

Small Group Discussion Guide — August 15, 2021

- Series: Beholding Jesus
 - Sermon: Jesus and the Wedding
 - Scripture: John 14: 1-6 (NLT)
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK

Consider the metaphor of the playwright from the service last week. Describe those unexpected moments where, in retrospect, you can sense the hand of God intervening in your life. How did you respond?

CONNECT

1. What stood out to you from this past week's service, and why?
2. What do you remember about the last wedding you attended? What is it about those things that stood out to you?

ENGAGE

Read John 14: 1-6.

1. Jesus tells the disciples not to be troubled. What is the context here for their disturbed hearts? (Read chapter 13: 33, 36.)
2. In order to comfort His disciples and prepare them for the difficult road ahead, what does Jesus tell them about, and why do you think He took this approach?
3. What is your reaction to Thomas' desperate question in verse 5? Can you identify with him? Why or why not?
4. In verse 6, Jesus makes a very strong statement about his identity. What is He saying?
5. Contrast how the disciples may have received Jesus's words as he was speaking them with how they might have remembered them in days and weeks following His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. What does this suggest to you about Christ's love for us?

APPLY

1. What are some things that currently trouble your heart? How does remembering "the big picture" of God's redemption bring you comfort or peace today?
2. David talked a lot about how often the relationship between God and His people in the Bible is communicated by stories about family and weddings. We are God's children, and God as a perfect father wants to protect, love, and provide for us. Also, we are the bride of Christ, and the bridegroom cherishes and pursues us with a faithful love. Although we as humans fall short in our relationships and devotion to each other, how might these images of God as father and husband bring comfort and clarity to everyone?
3. How does your concept of heaven compare to the one illustrated in John 14, that of a constantly expanding house, with new rooms being added every day as the family of God expands? What does this inspire in you, as a believer who is waiting for Christ's return and our homecoming?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you love us even more than we love our own children, that you are forever faithful to us, and that you are preparing a place for us to spend eternity with you. May we renew our desire to share this love with those not yet a part of your family. Amen

GOING DEEPER

One of the biggest human fears is the fear of rejection, of being unwanted, unloved. It is hard for us to trust that God will never reject us because we have so few human examples of that kind of perfect love. What are some practical ways we can grow our trust in God's boundless love for us? What does God give us to help us love others as he loves us?

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 54: 5
Matthew 24: 36
Matthew 25:1-6
Revelation 19:6-8

QUOTATIONS

"This is that kind of idolatry which tends to occur when people fall in love. Then you identify some other human being as the source of all your bliss, and try to possess him or her. When the relationship then begins to show the inevitable signs of strain, instead of recognizing that the initial demand and expectation was unreasonable in the first place, people just conclude that it was the wrong girl, the wrong boy."

Simon Tugwell

"'You mean,' said the Tragedian, 'you mean - you did not love me truly in the old days.'
'Only in a poor sort of way,' she answered. 'I have asked you to forgive me. There was a little real love in it. But what we called love down there was mostly the craving to be loved. In the main I loved you for my own sake: because I needed you.'"

C. S. Lewis

"Community cannot ultimately grow out of loneliness, but it comes most when the person who begins to recognize his or her belovedness greets the belovedness of the other. The God alive in me greets the God resident in you. When people can cease having to be for us everything, we can accept the fact they may still have a gift for us. They are partial reflections of the great love of God, but reflections nonetheless. We see that gift precisely and only once we give up requiring that person to be everything, to be God."

Henri Nouwen