



| **SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES** |

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THE TEXT

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| JESUS IN GALILEE |

SERIES SUMMARY

Jesus spent 90% of his time ministering around the Sea of Galilee. Why not in Jerusalem? Why not in another part of the country? The answer is simple: Location. Location. Location. Jerusalem may have been the religious center, but Galilee was the economic center. The International highway ran through Capernaum connecting Europe, Asia, and Africa. By ministering here, Jesus's message could reach a diverse audience quickly. By the end of this series, you'll have a deeper understanding of the many groups Jesus interacted with, and why he engaged them the way he did.

THIS CURRICULUM IS REALLY EASY TO USE

STEP 1: Click the link in each lesson to watch the video teaching.

STEP 2: Reflect on the discussion questions with your group.

STEP 3: Start embodying Jesus's kingdom message in the diverse world you live in!



PART 1 | FROM NAZARETH TO CAPERNAUM

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Matthew 4:12-17; Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7

DESCRIPTION

Jesus spent 90% of his time ministering around the Sea of Galilee. Why not in Jerusalem? Why not in another part of the country? The answer is simple: Location. Location. Location. Following the arrest of John the Baptist, Matthew's gospel tells us that Jesus "withdrew to Galilee." But Jesus wasn't retreating. He was advancing. He was taking his message into the heart of the crossroads of the world. By the end of this episode, you'll see the strategic brilliance of Jesus's decision to proclaim his message where it would have the greatest impact, and why we must do the same today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- What surprised you most about this teaching?
- It's no coincidence that God placed Jesus in the most highly trafficked area of the world. Where has God placed you to have an influence? (Think work, relationships, community, etc.)
- In what way(s) are you being intentional about having a kingdom influence in the location God has placed you?
- If that question is difficult, take a few minutes to brainstorm what it could look like to be a more intentional kingdom presence wherever God has placed you.
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 2 | **HERODIANS OF TIBERIAS**

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Matthew 22:15-22

DESCRIPTION

The city of Tiberias looms large over the life and ministry of Jesus because of the powerful group of Jews it represented: The Herodians. These were wealthy, influential people who supported the pro-Roman Herodian regime. When we understand the background and origin of the city of Tiberias alongside the strategic ambition of the Herodian family, it makes perfect sense why the Herodians saw Jesus as a threat. By the end of this episode, you'll see why integrity and vulnerability lead to human flourishing rather than exploitation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- How does the Herodian mentality of compromise, shapeshifting, and strategic ambition remind you of the world you live in?
- What are some of the ways you're tempted to compromise your convictions in order to accommodate to the culture(s) around you? (Think specifically: consumer culture, family culture, work culture, etc.)
- How might having integrity and "being the same person in every conversation" make life more difficult?
- Can you think of a time in your life (or the life of someone you know) when you told the truth even though it was costly to do so? Share that experience with your group and talk a little bit about how it shaped you for the better.
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 3 | RELIGIOUS JEWS OF THE TRIANGLE

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Matthew 11:20-24

DESCRIPTION

Jesus spent an enormous amount of time in a tiny area of the Galilee we call today the “Evangelical Triangle.” Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida were home to a religious Jewish population that was passionate about following the Scriptures. And yet they proved to be some of the most resistant people to Jesus’s message and ministry. How can the very people who are so fiercely devoted to the Text miss the Messiah when he shows up in their midst? By the end of this episode, you’ll be challenged to examine what keeps you from following Jesus more fully, and why discipleship is way more than simply knowing about Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- Reflect for a moment on the state of your relationship with Jesus. How would you say you’re doing in your commitment to following him?
- What are 1 or 2 things that seem to get in the way and keep you from following Jesus more faithfully?
- What are some ways you/we can overcome the temptation to get too familiar with Jesus? Can you name some habits or practices that might allow you to be continually surprised by Jesus?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 4 | **PAGANS OF THE DECAPOLIS**

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Matthew 5:14; Matthew 7:13; Mark 5:18-20; Mark 8:2

DESCRIPTION

Jesus interacted with all kinds of people. And when he crossed the Sea of the Galilee to “the other side,” it was to be with the pagans of the Decapolis. This league of Hellenistic cities was created to showcase Greco-Roman thought and culture in the region. But the cultural crusading of the Decapolis masked a spiritual starvation for something more. Like Jesus, we’re called to be salt and light in the cultures we inhabit, but influence is always a two-way street. By the end of this episode, you’ll be challenged to think deeply about “Who’s influencing who?” as you encounter the alluring cultures Jesus has sent you to influence.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- What are some of the ways you feel the “cultural crusading” of the world around you?
- The wealthy pagans of the Decapolis were spiritually hungry for the life Jesus had to offer. How do you see “the poverty of wealth” in the cultures around you?
- Name one or two specific ways you are being intentional about influencing the culture(s) around you. If it helps, think about work culture, school culture, family culture, neighborhood culture, global-consumer culture, etc.
- What are one or two specific ways you are being influenced by the culture(s) around you?
- What’s the difference between absorbing your influences and choosing them?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 5 | **GOSPEL PATRONS OF MAGDALA**

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Luke 8:1-3; Matthew 5:13

DESCRIPTION

As an itinerant rabbi with disciples, Jesus was dependent on the hospitality and generosity of others. So, who funded Jesus's ministry? The answer will make you chuckle and marvel at who God uses to advance His purposes in the world. But in order to find out who funded Jesus, we need to learn about the wealthy city of Magdala. By the end of this episode, you'll be inspired to be more intentional about using the gifts and resources God has given you to advance His purposes here on earth.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- Where in your own life have you been touched by the generosity and hospitality of others?
- What are some of the concrete ways (be specific) you are investing in God's kingdom right now?
- What are some of the ways you've been thinking about or feel compelled to invest in God's kingdom?
- Reflect on Lynne Twist's quote about "being known not for what we accumulate but what we allocate." Where in your life have you given in such a way that it makes you think, "Yeah, that's the kind of thing I want to be known for supporting?"
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 6 | ZEALOTS OF GAMLA

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Acts 5:37; Numbers 25:10-11; 1 Kings 19:10

DESCRIPTION

Before, during, and after the life of Jesus, the land of Israel was a hotbed of Jewish resistance against Rome. Located just northeast of the Sea of Galilee, the city of Gamla was a stronghold for a group called the Zealots. These were religious extremists who believed the kingdom of God came by force, and who were willing to kill Romans, Jewish collaborators, and themselves if needed. Despite their brutality, the Zealots were often admired as heroes who preserved the Hebrew tradition of zeal for God, but they totally missed the heart of God. By the end of this episode, you'll learn two specific ways Jesus put an end to the cycle of violence in an angry, polarized world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- Having watched/listened to this episode, is there anything you feel you can admire about the Zealot mindset? If so, what and why?
- Jesus lived at an extremely polarized moment in Jewish history. How do you see or experience polarization in the world around you?
- By calling Simon the Zealot and Matthew the Tax collector together in discipleship, Jesus showed that in His kingdom persons matter more than their positions and politics. Who is someone very different from yourself in terms of “positions or politics” whose story you know and whose heart you have come to love?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 7 | **MICROCOSM OF THE WORLD**

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Matthew 2:23; Matthew 4:12-16; Isaiah 9:1-2

DESCRIPTION

Jesus lived and ministered in a world of competing agendas, ideologies, and theologies. Nowhere was this more apparent than around the Sea of Galilee. Jesus trained his disciples here because it was a microcosm of the world! By modeling how to engage with Herodians, Zealots, Religious Jews, Gospel Patrons, and Decapolis Pagans, Jesus equipped his disciples for a life of faithfulness after his death. By the end of this final episode in “Jesus in Galilee,” you’ll appreciate why it’s so important for us to be intentional about how we’re leading others to think critically and live faithfully in a complex world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- Brad mentioned a teacher who helped him think critically about engaging movies. Who (person) or what (experience) has helped grow your faith by teaching you to critically engage the world around you?
- What, in your opinion, is the most difficult part of engaging with the different ideas, beliefs, and agendas of the world around you?
- How are you being intentional about helping others follow Jesus faithfully in a world of competing theologies and ideologies?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



FOR FURTHER STUDY

Click on the Titles below for links to each of these resources.

- *A Visual Guide to Gospel Events* by Martin, Beck, and Hansen
- *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman
- *Gospel Patrons* by John Rinehart
- *Josephus's Description of the Siege of Gamla*
- *Lexham Geographic Commentary* – Chapters 4, 9, 12, 27
- *Martin Luther King Jr. 'Love Your Enemies' Sermon* (November 17, 1957)
- *Rabbis and Disciples Mini-Series*
- *Rose Then and Now Bible Map Atlas* by Paul H. Wright – Chapter 17
- *Strong and Weak* by Andy Crouch
- *The Soul of Money* by Lynne Twist
- *The Jesus Way* by Eugene Peterson
- *THINQ Media*

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