

Series: Bon Voyage

Week of October 16, 2016

LIFE Group Notes for Session Five:

Text: Mark 1:1-13

Getting Started:

- Greet group members and thank them for coming.
- Open with prayer.

Ice Breaker:

- Draw a map of how to get to your house from here.
 - Share the map and your directions with the person next to you (someone who doesn't already live in your house!)
 - How easy or difficult is it to understand someone else's directions?
 - Could you drive to their house without the map?

Lesson:

Exodus Journey

- In the Lord's Prayer the fifth thing Jesus tells us to pray is: "*Lead us not into temptation.*"
- Like the other parts of the prayer that we have looked at, this request is anchored in the same Exodus story. God didn't give Moses or the Israelites a map for their journey. Instead, He became their personal Guide:
 - *Exodus 13:21 NIV*
 - *By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.*
- The cloud and fire were manifestations of God's glory. Wherever the cloud/fire was, God was present. He directed the journey through the wilderness all the way to the Promised Land.
- Isaiah retells portions of the Exodus Journey and gives us a further insight into the Presence of God in the cloud and the fire:
 - *Isaiah 63:11-14 NIV*

- *Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people – where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock?*
- *Where is he who set his **Holy Spirit** among them, who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses' right hand, who divided the waters before them to gain for himself everlasting renown, who **led** them through the depths?*
- *Like a horse in open country, they did not stumble; like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the **Spirit of the LORD. This is how you guided your people to make for yourself a glorious name.***
- Isaiah explains that it was none other than the Holy Spirit who was present in the cloud and the fire to guide Israel through the wilderness.
 - Isaiah was promising nothing less than a New Exodus for God's People – one that would take them from the realm of sin and death into God's New Creation.

Jesus:

- With this in mind, look at how Mark begins his story of Jesus:
 - *Mark 1:2-3 NIV*
 - *"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" – "a voice of one calling in the **wilderness**, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"*
- Mark is quoting from Isaiah in this promise of the long-awaited New Exodus. And just a few verses later we discover how it is that God's People will be led on this journey:
 - *Mark 1:7-8 NIV*
 - *And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and unite. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the **Holy Spirit.**"*
- John's *baptism* was nothing less than a new crossing of the Red Sea to begin the New Exodus journey. And when people took that journey, the Holy Spirit would be there to lead and guide them – just like the cloud and the fire in the original Exodus story.
- When Jesus is baptized, the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit becomes clear:

- *Mark 1:10 NIV*
- *Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the **Spirit** descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*
- Note:
 - Just as Israel became "God's son" in the Exodus, now Jesus is proclaimed to be God's Son.
 - And with Jesus' baptism/new Red Sea crossing comes the presence of the Holy Spirit – not as a cloud, but as a dove.
- The first thing that the Holy Spirit does is lead Jesus into the wilderness:
 - *Mark 1:12-13 NIV*
 - *At once the **Spirit** sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.*
- Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness and encountered many tests and temptations. Now Jesus takes the New Exodus journey on behalf of God's People.
- It is the Holy Spirit who sends him there (literally "casts" or "throws" him into the wilderness.) This is a Spirit-led journey.

Our Exodus Journey:

- Paul connects the dots for you and me when he says:
 - *Romans 8:14-15 NIV*
 - *For those who are **led by the Spirit of God** are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."*
- Like Israel, we are led by the Spirit of God on our Exodus journey.
 - Like Israel, we are set free from slavery.
 - Like Israel, we become God's children.
- Jesus promised us at the Last Supper that the Holy Spirit would be our guide:
 - *John 16:12a NIV*
 - *"But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will **guide you into all the truth.**"*

- And that enables us to say the very first words of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father!"

Learning to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit:

- That is why it is so important that we learn to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He is God's Presence dwelling in us. We are His Temple.
- How do we "hear" the Spirit?
 - Through the Bible
 - Through our own prayer times – actively listening to God speak into our hearts and minds
 - Through the loving counsel of others
 - Even through circumstances
- When all of these ways of hearing God line up, we can be sure that we are hearing from God.

Prayer time:

- Have group members pray for each other.
- Be especially attentive to those who are wanting to learn to hear God speak to them; encourage them and pray for the Holy Spirit to be real in their lives!
- Divide the group into smaller units if necessary, to assure that everyone gets to pray and receives prayer.
- Have group members pray for each other and agree to pray throughout the coming week.
- Thank them, once again, for being a part of your LIFE Group.

And thank you for leading them!