

Worship
LifeGroup Lesson
Vital Signs Sermon Series
Nehemiah 8:1-12; Romans 12:1-2
January 4, 2015

OPENING PRAYER:

We live in a world filled with so much stuff and junk that we can barely see over all the piles of it. So God, what if in our world of junk we have lowered You to our level? What if we have made piles of Jesus junk, heaped it at Your altar and then had the nerve to call it worship? God, help us rekindle the fire of Your passion. Help us remember that we are to worship You with awe, for You are an awesome God, worthy of our praise and worship. Amen.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- What did you agree or disagree with in the LifeTalk this week?
- Describe the most meaningful worship service you ever attended? What about the worship was powerful?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:¹

As we study worship, we learn how to transform our hearts and focus on God. Read Nehemiah 8:1-8.

- What are your thoughts on this passage?
- What happens when the people truly understand? How do they respond? Why do you believe they responded in this way?
- How important was God's Word in your own spiritual renewal? Which had the greater impact on you: private Bible study, small group study, preaching, etc.? Why?
- What three activities from this chapter would be foundational to the renewal of your church?
- How could your small group help in one such activity?

Read Romans 12:1-2

- What strikes you about these verses?
- What does it mean to you to live out vs. 1?
- Paul warns us not to conform to this world. In what ways do you think Christians are conforming to this world? How do you see your church conforming?
- Are you using your gifts in a way that is holy and pleasing to God? How?
- What is holding you back from using your gifts?

MORE TO PONDER:

Drinking the cup that Jesus drank is living a life in and with the spirit of Jesus, which is the spirit of unconditional love. The intimacy between Jesus and Abba, His Father, is an intimacy of complete trust, in which there are no power games, no mutually agreed upon promises, no advance guarantees. It is only love – pure, unrestrained, and unlimited love. Completely open, completely free. That intimacy gave Jesus the strength to drink His cup. That same intimacy Jesus wants to give us so that we can drink ours. That intimacy has a Name, a Divine Name. It is called Holy Spirit. Living a spiritual life is living a life in which the Holy Spirit will guide us and give us the strength and courage to keep saying yes to the great question.

---Henri Nouwen, *Can You Drink the Cup?*

- What strikes you about this passage?
- How have you been saying no to drinking the cup of Christ? Your church?
- What would it mean for you to drink His cup?
- How could you seek greater intimacy with God this week? What action steps will you take?

CLOSING POSSIBILITIES:

- How will your life be different based upon what you have learned in this week's scripture, lesson and/or LifeTalk?
- How can the group pray for you this week?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things and pass them on. Keep on doing those things you have learned and received and heard and seen that are of God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:8-9
adapted

¹ Adapted from *The Serendipity Bible* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1998)