

Small Groups Curriculum

Week of September 27, 2020

OPENING PRAYER

Shine in our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, the pure light of Your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind that we may comprehend the proclamations of Your Gospels. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments so that, having trampled down all carnal desires, we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the illumination of our souls and bodies, and to You we offer up glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Before the Reading of the Gospel
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

For the First Sunday of Luke

SUNDAY EPISTLE

St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10

SUNDAY GOSPEL

The Gospel According to Luke 5:1-11

All readings are available at goarch.org or the Daily Readings app.

EPISTLE READING

Brethren, working together with Him, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For He says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation."

Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute.

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

GOSPEL READING

At that time, as Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, He saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, He asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat.

And when He had ceased speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

For more on this Sunday's readings, watch:

[Live the Word #1 | A New Direction](#)

Discussion

INTRO NOTES

1. Patience during struggles
 - A. St Paul explains that the Christian life takes us through many struggles, “through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships”
 - B. At times, it can feel like our struggle is pointless: as Peter complained, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!”
 - C. Yet the mark of a Christian is not sorrow, but to be “always rejoicing”

2. God brings the success
 - A. St. Paul reminds us that we act, not under our own power, but “the power of God”
 - B. While the disciples fished all night and caught nothing, they had a different outcome when they acted in obedience: “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”

3. Encountering God
 - A. Seeing the power of God, any pride we had disappears: St Paul reminds us that we are “servants of God”
 - B. When Peter saw Jesus at work, He fell on his knees: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How are you feeling right now?
2. How have you encountered the Lord? What did this do to you?
3. What seems fruitless and frustrating in your life today? How does meeting the Lord make you re-prioritize your life?
4. What if the problem isn't *what* you're doing but *how* you're doing it?

If you don't get through all the questions, that's ok!

Discussion

WRAP-UP NOTES

Each Wrap-Up should be personal and based on your time together as a Small Group. These three questions can help you, as a Small Group Leader, wrap up your weekly meeting:

1. What are you grateful to have learned or heard in the conversation?
2. What simple statement or question from the conversation can you share again that would be most helpful to hear again three years from now?
3. If you could share up to twelve words on the topic of “success” what would you say?

AT THE END OF MEETINGS

We give thanks to You, invisible King, Who by Your boundless power fashioned the universe, and in the multitude of Your mercy brought all things from nothing into being. Look down from heaven, O Master, upon those who have bowed their heads before You; for they have not bowed before flesh and blood, but before You, the awesome God. Therefore, O Master, make smooth and beneficial for us all, whatever lies ahead, according to the need of each: Sail with those who sail; travel with those who travel; heal the sick, Physician of our souls and bodies. Through the grace, compassion, and love for mankind of Your only-begotten Son, with whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Following the Lord's Prayer
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom