

## NOTE FROM PASTOR JONATHAN

(Although our Life Groups will be at the Prayer Summit, I'm still providing a smaller set of questions/notes. Things will go back to normal for next week.)

We have a **Prayer Summit** on **May 7**. It's a vital opportunity for our Life Groups to come together to pray. Charles Spurgeon called his church's prayer room "the powerhouse" of the church. We're powerless without God, so let's come together to seek Him. Whether your Life Group meets at the Willingdon Campus, at home, or online, please join us at the Prayer Summit instead of your regular meeting. The theme will be "Blessing," based on Numbers 6:24-26, often considered "The Lord's Prayer of the Old Testament." We'll be meditating on this prayer and praying for our high school and university graduates as they step into the next stage of their lives. We'll also pray for our families and our nation. No matter who wins any election, Canada and all Canadians need God.

**The café will be open for dinner from 5 pm to 6:45 pm.** Come early to relax after work, enjoy a good meal, and have fellowship with others before we pray. **The café will not be open for Life Groups on May 6 and 8.**

### Matthew 28:16 - 20

<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

### Willingdon Definition of the Church Family

God the Father adopts followers of Jesus into his eternal family. As sons and daughters of God, we center our church family life in Jesus, the foundation, builder, and head of the church. As we abide in Jesus, we are fit together like living stones and become a spiritual house where God is pleased to dwell by His Spirit. In Christ, we are his body on earth, set apart to be the primary agent of his kingdom, for his glory among the nations. By His Spirit, God calls and gifts all members of the church family to serve one another, so that we might reach maturity in Christ and be equipped to minister to those around us. When followers of Jesus walk together in love and harmony, they reflect the likeness of Jesus to each other and the world.

## Let's Warm Up: Questions to break the ice.

### 1. How does it feel when you're sent out on a task or mission?

Did your parent give you \$5 and send you out to pick up something from the store? Maybe felt a sense of pride because you were finally big enough to go out on your own. Or fear because this was your first time out?

Maybe your job booked a flight for you to fly across the country to recruit a client. You felt nervous because this deal could make or break your career. Did you remember to iron your clothes and bring parfum à l'odeur professionnelle?

In this week's passage, Jesus sends His disciples on the mission to make disciples

**2. Besides your biological/legal family, who has felt like family to you?**

Some of us have grown up in church communities where we're always going to each other's houses and spending so much time together. The adults were like uncles and aunts. The kids felt like siblings. Some of us left home to pursue an education or career. We felt like strangers and orphans until an older couple took care of us, providing guidance and home-cooked meals. They felt like second parents. Some of us have bonded with others through hard struggles. They were with us through a health scare and recovery, a frantic work season with way too many late nights, or provided community in a COVID bubble when the world was in isolation. This struggle brought you all so close together.

In this passage, Jesus doesn't just send out some guys, but His family.

**Let's Get Started: Questions to start thinking about the main themes.****3. Why was it important for the disciples to stick together?**

Matthew notes that the remaining 11 disciples came together. A few weeks ago, Pastor Vinh shared something that stood out to him as he was reading about the crucifixion. Judas and Peter both betrayed Jesus for their own interest. Judas for money. Peter for self-preservation. Both regretted their decisions. Judas tried to give the money back (Matthew 27:3-5). Peter wept bitterly (Luke 22:62). Judas ended up committing suicide (Matthew 27:5), but Peter was restored and served Jesus until his death. Why the difference?

A big factor was that Judas was alone because he left the group (Matthew 26:14). He never went back and died in isolation. We know that Peter went back to the disciples because he was with the others when the women told them about the empty tomb (Matthew 24:10-12). In fact, all the other disciples also had abandoned Jesus (Matthew 26:56), but they all came back together.

God has put us together as a family to strengthen, encourage, and protect each other.

**Let's Dig In: Questions to discuss the passage and how we can respond.****4. How does Jesus hold authority? What does that look like?**

Jesus holds authority! How does He have authority over the world's political and religious leaders? How does He have authority over nature and death? How do our lives reflect His authority over our lives? What are some concrete ways that the world or our lives submit to His authority?

**5. Jesus called the disciples brothers even though they all abandoned Him. How do you think they felt?**

Pastor Vinh quoted Matthew 28:10, where Jesus tells the women to tell His "brothers" (the disciples) to meet Him at Galilee. He didn't say, "Go and tell my cowardly, good-for-nothings to meet me because I'm going to let them have it!" He calls them His brothers because they're still His family.

How would you feel if you were a disciple? Would you feel hopeful? Guilty? Confused?

**6. Pastor Vinh said, "Jesus doesn't start with a task list—He starts with Himself. The mission isn't launched by action, but by adoration. Before we go out for Him, we must look up to Him. Only then do we go as a family, united under the power and authority of Jesus." Are you adoring before you go?**

We live in a world full of checklists full of to-dos. Do your dishes, laundry, and taxes! (Hopefully you did your taxes!) File those reports, move those pallets, take care of the customers. Exercise, eat well, watch the Whitecaps beat Inter Miami. Our lives are busy with so many tasks.

Sometimes our spiritual lives can feel like that. Go serve in that ministry, lead your Life Group, and evangelize. Yes, those are good, but do we start with adoring and enjoying Jesus' presence first? I admit that I struggle. I grew up always being told to stop dilly-dallying and get to work. Sitting quietly and enjoying Jesus can feel like wasting time, because nobody's measuring how much time I spend with Jesus. I have to remind myself that it's the most critical thing and enables me to do everything else (John 15:1-15).

**7. "God adopts Jesus' followers into his family, uniting them by his Spirit, to be his church, serve one another, and reflect his glory to the world." Which part of this statement stands out to you? Why?**

If you break this statement down into its parts, there is a lot to think about. God adopts us. Who are "us"? Jesus' followers. What are we adopted into? His family. We're part of God's family! We're united not by political affiliation or geography, but by God's Spirit. What's the result? We become the church. What do we do? Serve one another and reflect God's glory. To who? The world around us!

Any of these facts make you excited? Anything make you confused? Do you realize you've been missing out on something?

**8. Pastor Vinh said, "Baptism is a death to the old self, and a resurrection to new life, a new identity, a new name, a new family. Baptism is also about belonging—we are joined to one another, as family, in the body of Christ."**

**If you've been baptized, how does this statement reflect your baptism? If you haven't been baptized, how can this statement encourage you to seek baptism?**

Baptism isn't just an empty act or an initiation. It declares profound truths before, during, and after. How have these truths played out after your baptism? How is your life different as a result? How can it remind you to live in light of your baptism?

If you haven't been baptized yet, what part of this statement might encourage you to seek baptism?

**9. Pastor Vinh said, "The people in the pews around you are your family. You didn't choose them, but Christ did. Because you belong to Him, you now belong to them." How can we celebrate the big and beautifully diverse family that Jesus has given us?**

Willingdon Church is only a fraction of the family of believers across the world and throughout time, but it's an amazing vignette. Our family is from all over the world. (I think the only region we're missing is Antarctica.) Those who have been baptized range from teenagers all the way to nonagenarians. Jesus has picked our brothers and sisters from so many religious backgrounds, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, atheism, New Age spirituality, and more. We're adopted into a stunningly diverse family.

Maybe we can spend time getting to know people who don't look or sound like us. We can get to know people from different socio-economic, cultural backgrounds, or educational levels. Meet people who are way older or younger than us. Go and enjoy this diverse group!

**10. What are the costs and benefits of being part of the church family? How can the benefits outweigh the costs?**

Pastor Vinh listed out three costs:

- You will have Less free time than you would on your own.
- You will have less money than you would on your own.
- You will carry the added sorrows and burdens of others.

He also listed two benefits.

- More joy than you could ever find on your own.
- More family than you ever expected.

Are any of the costs really heavy for you? How can the benefits help you make those sacrifices with joy?