

Ponderosa Bible Church
Sermon Based Small Group
Monday, September 14, 2020

Last Breath



For the Leader: *The person leading the small group really needs to watch the Sermon titled “Last Breath” on the Ponderosa Bible Church YouTube channel in order to have a full discussion for this small group.*

- *This guide is NOT MEANT to be studied in preparation for the small group you are leading but only to be looked over. This is a guide that is meant to compliment the Study Guide that is given out in the Sunday Morning bulletin. The only work that needs to be done beforehand is to listen to the Sunday Morning message and to use your Study Guide while listening to it. The study guide and the leader guide are your materials for the sermon based small group.*

“Digging Deeper” Fellowship time:

For the leader: *The purpose of these questions is to foster relationship building and to deepen the fellowship of the group.*

Fellowship time suggestion: This week email or text everyone in your small group one time and remind them where the meeting is and what time what time you guys are getting together. This week we are going to have some fun with our “digging deeper question.” Ask the members of your sermon based small group the following, “What is the biggest way you've changed since you were a child? In what way are you still the same?” Remember, the goal is to make fellowship time last a half hour, but be prepared to have fun with this question!

Sermon Based Study Questions:

For the leader: *A few things to remember while leading this study: (1) You are not TEACHING, you are facilitating! There will be small group leaders who have led a small group that will teach, but that is not the primary purpose of this leader guide, the primary purpose is to help you facilitate. Your job as a small group leader is to facilitate a discussion, not teach a lesson. The pastor has already taught the lesson, now you are trying to start a discussion on what was taught. You are putting a magnifying glass to the teaching and teasing out the details. (2) As a small group leader you want to bring out personal application of the Sunday message (which means you should have listened to it). Ask questions during the discussion, “How does this apply to you? What did you learn? How does this change your views on Christianity?” Etc. Personal application is the goal of the Sermon based small group. (3) It is not the goal of this outline to get through the whole guide, the goal is to foster conversation. While progressing through this guide is a desired outcome, don’t consider getting to the end as “success.” Success as defined by the “sermon based small group” is defined as equal parts fellowship and a deepening study of the Sunday Sermon. (4) Not every sub-point under a question needs to be asked, these are suggestions for you to consider while you are talking about the question from the study guide. If you asked the study guide question and had a good discussion about it then you may not even need to discuss the sub-points. These points exist to help you agitate a discussion.*

This week's scripture: Luke 23:39-49, "One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

(1) What was the significance of darkness at the sixth hour? Do you think it was an eclipse?

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think it will make for a better discussion****

A. Why you think that such natural events happened at the crucifixion of Christ?

-or-

B. Would this event being an eclipse change how you feel about the significance of the event?

• **For the leader:** *What would you expect to happen if you were God and your son was killed by the rebel? We do know that God being God cannot die, but God being completely innocent of what he was accused of and then being handed over to the rebel to be murdered while in his human form was no light thing. God, in human form, was mistreated and murdered. We should be surprised that the sky didn't collapse and that the atmosphere didn't catch on fire! What happened at Jesus's crucifixion was less than what was deserved as far as supernatural actions are concerned.*

(2) Read Mark 15:38 to get more information about the veil of the temple. What is significant about this event? See Ephesians 2:14—16 for added information.

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think it will make for a better discussion****

A. Was it possible that the tearing of the veil at the time of Jesus's final breath was a coincidence?

-or-

B. Was there a significance in the time of the tearing of the veil in the temple?

• **For the leader:** *Those who study the history that surrounds the scripture that we are looking at mark the significance of the temple veil tearing. Here is what the Bible Knowledge Commentary has to say about the event:*

“Darkness was reigning because of His crucifixion. The other symbolic event was the tearing in two of the curtain of the temple, which separated the holy of holies from the rest of the temple. The curtain divided people from the place where God had localized His presence. The tearing from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51) symbolized the fact that now, because of Jesus' death, people had freer access to

God as they no longer had to go through the sacrificial system (cf. Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; 3:12). Jesus was the only Sacrifice needed to enable people to have a proper relationship with God.”

(3) To the best of your memory, what is the difference between the two worldviews represented by the two criminals?

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think it will make for a better discussion****

A. What do you think that the criminal who mocked Christ was thinking while doing it?

-or-

B. Do you believe that deathbed confessions are legitimate ways to be saved?

• **For the leader:** *One of the many flaws of humanity is that though we are not God, we try to be! We make judgment calls as if we have a right to and that are judgment calls are without error. That being said, regarding the two worldviews of the thieves on the cross, the major distinction is that one viewed his situation from a perspective of hope, and the other viewed his from a perspective of hopelessness. The one that declared Jesus’s innocence saw that Christ could still help him even though he was dying, and the other saw his situation as*

irredeemable and that he was going to die regardless. As we watch the two thieves we get to see the outcome of such worldviews.

(4) Do you think the second thief was actually saved on the cross? Why or why not?

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think it will make for a better discussion****

A. Did his actions exude that of a man who was convinced that Jesus is the Christ?

-or-

B. Is just the man's confession that Jesus Christ is God enough, or is there something else the man had to do to be saved?

• **For the leader:** *Addressing this scenario Eerdman's commentary on the whole Bible says the following:*

“One of the criminals crucified with Jesus “kept blaspheming” him, for the third time mocking his ability to save himself or them (23:39). Mark (15:32) notes only that “those [plural] who were crucified with him also taunted him,” a notice that Luke develops into a dialogue (23:39–43). The one who mocked was rebuked by the other, “Do you not fear God ...?” (v. 40; see 1:50; 12:4–5; 18:2, which shows this to be a typical contrast for Luke: some fear God, others do not; Acts 10:2). The “wrongdoer” who fears God considers himself justly

(dikaios) condemned, but Jesus as having done nothing wrong (nothing “out of place”; 23:41).

Addressing Jesus directly, he asks, “Remember me when you come into your kingdom” (23:42). God remembers Israel in this gospel (1:54, 72), but here the Jewish revolutionary asks Jesus to remember him, as later God “remembers” the prayers and alms of the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10:31). The criminal accepts Jesus’ message, that as king (as also the inscription on Jesus’ cross says) he has a kingdom (1:33; 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 12:32; 17:20; 22:29, claimed by Jesus himself; also Acts 14:22; 28:23, 31).

Jesus responds, “Amen, I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (23:43; see 2 Cor 12:2, 4). Luke has fewer (6) of these “Amen, I tell you” sayings than do Mark (13) or Matthew (31). In Luke the expression precedes assertions that many in the culture would not accept, for example, 12:37 concerning the master serving the slave dinner, 18:17 concerning only children entering the kingdom, and 18:29 concerning disciples who leave house or wife or brothers ... getting much back. Here the “wrongdoer” is to enter paradise—today’s.”

(5) Do you believe the centurion was saved because of what he said about Jesus? Why or why not?

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think it will make for a better discussion****

A. Was there more to what the centurion said about Jesus than what we read about in his statement?

-or-

B. Why would the centurion say this after having murdered Jesus?

• **For the leader:** *What a lot of people do not realize while reading statements like this in the Scripture is that not every statement about a person's ability to perform miracles for God or Jesus being the Son of God doesn't necessarily refer to the God we worship. The Roman's were polytheists and so it wasn't that hard for them to imagine that Jesus was the son of a God. Roman's did not believe in Yahweh and so it was more than likely that the Roman soldier was referring to Zues and not Yahweh. To the Roman Centurion Jesus could've been on par with Hercules or Hermes, which would've been a great honor but still degrading to the name of Yahweh.*

For further study check out: Matthew 27:39-44; Revelation 2:7; Exodus 26:31-33; Psalm 31:5; Luke 18:13; Psalm 88:8

PLEASE READ, VERY IMPORTANT!!! How you close your meeting is very important so even if you do not get through all the questions and even if you stick on one point for far longer than you anticipated, please decide how you plan on ending your meeting before it has even started. It would even be good to choose a talking point to end the meeting on about ten minutes before it ends. Also decide who is going to pray to close out the meeting. Ending a meeting in an abrupt manner leads to a very awkward meeting. So have your last talking point ready to go along with someone chosen to pray in order to close the meeting smoothly.