



THE BLACKLIST | THE AVENGER | Week 7 April 20/21, 2019

Matthew 16:21; Luke 24:19-23; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

Opening: During the Lenten season we are reflecting on the opposition that Jesus encounters on the way to the cross. We have discussed the Jewish authorities, Roman governors, Peter, Judas and last week we discussed Pilate. As we conclude this series think back through the dismissive encounters, betrayal, torture and subjection endured by the Truth and imagine yourself watching it happen. And then imagine yourself left alone, leaderless, facing the world.

Context: The day is very black. Pastor Meyer describes “That amazing loved one has died. The medical diagnosis is catastrophic, maybe even terminal. The love relationship is clearly over. The job is gone. The dream for that child or for yourself has faded to black. Life feels miserable or meaningless. At some point, all of us find ourselves at a point where we feel we’ve lost the war for whatever mattered most to us.” *Have you ever been in a dark and hopeless place like this? Share what helped you survive?*

The Prediction: Read Matt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19. Jesus has walked with his disciples for three years. He knows them and loves them. He has shown them his miracles and his wisdom. They are his dedicated devotees. They are all in. *What do you imagine you would be thinking as a disciple, at this point? How would you have understood this statement by Jesus?*

The Picture of the Kingdom: Pastor Meyer sets the contrast of the “kingdoms” in the world to that of the Avenger characters. His summary comment on the contemporary culture in the life of the disciples was, “Life was everybody for themselves, scrapping and scraping and skirmishing. It was a dark world full of disease and decay and despair.” *What contrasting kingdom do you think is imagined by the disciples? What do you imagine you would be expecting from the Messiah, the Savior, after you walked with him for three years?*

“The Kingdom of Heaven is near:” (Matthew 4:17) Jesus began his ministry with these words. Pastor Meyer describes the type of life he lived. “Jesus wasn’t like the political or religious figures of the day. He seemed to see the value of everyone and the beauty of life in simple things...he taught wealth as relationships....and leaders as servants...power as forgiveness...joy as giving for others.” *How do you imagine the disciples thought that “upside-down” Kingdom would work? How does it overcome Jewish hierarchy, Roman authority and cultural decay? How do you think the disciples saw Jesus doing this?*

Why are you interested?: Read John 6:66-69. Peter and the disciples knew there was a difference in Jesus’ kingdom. They could feel it and see the impact—but they didn’t understand it. *What are we interested in? How do we see the kingdom today in our culture?*



The “rug pulled out”: The epic battle took place on that Friday. Whatever your vision of the kingdom, it was gone. Darkness and power had won. The Rabbi, Redeemer, Messiah was dead—killed by jealousy, envy, fear..... Pastor Meyer says “Everything good and hopeful was disintegrating, dissolving, dying away. And the Messiah is saying ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” *Imagine how you would feel if everything you believed in was taken away and you were left alone. What would you do?*

The Second Day: *How would you describe what Pastor Dan called “second day?” When have you lived a second day? Talk about it with the group. What was the result in your spirit, in your soul?*

Our Kingdom: The triumph of Jesus over the darkness is an eternal fact. The sequel to the Friday battle shows the Avenger rising from the grave to defeat the power of sin, decay, disintegration, and death. As Pastor Dan put it “Friday was the day of suffering, pain, and agony. Saturday was the day of doubt, confusion, and misery. But Easter—that Sunday—was the day of hope and joy and victory. We face these days still” And he asked: *What do I do in my days of pain? How do I get through my days of doubt and confusion? How do I get to the days of joy and victory? Talk about how you have experienced “these days.”*

Practice of the Week: Reflecting on the Days—question the battle.

Are you in a battle? You are not in it alone. Figure out which day your battle is: pain and agony, doubt and confusion or joy and victory. Sit with the ultimate superhero the Risen Christ and prayerfully ask for help.

Read James 1:2-6 and thankfully ask for wisdom.

Family Formation: Imagine THAT person

What can we pray about? Pick one of your kid’s heros. Ask them to describe what they do and what is awesome about them. Ask them why they do what they do? Then use that example and talk about why Mommy and Daddy do great things (like go to work or cook dinner) and lead that into why Jesus did things. The why of fame vs love is in there somewhere, find your way to say it.

Additional Resources: *The Case for Hope* (Zondervan, 2015) Lee Stroble

During this Lenten season we have been providing weekly devotionals that complement the previous Sunday’s message. This Monday reflect on the one for the “Avenger”. They can be found at ChristChurch.us/lentdevo19.

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 and your group, please let us know.

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

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