

# Deliver Us: A Counterculture

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Ephesians 3:7-13

D E L I V E R U S  
*Life in the victory of Jesus*

## Begin with Prayer

In silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then pray:

*Empowering God, we pray that you will send your Holy Spirit to move us to understanding; to help us to believe the gospel; to give us strength and wisdom to live by it. Amen. (Worship Sourcebook Q.3.5.8)*

## Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a moment to check in with one another (2 minutes each).

1. *When was the last time you tried something new?*
2. *Have you been baptized? If so, what was your experience? If not, what do you think about baptism?*

### Introduction

*When we gather, our goal is to be a people apprenticed to the life of Jesus.*

*As you begin this week, remind your group that while we are meeting, commit to focusing rather than multitasking. Be all here.*

## Listening to God's Word

As we conclude our series on spiritual warfare, we look at where and how we implement all we have discussed. How do we resist temptation, counter lies, overcome good with evil, and live into the victory of Jesus? The context in which we implement these is in community with fellow brothers and sisters of faith. While contemporary culture pushes us to individualism and isolation, Jesus calls the church to be a body of unified believers. The church exists as a counterculture in our world, and through this community we overcome the work of the enemy.

---

## Small Group Discussion

**Read Ephesians 3:7-13.** Then discuss together:

- ***What is your first thought when you read through this passage?***
- Paul refers to two unlikely kinds of people that are involved in God's plan: he calls himself "less than the least of all the Lord's people," and he names Gentiles. *What does the inclusion of these people tell us about who the church is?*
- *What kinds of people are the contemporary equivalent to these two kinds of people (i.e. those that you wouldn't naturally think of as part of God's plan)? How could we actively include them in the church?*
- We often separate aspects of following Jesus into two categories: individual practices (devotional times, prayer, etc.) and communal practices (worship, group bible study & discussion, etc.). *Which category comes more naturally to you?*
  - Reminder: Both individual and communal practices are crucial! The danger is in overemphasizing one and neglecting the other.
- Whether you gravitate towards individual or communal practices, *how can you ensure you are following Jesus with a healthy balance of both communal and individual practices?*

## Read Luke 10:1-3, 17-20

- **What is your first through when you read through this passage?**
- *Why would Jesus send his followers to places he was already planning to travel to?*
- Jesus calls his followers “lambs among wolves,” and Jesus is elsewhere called the lamb that was slain (Rev. 5:6-13). Both are weak and vulnerable animals that achieve victory. *What does this tell us about how we overcome the enemy?*

*“I have given you authority to trample on snakes” (Luke 10:19)*

Jesus is here making reference to Genesis 3, where God curses the evil serpent, saying that someone will one day “crush [his] head” (Genesis 3:15). Jesus fulfills this prophecy by destroying the devil’s work (1 John 3:8) and empowers his followers to do the same.

- **Read verse 20 again.** Earlier in the sermon series, it was said that victory over the enemy is about being freed to Jesus – having a closer relationship with God by eliminating the works of the enemy. *What work of the enemy do you sense God wanting to destroy in your life? How would that result in deeper connection with God?*

## Practices

**Prayer of Examen:** As the counterculture that is the church, our purpose is to look more like Jesus in our everyday lives. The prayer of examen is a helpful way to reflect on ways we are fulfilling that purpose, and what areas of our lives still need to be shaped to look more like Jesus.

Invite the group to close their eyes, then pray through the following prompts. Leave some time for silence (1-3 minutes) between each prompt to allow God to speak.

*Holy Spirit, we invite you now to come. Still our minds and search our hearts.*

*Father, where were you at work in my life today? How did I experience your grace today?*

*Jesus, in what ways did I not walk according to your ways? I confess my sin and shortcomings to you now.*

*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – I thank you for your presence in my life. Empower me to walk in your ways, living out your kingdom, and loving those around me. Amen.*

Reflect on this time of prayer and share what you sensed God saying with the group.

## Caring for One Another

- *Suggest a prayer request that is related to the topic we’ve discussed.*
- **Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?**

Using **the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)** as a guide, based on what you’ve shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.