

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Gracious God, there are many things that keep us from being a neighbour—perhaps most of all our fear. Show us your ways of grace and life and lead us deeper into community with you and with one another we pray, through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Brief Introduction to the study/what to expect/Dwelling in the Word

Karen, share screen with scripture text please

Dwelling in the Word: Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Karen, after reading the first time, wait about a minute, then display the questions on screen please

Reading the first time:

- *What words or phrases stand out for you?*
- *What surprises you? What things are you hearing for the first time in this text as we read?*

Karen, as we read the second time, share screen with scripture text (above) please

Going Deeper: Reading the second time

Karen, after reading the second time, wait about a minute, then display only the first question on screen please. I will lead the rest of the questions verbally.

- *Do you hear anything different? What stands out for you as you hear the second time?*
- *If Jesus were to tell this story today, who in our world would be those beaten and left for dead in the ditch?*
- *Many of Jesus' teachings and parables were spoken to the faith community of his day. As part of a faith community of our day, where do you see the church in this parable? What role in the story does the church take?*
- *Why do you think Jesus tells this parable? What is Jesus calling us to?*

SESSION TWO // What is the Church?

In session two's film, we hear Walter Brueggemann, one of our generation's most profound and prolific biblical scholars, answer the question, "What is the role of the Church?" His answer will help set the stage for our discussions around that question in the coming weeks as we begin to think deeply about our own answers.

Karen, please screen share and play the video

Watch the film Collision Course with Walter Brueggemann

Going Deeper

When asked "What is the role of the Church", Walter Brueggemann responds saying "the role of the Church is to try to act out the neighbor narrative—that is an endless challenge to whatever one calls the other narrative."

A. What do you think is meant by the phrase "the neighbor narrative?"

B. By way of contrast, then, what is “the other narrative” all about?

C. When you think about your own life how difficult has it been for you to live out the neighbour narrative? Why do you think that is?

D. What kinds of examples from your own life can you lend of ways that you have lived out the neighbour narrative, in what ways have others lived out the neighbour narrative with you?

Brueggemann states that “[The Gospel of] Luke has Mary announce that the story of Jesus we are about to tell is a story of contradiction and conflict. And then I think Jesus simply lives out the song that his mother sang which calls into question all the structures by which people are kept immobilized, disadvantaged and devalued. And what the gospel narrative tells is that Jesus had this incredible capacity to keep breaking that open.”

A. When have you seen examples of the Church complicit in immobilizing, disadvantaging and devaluing others?

B. When have you seen examples of the Church working against these kinds of injustices?

C. Many Christians advocate both for and against the Church being more involved in challenging political and social structures. How engaged should the Church be with these other forces? What do you think—is it the role of the church and or the Christian life to be actively involved in politics? Why or why not?

The title of today’s film is “Collision Course.”

A. Why do you think this name has been chosen?

B. With what does the Gospel and ministry of Jesus collide or crash into?

C. God is always calling us out of ourselves and deeper into love and grace. In what ways do you feel the Gospel collides with the Church and our ways of being as God’s people? Where do we need to be reformed?

Towards the end of the film, Brueggemann says that “Before Easter Jesus has already performed many resurrections of people who have been declared dead by the dominant system.”

A. From our discussion earlier about those we might find in the ditch and left for dead today, recall again who are the ones declared dead by the dominant system. These are ones already resurrected by Jesus according to Brueggemann. How

do you understand this statement? In what ways has Jesus been raising people to life?

B. What might these resurrections have to say on our role as church?

C. If we are Easter people (and we are...) what difference does resurrection make on how we see and live in this world particularly in these times challenged by COVID? How might Easter be a call to community?

Closing Thoughts/Comments

Closing Prayer: Resurrecting God, in Jesus the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead are raised; and you set before us the new realities of your love that collide with every immobilizing, devaluating, demonizing force in this world. Raise up your church, O God. Call us deeper in community, and mobilize us to live as neighbour with you and with one another through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen.