

Welcome to the fall term of small groups at New Day!

1

GETTING STARTED

During the message, Pastor Aaron made reference to the book and movie *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Do you consider yourself a reader, or do you prefer to wait until the movie comes out? What is one of the better stories you have read or watched recently?

2

LOOKING BACK

Looking back on Sunday, is there anything that stood out to you, confused you, or challenged you?

Key Text: Matthew 5:7 (NLT) God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Further Reading: *The Good Samaritan* (Luke 10:25-37), *The Unforgiving Servant* (Matthew 18:21-35),

A Warning Against Prejudice (James 2:1-13)

NOTE: Remember that the goal of these groups and the command of Christ is to love each other well. Even as we wade into thoughts and ideas where we might disagree, we must speak to each other with respect and encouragement.

3

MY STORY

Have you been affected by any of the divisions Pastor Aaron alluded to in the message, or do you feel like you have dodged the big controversies in the world today?

Do you pay close attention to the news? Why or why not?

4

DIGGING DEEPER

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 (NLT) 9 For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. 10 Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. 11 So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

Paul wrote this to people in a first-century church as a reminder of God's mercy on us. How does remembering God's mercy help us to encourage and build each other up within the church?

How can you love and encourage someone in the church who disagrees on an issue that is important to you?

4

DIGGING DEEPER (CONTINUED)

What are some ways Jesus showed mercy to people during His ministry?

Practically speaking, how can people in the church today show mercy to people outside the church the way Jesus showed mercy?

James 3:17 (ESV) But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

James describes godly wisdom as a contrast to bitterness, jealousy and selfishness (James 3:13-16). In what situations do you have a hard time acting wisely, with mercy and gentleness?

What is a wise way to interact with people who don't seem to be open to reason?

How can your small group defuse discussions that could escalate into arguments?

Colossians 3:12-13 (NLT) 12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

How is forgiveness related to mercy?

We all have times when we say to ourselves something like, "I can't understand how those people can think that way." What practical steps can you take to get "into the skin" of other people and better understand their thinking?

5

BRINGING IT HOME

Thank God that He was merciful to us, even in while we were offending Him (Romans 5:8). Too often, Christians are known for who fighting against people who offend them. The ability to show mercy--even to people who are offensive to you--is the mark of a true disciple of Jesus.

6

PRAYER REQUESTS

How can we take practical steps to being an answer to these prayers?