

Boundless

The God of Our Broken World (July 12th, 2020)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

DISCUSSION

Opening Prayer: (1-2 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.

Thank the Father for being the God who is infinitely large, yet tangibly existent and immanent in our every-day lives! Pray that as we navigate the chaotic waters of our cultural moment that we would humbly listen and obey God's voice. Pray that the Father would fill us with His Holy Spirit and give us the words to speak in our daily lives as we interact with the people in our social circles. Finally, pray that we would continue to learn how supreme your authority is and how to submit to your word as we await your coming kingdom!

Discussion: (45-60 minutes)

What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Danny led us into the third week of our *Boundless* series. Pastor Danny focusses in on the beginning of Paul's letter to the *Colossians* in order to lead us toward some answers to some difficult questions we tend to ask in troubling times such as, "Where is God and what is He doing?" In order to answer the *where* portion of the question, Pastor Danny points to Jesus as the one true image of God that we can comprehend and the one who is seated on the throne! In order to answer the *what* portion of the question, Pastor Danny explains that all things are being reconciled to God for the purpose of peace, or shalom. As a church, we are challenged to rest in God's boundless sovereignty and step into God's mission of reconciliation and peace-making!

"Being a Christian does not mean you will never feel isolated or lonely, like a kid forgotten after youth group. But it does mean you are learning to trust that God is in control and at work in all things even when it feels like he has forgotten us." – Pastor Danny Strange

Suggested Questions

Check-In: Icebreaker – Share a moment in your life that solidifies your understanding of *God's will!*

Study Tip: *How do I determine God's will?* This is a question that many followers of Jesus wrestle with, including the church of Colossae. The city of Colossae was a relatively small and unimportant city in the Roman empire. Rather, Colossae was a diverse suburban town that acted as the gateway to the heavily populated Roman province of Asia that included larger cities such as Ephesus and Laodicea. Furthermore, the church of Colossae was not even founded by Paul! We are introduced to a man named Epaphras who was a citizen of Colossae (4:12-13) and who most likely shared the gospel with his hometown after hearing it preached by Paul during his three-year ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19). Paul writes to the Colossians after Epaphras visits him in a Roman prison in order to give a report about his home church. If Paul's Ephesus ministry began in the mid-50's and Paul's imprisonment is dated around 60-61 A.D., that means that Epaphras was involved with a church that is at most 5-6 years old. *So what did Epaphras report?* Scholars believe that Epaphras was concerned that this young church had succumb to the diverse opinions of the city as they sought to become spiritually mature. In fact, Colossians is known for primarily addressing the teachers of a "deceptive philosophy" that had prescribed a pathway towards spiritual "fullness" by means other than Jesus (2:8-23). *How do I determine God's will?* Colossian teachers would have responded by claiming that increased knowledge comes by practicing mysticism or asceticism, worshipping spiritual beings, summoning visions, or following Jewish traditions and other rules. Paul claims that an increased knowledge of God's will and knowledge of God (1:9-10) comes from a deeper understanding of who Jesus is, what he has accomplished for us, **where he is now**, and **what he is currently doing!** As you engage with our key text, consider what false programs you have invented in order to become "spiritually full" and explore how a deeper relationship with Jesus is the only pathway to knowledge of God and His will!

Objective #1: Explore seasons of feeling abandoned by God.

Primary Texts: Psalm 10:1-18 – Pastor Danny begins the sermon by pointing out that in times of difficulty, we can begin to feel abandoned by God. We begin to ask ourselves, "*where is God in relation to me,*" and, "*what is God doing that's more important than this?*" Have you ever had a season where you wondered, "Where is God and what is He doing?" Describe this difficult season to your group and identify the various reasons why you were influenced to ask these kinds of questions.

Objective #2: Identify where God is and how that changes your perspective!

Primary Texts: Colossians 1:15-19 – Next, Pastor Danny uses these texts to answer the question, "*where is God in relation to me?*" He explains that in Jesus, we have the *image* of the invisible God that we can cling onto who is supreme over everything **on his throne!** What emotions come to you when you hear, "Jesus is on his throne." When is this an easy truth to believe and when is it difficult?

Supporting Texts: (Son of Man at the Right Hand / Throne) Ps. 110:1-7; Dan. 7:13-14; Matt. 26:63-64, 28:18-20; Acts 2:29-36, 7:54-60; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:15-23; Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 1:1-4, 8:1-2, 12:1-3; 1 Pet. 3:18-22; Rev. 5:1-14

Objective #3: Define what God is doing and how you may be able to step into His story!

Primary Texts: Colossians 1:13-14; 20-23 – Finally, Pastor Danny uses these texts to answer the question, "*what is God doing that's more important than this?*" He explains that Jesus' rule on the throne is one that seeks the reconciliation of all things back to himself in order to bring peace (or *Shalom*) everywhere in the universe. Where have you seen God's reconciling / peace-making work in our world recently? How might you become an agent of God's reconciliation and peace this week in your sphere of influence?

Supporting Texts: (Reconciliation) Matt. 5:23-24; Rom. 5:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:17-21

Closing Prayer: (5-10 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.

Thank our Heavenly Father for revealing Himself to us in the person of Jesus! Ask that the Holy Spirit would continue to teach us how to live and love like Jesus in situations like the one we face today. Finally, pray that we as a church would develop a boundless understanding of our Heavenly Father so that we could rest in the assurance that Jesus is on the throne and that He is reconciling all things back to Himself so that he can bring peace!

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-Further Reading and Exploration: *Read Colossians* The key text this week comes from a crucial section in Paul's letter to the Colossians. As with all of Paul's letters, pay special attention to the themes he introduces at the opening greeting of the letter in order to determine how he seeks to minister to the church at Colossae (Hint: verses 1:9-14 are key). Once you have identified the key themes, their order, their wording, and other key factors, right them down and try to identify how Paul maneuvers his way through each topic!

-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities: Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to 3Crosses.org/coronavirus . If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at 3Crosses.org/neighborhood

- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week! Pray that the members of your group would rest knowing that Jesus is on the throne and that He is working to reconcile all things back to Himself!