



PLEASANT HILLS
COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Week of Sunday, November 28

*Questions with asterisks are meant to be answered by everyone in the group.
Leave enough time for prayer at the end of your time together.*

Icebreaker

****What is one thing you remember about Black Friday shopping (personally or culturally)?****

Questions for the Sermon Series, *God is in the Manger: Week 1 (Waiting)*

Read Luke 6:17-26 to provide the context for the discussion questions that follow.

Jesus went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Looking at his disciples, he said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,
because of the Son of Man.

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because
great is your reward in heaven. For that is how
their ancestors treated the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.
Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.
Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
for that is how their ancestors treated the
false prophets.”

1. This is the beginning of Jesus' "sermon on the plain" in the Gospel of Luke. It is similar to the more popular "sermon on the mount" in the Gospel of Matthew. Both include *beatitudes*, which are statements about the life that is truly blessed. As a group, read the beatitudes again (left column), and discuss the following questions:
 - a. Which phrase do you relate to the most in this list, and what does Jesus' promise about your experience mean to you?
 - b. ****Which phrase would be the most painful for you to endure as a lifestyle? Why?***
2. What do you think Jesus means when he uses the phrase, "Blessed are you...", when describing life-experiences that we often perceive as the exact opposite of "blessed"?
3. In our culture, it is increasingly difficult to be a disciple of Jesus. Would you agree or disagree? How does the final beatitude (and the promise that follows it) encourage you to remain faithful? Is it enough?
4. Read the rest of the passage aloud again (right column).
 - a. How do these phrases convict you or unsettle you?
 - b. What questions do you have about this part of Jesus' teaching?
 - c. How might God be calling you to change as a result of Jesus' teaching?
5. As a group, recount parts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life as told by Pastor Mark. How does his faithfulness in the context of Nazi extremists challenge you?
6. Mark referenced two kinds of faith: "faith *because of*..." and "faith *in spite of*..." Discuss the differences between the two, and whether one form of faith is stronger than the other.
7. How might you complete these statements?
I have "faith *because of*..."
I have "faith *in spite of*..."
8. Advent is a season of waiting -- eagerly waiting for God to fulfill his promises.
****What are you waiting for this year?***

Take prayer requests and close in prayer. Allow time for small group members to pray aloud.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

5:00pm Great Room, Contemporary Worship Service (with livestream)

7:00pm Sanctuary, Traditional Worship Service (with livestream)

11:00pm Chapel, Contemplative Worship Service

Nursery and childcare from preschool through 2nd grade is available for 5pm and 7pm. Please pre-register for nursery and/or childcare options.