

The Gathering Community Group Guide

True Story // Part 7 // Why Jesus needs a snowplow

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Luke 3:1-20

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

This week we meet a grown up John the Baptist who served his mission to be a "snowplow" for Jesus by going before Jesus and making a way for Jesus to step into his ministry. We're called to do the same, although sometimes it might seem that we're more in the way of Jesus than we are making the way for Jesus. As Paul taught, if we're going to make the way for Jesus, there are 5 steps to take:

1. **Separation:** John got his calling in the desert and he did most of his ministry in the desert. As if that wasn't off enough, he wore strange clothes and ate strange food. John was separated from the cultural influence around him, and it was the perfect setting to hear God's instructions.
2. **Preparation:** In an "instant" everything society, preparation is anything but. It takes work, time, and responsibility to stay committed to blazing a trail. In fact, this step can easily make the trail seem like a trial, but we've got to stay true to the call to prepare ways for Jesus to come.
3. **Activation:** It isn't enough to hope, or to dream, or to "claim" the promises of a new life if we aren't willing to actually activate the new life. John told the crowds to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance" and he would tell us the same thing today. Repentance is the proof of a new life, not the punishment for an old one. A big part of making the way is changing our ways.
4. **Exaltation:** When we start making it easy for people to see Jesus, we'll run the risk of making it easy for them to see us as Jesus. John nipped this in the bud by clearly proclaiming that Jesus was better than he was and that it was all about Jesus. We'll need to do the same. You and I aren't the heroes; Jesus is.
5. **Minimization:** It's just a big word that means we'll get small the more we point others to Jesus. We set the stage that will shine the spotlight on Jesus and then we exit stage right. John said he had to decrease as Jesus increased. Ultimately that truth cost him his life, and he was ok with that.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What takeaway – if any – did you have from the message this week?
- How would you describe John's message and style? What's radical about his message?
- Who have been some "John the Baptists" in your life – people who have shown you the way and led you to Jesus and encouraged you along the way?
- How are you "setting the stage" so that Jesus can step into the spotlight?
- 3 times John was asked, "What should we do?" as he preached about repentance. If you asked John that same question about your life, how do you think he would respond?
- What is one action that you can take this week to "produce fruit in keeping with your repentance?"