



BELIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE | Impossible Reconciliation | Week 5 | Dec 28 & 29

Isaiah 11:1-10; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Matthew 5:23-24; Mark 9:35; Matthew 5:9

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 all have goals, it's part of human nature. We sometimes make plans and sometimes follow orders, but we do so with an eye on our goals.

- What goals have you fulfilled over this Christmas holiday?
- What were you asked to do or did you plan to do to make the day special?
- Were there interactions? Was there love and unity? Did anything get in the way?

We're in the Mountains: Consider hiking in the mountains. Reaching the top of a first ridge you might say, "Yes, I am in the mountains." But surveying the path ahead it's clear there is further to go. Read Isaiah 11:1-10.

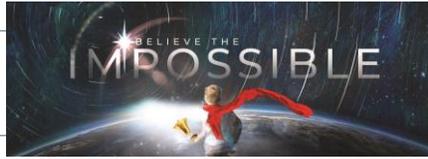
- What part of this prophecy has already taken place?
- What part of the passage has "further to go"?
- How do you respond to the idea of a "partially verified" prophetic passage? How can it provide confidence in what's still to be fulfilled?

Moving toward an IMPOSSIBLE goal: Consider two types of storyline. There's the mystery story (think Sherlock Holmes) and then there's the triumph of good story (think Star Wars)--you know what is going to happen but you're not sure how.

- Consider the Isaiah passage. What is the "good" that we see described?
- How can you imagine mankind reaching such a goal? What would it take?
- What does the passage describe as the conclusion?

An important image, what does it mean?: Read Isaiah 11:6-9. This description violates the principles of the natural world as we know it. But just like we look for clues in a movie, this impossible description takes up a larger portion of the broader passage, that's intentional, we should pay attention to it.

- What does this description say is the ultimate characteristic of the coming Kingdom?
- How can you apply this description of the natural world to our daily life?



A different priority: Read Matthew 5:23-24. The idea of reconciliation is so important to the vision that God has for humanity, we see Jesus leading his followers into these ideas in the Sermon on the Mount.

- Share or journal how you would reword Matthew 5:23-24 for our lives now.
- Considering the Matthew passage again, how important is reconciling to our best effort to God? How do you know?
- What gets in the way of giving our best effort toward reconciliation?

IMPOSSIBLE point of view: Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Paul is refocusing our point of view. In Jesus, we no longer see things from a worldly point of view and the result leads us towards reconciliation.

- What is reconciliation in your own words?
- What changes, in our point of view, allow reconciliation?
- What does it mean to be an ambassador? Journal or brainstorm with your group what makes for a good ambassador? How does this relate to us as followers of Jesus?

Changing the “Natural” state: Our world is so full of the noise of tribal acrimony we don’t notice the tension we “naturally” live with. We may notice our outrage at child trafficking or racial suppression in Africa and China, but the tension at the office and the dinner table are “natural” we think. Here are four steps to guide you towards reconciliation:

- *Identify the area of conflict.* What happened to cause it? Pray, asking for Jesus to guide you in this process.
 - *Imagine the resolution.* What would change if the enmity were healed? *See grace, healing and humility is the Ambassador vision—it is not vindication and revenge.)*
 - *Ask God to show you* how and when to take the next steps in the path towards reconciliation.
 - *Pursue the process,* in humility and truth but open to learning and forgiveness.
- Share or journal about a relationship you would like to see God heal through this process.

Practice of the Week: Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.

As you do, journal what new insights you receive or questions the Spirit gives you as you allow this powerful passage on reconciliation to shape your heart and mind.

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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