world? Is it still true today?
7. What’s one thing you can do this week in your world to hope to a relationship, your home, your work, or your neighborhood?

## **NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)**

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I put my hope in Jesus.
- When facing adversity, I will not give in to despair.
- I will reflect on Psalm 42:5 when challenges come.
- I will bring hope into my home, relationships, neighborhood and work.

## **PRAYER**

Prayer as a spiritual practice is our conversational life with God, where He hears from us, and we hear from Him, with the intent of learning and leaning into His will for our lives. Let this prayer guide you over the next week.

Heavenly Father,

It is so amazing to know that You want me to partner with You to bring Your kingdom on earth. Lord, open my eyes to understand this great truth. I receive the Holy Spirit as you breathe Jesus' life into me. I want to know Christ, the power of His resurrection and I believe that I will be resurrected from the dead. Father, I put my hope in You and let Your kingdom come in my situation. In the name of Lord Jesus Christ, I pray.

Amen.

## **SCRIPTURE REFERENCES**

- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 2:7
- Genesis 2:15-17
- Genesis 3:4-7
- Genesis 3:17-18
- Genesis 3:23
- Lamentations 4:22
- Mark 1:9-10
- Luke 24:15-21
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-22
- Matthew 27:52
- Luke 24:28-31
- John 20:1
- John 20:19
- John 19:41
- 1 Corinthians 15:45-48
- John 20:19-22
- Psalm 42:5