



### **\*Said No One Ever Week 1 –God Works Exactly As I Expect Spiritual Formation & Discussion Guide**

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take your next spiritual step, contact us at [info@wschurch.org](mailto:info@wschurch.org).

#### **Scripture:**

When Jesus had finished giving these instructions to his twelve disciples, he went out to teach and preach in towns throughout the region.

<sup>2</sup> John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, <sup>3</sup>“Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen— <sup>5</sup>the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.” <sup>6</sup> And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.”

Matthew 11:1-6

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? <sup>36</sup> (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) <sup>37</sup> No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

<sup>38</sup> And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. <sup>39</sup> No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- If you could ask God one question today, what would it be?
- What stood out to you from Sunday's service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church? (The message's main points and scripture are listed below if it helps you think back.)

- How have you realized that God rarely works in the ways we expect? (Whether in good and surprising ways or in ways that are painful or disorienting?)
  - Read through the interaction between John the Baptist and Jesus in Matthew 11:1-6. (If you have time, you can read verses 1-19 to see more of Jesus' response and teaching.)
    - What do you notice about John? How do you imagine he felt?
    - What do you notice about Jesus? How do his words speak to you today?
  - Eddie shared that "doubt is a normal stop on the journey of faith" and that Jesus responded to John's question without shame. How comfortable are you with expressing doubt to God? Why?
  - Eddie also offered two takeaways from the message:
    - a little faith can eventually produce a big result
    - God doesn't have to work as we expect to be at work
- Is there one of those that you need to hold onto this week? How could you remember and act on it?
- Is there anything else from this teaching that you want to explore more?
  - Take some time to slowly read Romans 8:35-39, the passage from the close of the message. Let these words reassure you of God's love.
  - Take time to pray as you close your reflection or discussion, asking God to help you act on what he has asked you to do.

## Resources

Looking for some ways to grow and be stretched spiritually? Check out our highlighted resources at [www.wschurch.org/resources](http://www.wschurch.org/resources).

## **Message Main Points and Scripture:**

- **"God works exactly as I expect," said no one ever!**
- Acts 9:15-16 - "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."
- 2 Corinthians 4:11 - "Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus..."
- Mark 4:17 - "But if they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word."
- Matthew 11:2 - John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?"
- John 3:28, 30 - "I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him... he must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less."
- **DOUBT**
- **doubt is a normal stop on the journey of faith**
- Matthew 11:4-6 - Jesus told them, "Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor." And Jesus added, "God blesses those who do not fall away because of me."
- **the absence of shaming**
- John 1:29 - John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."
- Jude 1:22 - Be merciful to those who doubt.
- **doubt and disbelief are different**
- Psalm 14:1 - The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
- Psalm 39:13 - Leave me alone so I can smile again before I am gone and exist no more.
- Psalm 88:18 - You have taken away my companions and loved ones. Darkness is my closest friend.
- Matthew 11:6 - Jesus added, "God blesses those who do not fall away because of me."

- *Skandalon*
- **a little faith can eventually produce a big result**
- Matthew 17:20 - "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible."
- **God doesn't have to work as we expect to be at work**
- Romans 8:35-39 - Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.