

APRIL 11, 2021
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
DYING TO LIVE WEEK 4 | WHEN VICTORY WENT VIRAL
ACTS 1:9-11
SPRING QUARTER WEEK 1 OF 10

EFCC's definition of a disciple: Someone who is learning to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus.

EFCC's discipleship values: Pursuit, Obedience, Journey, Wholeness, Togetherness, Mission.

EFCC's discipleship model: being WITH (upward focus), becoming LIKE (inward focus), doing AS (outward focus).

EFCC's discipleship methodology: focus on what we need to learn, what we need to practice and who we need to be in relationship with.

For this week, the discipleship value is **obedience**. Josh made the point that ever since the ascension, Jesus has been leading in a different and more powerful way. If He's leading, we're necessarily following. Since He has assumed His rightful place at the right hand of the throne of God (Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3), He is the One calling the shots (1 Cor 15:25-28). As we run the plays He calls for us, He continues to do His work through us. That happens as we live in obedience.

In the being WITH, becoming LIKE and doing AS paradigm, this week's message focuses us on **doing AS**. We are to live in obedience to Him, just like He lived in obedience to His/our Father. It is only as we do what Jesus wants that we willingly and consciously participate in His plan to reign and put all His enemies under His feet. It is a great reminder to consider that obedience is conscious participation in the plans and purposes of God.

Engaging with Each Other

1. **What is a store that you absolutely dread going into? Why?**

The car dealership! Because the whole car-buying process is just no fun.

What about for you?

Engaging with the Scriptures (READ THE PASSAGES TOGETHER HERE)

I have decided to write some very open-ended questions for this week. I thought about the best order in which to arrange them, and came up with what you see below. I also know that there might be overlap between the questions, but I hope it's not too much. Finally, what will bring freshness to the topic of the ascension, and to the implications of it, is that I am asking people to consider it in light of their current circumstances. And if you need to remind your people about this, feel free to. We are wanting to take this truth and apply it to where we are today, to today's circumstances, joys, challenges, problems, and opportunities. The Scriptures never change, but our lives do, and this is one thing that keeps our engagement with them fresh. To have a current interaction with the Word of God is what He wants for us and from us.

If it's helpful, here are some things I pulled from Josh's teaching notes about the ascension. Feel free to send these around ahead of time, to mention them during discussion, or to ignore them!

- “The birth and death and resurrection of Jesus are of no use to us without the ascension.” Tim Keller
- Don’t think of Jesus sitting down at the right hand of God because He is done working. The ascension is Inauguration Day, the day He gets to work.
- The ascension is the way Jesus’ victory went viral.
- Five Victories are highlighted at the ascension.
 - The Father’s plan is accomplished.
 - The plan was ultimately that Jesus would rule (1 Corinthians 15:27-28; Philippians 2:9-11).
 - “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!” Abraham Kuyper
 - Jesus’ presence is amplified.
 - “Heaven is God’s space, which intersects with our space but transcends it. It is, if you like, a further dimension of our world, not a place far removed at one extreme of our world.” N.T. Wright
 - Heaven is another dimension. It’s not “out there.” It’s “right here,” but it’s veiled to us because of our sin. Heaven is a dimension that co-exists alongside this one, that interacts with this one. It is where God is. It is the command center, the control room, the place where God can have complete access to all that happens in this dimension simultaneously.
 - Jesus ascended into heaven, not to get away from us, but to be more available to us. When Jesus ascended, we got more of Him, not less. Jesus’ presence in the world is amplified!
 - (Without letting your group get too philosophical or lost in the weeds, the fact that Jesus went away so that He could be more available is a fantastically important and comforting truth.)
 - The Spirit’s power is accessible.
 - This is from Acts 2:33, “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.” (ESV)
 - The church’s purpose is announced (Acts 1:8)
 - This is our purpose - to bear His image in the world, to be His representative, with His power, and under His leadership.
 - The ancient promise is advancing.
 - Genesis 12:1-3, “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
 - The Father’s plan was that Jesus’ presence along with the Spirit’s power would give the Church the strength to live into our purpose of fulfilling the ancient promise that God made to the world.

1. What are some things you learned about the ascension that are most important for you right now? Why?

Another way to ask it is, “In what ways is the ascension most important for you right now?” Or, “How is the reality of the ascension important for you right now?” Or, “What are some of the truths (which are communicated by the ascension) which are important for you right now?”

For me, I think of the fact that Jesus has taken His rightful place to rule the universe. This gives me great comfort. I also think of the fact that His presence is amplified,

that there is nowhere He is not. This is also very comforting and important. There are people I love who I do not have access to right now. But He does, and He is still in charge, and He hears my prayers for these people and I am more motivated than ever to pray for them. For me, the truth of His omnipresence and omnipotence are the most important realities communicated by the ascension.

This is what I'm going for with this question. What about for you and your group?

2. What are some things you learned about the ascension that are most encouraging for you right now? Why?

One thing that is particularly encouraging to me is that "The Ancient Promise is advancing." It is so encouraging to know that Jesus is leading us into the future He has for us as a church. He is building His church, and He will hold His church together through all of our shifts and changes. Participating with Him in seeing the promise advance requires risk and faith. Not every decision is appreciated or agreed with. But now that the ascension has occurred, we are positioned in a way that those who lived before it were not. Jesus has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God and He is ruling and reigning over His creation and His plans will not be thwarted. In these days of trying to figure out what Post-Covid is going to look like, it is encouraging to know that He is advancing His cause, and that He has plans for EFCC.

What about for you and your group?

3. What are some things you learned about the ascension that are the most challenging for you right now? Why?

One thing that is particularly challenging is when "the plan" doesn't go the way I think it should. In those moments I have to remind myself that He is smarter than I am, sees and knows things I don't see and know, and has promised to work it all out in the end. When things "aren't going well," I can't claim it's because He's not all powerful, because He is. Or that He's somehow lost control, because He hasn't. Those times take a lot of faith and trust and patience to see what He is up to, if He'll let me in on what that is.

What about for you and your group?

Engaging the Scriptures with Life

4. What is one way you can apply this message during the week?

I need to think through this some more...