



The TOAST | April 26

These study guides are designed for individual or group study but highly encouraged to be experienced in community with a small group or other friends on the journey with Jesus.

Context: We are living in what many are calling “unprecedented times.” Shelter in place, social distancing are terms we would not have fully understood just two months ago. An important question that we ask in today’s lesson is, “How are you finding joy today?”

Celebration is Important: We’re missing celebrations. Graduations, baptisms, weddings, all joyful occasions that we can’t have right now. Missing them is sad.

- Are you missing a celebration because of the virus rules? Talk about it with the group. What emotions and feelings does it bring up in you?
- Have you found new celebrations? What have you done (virtually or otherwise) with family or friends to inspire fun, joy and celebration?

Jesus at the Wedding: Read John 2:1-11. Jesus had gone to a celebration. Pastor Dan describes the cultural significance of making a lifelong impression with this traditionally week-long village celebration of a marriage. Good impressions meant good relations with the village and future prosperity. The groom was out of wine!

- In vs. 3, Jesus’ mother notices the dilemma. What was her concern? Why did she worry about the wine supply?
- In vs. 4 we see the response of Jesus. What was Jesus’ concern?
- What are the dynamics—the push-pull—in this scene? Have you ever experienced this (either as a parent or a child)?

Do whatever he tells you: What a metaphor for all of life. Jesus instructs and what happens? The BEST wine is produced. The host is saved humiliation. The wedding celebration goes on. The JOY continues.

- What captures your attention from this story? What questions stir in you as you read the scene?
- Can you remember a time when you were saved by “following Jesus’ instructions”? Tell the story to the group (or journal about it).

Out of Resources: “Jesus has a special place in his heart for people whose resources have run out. When someone’s love has been poured out till there’s nothing left. When someone’s hope for the future has been drained to the last drop. When someone’s supply of courage or physical strength has trickled away. Jesus shows us the God of good news, of joyful renewal, in short -- the God of celebration.”

- Do you have a story of coming to the end of your resources? What happened? How did the God of good news impact the story?
- Are you in such a story right now? How can the group pray for you? What kind of help do you need?
- How can you allow Jesus to join you where you are at and help you recover your joy?

The Eternal Joy: Read Luke 15:7-10. Celebrations are not always visible to us. Think about the Dad’s heartache in Luke 15:11-32. Do you think life was all joy after the welcome home party?



- What perspective unlocks joy in the face of suffering and hardship, in the face of disappointment and betrayal?
- Pastor Dan describes Jesus' joy as bubbles that keep rising to the surface "filling the world with a grace that triumphs over the gravity of life." How would you restate that in your own words sharing what it means to you?
- What gets in the way of your joy? What brings joy visible through your life?

Jesus Eagerly Desires: Read Luke 22:15; John 15:11 and 16:20,22. Jesus shows us that far from being the celestial Scrooge some people picture God to be, Jesus is the God of good news, of joyful renewal, in short -- the God of celebration. In the face of His ultimate suffering Jesus wanted to celebrate the Passover with his disciples.

- What is this joy John describes in the given passages?
- Pastor Dan asks a simple question, "What do you have to celebrate"?
- Do a group brainstorm. Appoint a scribe and set a timer for two minutes. Come up with as many things as you can think of that you are thankful for, that you celebrate in these days right now.
- What is the relationship between gratitude and joy?

The Toast: Pastor Dan closes with "I pray [we] toast the Creator of this Universe who so loved the world that He changed his own blood into the wine of salvation for us all."

- How does this invitation resonate with you?
- What can you do over the next week that moves you toward toasting that toast?

Practice of the Week:

What can you celebrate this week that brings you joy and fosters your gratitude towards God's goodness in your life here and now? Take a picture and post it on our [Grow Ministry FaceBook Page](#) to share your joy!

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts, questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you or your small group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these study guides in your lives.

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