

“What’s going on?”

- + Easter was amazing! Thank you to all of you who gave your time to help. We heard from one person that has been away from church for a long time, but because of an invitation, joined us for Easter. He said, "there's an amazing amount of love and Spirit of Jesus in that building." Thank you for being a part of that!
- + Our serve day at Horizons is this Thursday. If you're able, we'd love to have you join us from 11:30 to 1:30 as we serve our community. If you have any questions just reach out to Chris!
- + Dates to remember: May 13th - Denman School Prayer Event // June 2nd - Child dedications
- + Chapter One is this Sunday, April 28th, after the second gathering. Chapter One is a great next step if you are considering getting more involved or making LifePoint your church home. Meet some of our church leaders, hear the story of LifePoint, and enjoy lunch together! Lunch and childcare will be provided with an RSVP.

ICE BREAKER

Question: Name some movies that portray what life will be like in the future.

Question: What are some of the defining moments of the 20th century?

CENTERING FOCUS

Spend 3-5 minutes of silence, centering our heart and minds on Christ, letting go of distractions. Have someone close the time of silence in prayer.

LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Last week's challenge was to ask God to specifically lay on your heart one person who doesn't know Christ, and intentionally pray for them 3x a day.

Question: Did God reveal a specific person to you? If so, how was your experience praying for them 3x a day? Was it hard or easy? Share your experience with the group.

THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTIONS

Question: How has tragedy shaped our culture in the 21st century? What are some of the events you could point to?

Question: How has information/technology/media desensitized us to tragedy?

Question: What reactions do people typically have towards God in the midst of tragedy?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Revelation 21:1-4 (ESV): *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with humanity... God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

Question: Here, in the last book in bible and the conclusion to the biblical story, we see God remaking the world in accordance with his good and perfect will. How is this new world different from the one you experience today?

Question: According to this passage, what is God's good and perfect will in regards to pain, mourning, and death?

John 11:1-6 (ESV): *Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him [Jesus], saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.*

Question: How did Jesus feel about Lazarus and his sisters?

Question: According to John 11:5-6, upon hearing that Lazarus was sick, why did Jesus stay two days longer before going to see and heal Lazarus?

Question: It seems strange that Jesus waited to heal Lazarus out of love for him. In a typical situation, what would love motivate a person to do in this scenario?

John 11:17-21 (ESV): *Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."*

Question: Reflect on Martha's last statement. Do you think she was correct in her assessment? Did Jesus have the power to heal Lazarus before he died? If you answered yes, why do you think he waited?

Question: How do you think that made Martha feel toward Jesus? What do you think Jesus' intentional delay made Martha think about Jesus' love for Lazarus and for her?

John 11:32-33 (ESV): *Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.*

Question: Why do you think Mary's question and her mourning cause Jesus to be troubled?

Question: What do you think it means that Jesus was moved in his spirit?

Question: In light of this, how do you think God feels about suffering, mourning, and death?

John 11:35 (ESV): *Jesus wept.*

Question: Spoiler alert: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead moments later (in verse 43 to be exact). In light of the fact that Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, why did he weep?

Mark 14:36 (ESV): *[Jesus] said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."*

This is an excerpt from Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he is beaten, mocked, tortured, and crucified.

Question: According to Jesus' perspective did God the Father have the ability to change Jesus' situation? Do you think Jesus understands how we feel when we face pain, sickness, and tragedy and we cry out to God to change our circumstances and he doesn't? How does that make you feel? How does that affect your perspective of God at all?

Question: How does it make you feel when someone else can understand your situation, your frustration, your anger, and your despair? How does it make you feel knowing that God is moved by your suffering and can honestly say, “Me too”?

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (ESV): *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

Question: Not only is God with us in Spirit comforting us, but he is also comforting us through the community of faith. When you're going through something difficult what are some things we could do or say that would be helpful to you? Are there any things that would be unhelpful to say or do?

NEW CHALLENGE

In Matthew 6:5-6 Jesus says, “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.”

This week's challenge is to practice praying in private, frequently throughout your day. Whether you're at the office or staying at home with your kids, try and find a special place to go throughout the day to spend time in private prayer.