

1/18/26
2nd Sunday after Epiphany
For Group Meetings from January 11th – January 17th

OUR MISSION: As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

Prayer of the Day: Holy God, our strength and our redeemer, by your Spirit hold us forever, that through your grace we may worship you and faithfully serve you, follow you and joyfully find you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER:

Share: How did last week's scripture (Matthew 3:13-17) work in your life this week?

Mission:

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

Hear: John 1:29-42

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What does John the Baptist say when he sees Jesus approaching? What title does he give Jesus?
2. Why do John the Baptist's disciples begin to follow Jesus?
3. Why does Jesus give Simon a new name, and what does his new name signify?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What assurance would you demand before following someone?
2. Who has pointed you to Jesus like John did for his disciples?
3. What are you looking for in 2026?

Memorize this verse: "He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon." (John 1: 39) When has an invitation been a particular blessing for you?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Meditate on Psalm 40:1-11. How does this speak into your life?

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

Jesus' ministry and mission in the Gospel of John all starts with a question and an invitation. First, the question. Jesus' first words in John's Gospel are not a sermon or an exorcism or the proclamation of the coming kingdom, but rather a question. When disciples of John the Baptist come looking for him, he asks them, "What are you looking for?" The richness of this question in the original Greek bears notice, as the question could also have been translated, "What are you seeking?" or "What do you hope to find?" And we might expand that to "What do you need? What do you long for? What do you most hope for?" These are helpful questions to ask especially as we begin a new year. But given the chance, our culture is happy to answer these questions for you telling you that you can have what you want for a price.

But deep down we know that true wealth is counting all the blessings we enjoy that money can't buy. But message after message to the contrary can wear us down and push us to look for substitutes. What do we really need, long for, hope for, both as individuals and the church? Is it silence in a world of so much noise? Is it relationship in a world increasingly isolated and isolating world? Is it community in an individualistic and often lonely culture? Is it the chance to serve and be connected to others in a world that encourages putting yourself first? Is it hope and courage when headlines inspire fear and despair? Is it Sabbath rest in a 24/7 world where relentless busy-ness has become a badge of honor and is regularly substituted for meaningful activity and necessary rest.

The disciples reply to Jesus' question by asking where he is staying. Again, the translation limps a bit, as they are really asking where he is dwelling, abiding, remaining, indwelling. They want to know where they can come and simply be with him. And that leads to Jesus' invitation. Jesus' invitation is really quite simple: "come and see." It's non-threatening. It's clear. It's inherently relational. And it's something any of us could say. Which invites us to imagine evangelism rather differently. Evangelism doesn't have to be intrusive or abrasive or unwelcome. Evangelism is offering a simple and relational invitation to other people seeking something more than the culture has to offer. Come and see.

And here's the thing. We are not the only ones offering this invitation. It is God in Christ working through us to invite others to abundant life so much richer than anything we can buy. And, just as importantly, it's God in Christ inviting us to that same life. Even if we struggle to name or understand or articulate our faith. Even when we opt for cheap substitutes we think we can buy or earn rather than receive the gift of faith from God. Even when we struggle to share our faith with others. Jesus is still there, still asking what we most deeply need, still inviting us to come and see, and still determined to give us more than we can possibly imagine. Jesus simply will not give up on us. Ever.

Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

Traditional version:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Contemporary version:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen