

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

Over the next 3 chapters of Luke's gospel, we're going to see a common theme: God is always looking to find the lost. But He also wants the ones who have been found to join Him in finding others who are still lost, and in the first 17 verses of Luke 13, we find that the pursuit is about the heart before it's about the hurt. If we're not all in on the same mission that Jesus had, we'll never have the heart of the pursuer that God is looking for. Some lessons are better learned second-hand, and in these verses we see 3 warnings that Jesus gave the religious in His day that still apply to us today.

- 1. We won't extend grace if we think people are getting what they deserve.** Bottom line? If we want to help in the pursuit of the lost, we've got to be merciful. We can't look at other people's pain and think that somehow the hurt they have is because they aren't as smart or good as we are. Sin-shaming has no place among the pursuit of the lost.
- 2. A fruit tree without fruit is just an ugly stick.** Bottom line? If we want to help in the pursuit of the lost, we've got to be fruitful. Jesus talked about a fruit tree that wasn't bearing fruit, and how it should be cut down. Either we're going to bear the fruit of lost souls coming to salvation, or we're just going to be an ugly dead tree that is wasting space and making the pursuit harder.
- 3. When Jesus straightens a life, it's an opportunity to realign ours.** Bottom line? If we want to help in the pursuit of the lost, we've got to be mindful. It's odd that, even after Jesus warned the religious about the condition of their hearts, they still struggled seeing someone set free because it didn't happen at the time they thought it should have happened. The worst pursuer is the one who forgets that he himself needed to be pursued.

Discuss

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

- Have you ever been lost? What did that feel like? How did your emotions change once you were found?
- Why is it hard to give grace to people if we think they're being punished by their bad circumstances because of their sin? Read Psalm 103:10-12 and talk about how God treats us in our sin.
- Read James 2:13. What happens if we refuse to be merciful?
- Here are a number of verses dealing with our need to be fruitful. Read them out loud as a group and discuss what we can learn from them. Colossians 1:10; John 15:1-5; Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 7:17-20; John 15:8.
- In Luke 13:10-17, Jesus challenged the thinking that the pursuit of the lost can be "compartmentalized" by pointing out that the religious leaders had "Sunday" rules and "the rest of the week" rules. What would be a better strategy for reaching our city: getting everyone to church on Sunday or sending the church everywhere on the other six days? How does pursuing the lost 24/7 keep us mindful of what mercy has done for us? How can it keep us from being hypocrites in the way we live our lives in front of the hurting?
- What other takeaway(s) did you have from this week's message?