GROUP GUIDE

**Jesus, one on one**

Individual Choice in God’s Unstoppable Plans 4/2/2023

Luke 13:31-35

MAIN POINT

Today's message will be on Jesus' personal interaction with people. (From the gospel of Luke).

One person at a time, One conversation at a time, One act of kindness at a time. Jesus taught us the importance of focusing on the person in front of us. Throughout the gospel of Luke, we see a record of Jesus personal interactions with a variety of people. He demonstrated that impacting others begins by focusing on the person in front of you. Following His example, we learn to focus on one person at a time, engaging in one conversation at a time, demonstrating one act of kindness at a time.

The lesson will focus on: No entity or power can prohibit Jesus from fulfilling God’s purpose and plans, but He will not force anyone to entrust themselves to Him as He fulfills those plans.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

In what situations do you tend to feel most compassion for other people?

In what situations do you find it hard to show sincere compassion?

Compassion could be considered a hallmark of the person who follows Christ, but we don’t always show compassion. Compassion becomes an even greater challenge when dealing with people who are opposed to us or what we believe. God is compassionate toward all people, and Jesus Christ embodied that compassion. While He longed to gather His children, He would not be deterred from the cross where He would die for them.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Ask a volunteer to read Luke 13:31-33.

In your own words, what was Jesus’ response to the threat of Herod?

Read Matthew 2:13-18. Jesus’ life had been threatened before, and Mary and Joseph fled. What was different in Luke 13?

What was Jesus’ goal according to verse 32?

What would you say is your goal in life? How do a person’s goals impact his or her commitment to Christ? Give an example.

God was never once worried about Herod or anyone else thwarting His plans. When Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Egypt, it was part of God’s plan - not simply a response to a threat (Matthew 2:15). No one has control or power greater than God. So, while Jesus recognized Herod’s deceit and wickedness, He would not back down or run from the path God had set before Him. His goal was to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; therefore, nothing could or would keep Him from willingly going to the cross.

Ask a volunteer to read Luke 13:34-35.

Instead of anger toward Herod, Jesus’ thoughts turned to Israel. What two different emotions did Jesus express in verse 34?

What does Jesus’ response teach you about His heart toward you when you reject His commands?

Jesus didn’t mask the truth and spoke against the actions of the religious leaders, but He never lost His compassion for them - as evidenced by His work on the cross. In verse 34 (and in Ps. 17:8; 91:4; and Isa 31:5), the image of a hen sheltering her chicks portrayed Yahweh’s protection of Israel. By rejecting Jesus, Jerusalem rejected God’s protection. Even while Jesus rebuked His wayward people, He affirmed God’s identity as their Father and reminded them of His intimate, personal care for them.

If Jesus longed to gather His people, then why did He leave Jerusalem (v. 35)?

From Jesus’ words in verse 35, what level of confidence did He have in God’s plan?

Would you say you have the same confidence in God’s promise that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 14:11)? Explain.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Do you lean more toward rebuke and anger in your relationships or toward compassion and forgiveness? Explain.

What role do sorrow and compassion have in our sharing God’s purpose and plans with other people?

What choices does God allow you to make in light of His unstoppable plans? How do you see His love in this?

PRAYER

Thank God that His purpose and plan has always been and will always be unstoppable. Ask God to help you see people the way He sees them, with love and compassion. Ask for the strength to show compassion in our actions, even toward the people we find it hardest to show compassion. Invite Him to be glorified through the compassionate witness of your words and actions.

COMMENTARY

Luke 13:31-35

13:31. “Leave,” the Pharisees shouted. “Herod wants to kill you.” What a change of heart by the Pharisees. Why? Is this a special group with some respect for and even secret belief in Jesus, similar to the man who invited Jesus to dinner or Nicodemus? Or is this a trick as they try to hide their intentions and place the blame on Herod? Or is this an attempt to make public Jesus’ fear before Herod and thus make the crowds stop following him? Why have they waited until now to say Herod wants to see Jesus (see 9:9)? Luke does not answer these questions. That is not his point, and it should not be ours. The point is Jesus’ reaction.

13:32-33. Fearlessly, Jesus responded. “The man is a sly old fox,” he said. “He recognizes ability and power but does everything to undermine and destroy it. Tell that old fox to wait a minute. I am doing my normal work defeating the kingdom of Satan. In a few days I will be finished. Then I will have time to deal with him. I will not alter my course for him, nor will I change my time schedule. You are not in control over me. The Father is. I will complete his mission-a mission that must end in Jerusalem where prophets generally die - (see 2 Kgs. 21:16; 24:4; Jer. 26:20-23; 2 Chr. 24:20-22; Luke 11:49; Acts 7:52).

13:34. Jesus grieved over this murderous city. He would gladly sweep its citizens under his wings like a mother hen. But the chicks would not come. They scrambled away in all directions. Messiah came to Jerusalem, and Jerusalem ignored him.

13:35. Ignoring God brings disastrous results: Israel is abandoned once again as it was in exile six hundred years earlier. Their opportunity is gone. Never again will they see him until it is too late. Then he will be clearly recognized as Messiah, coming again, this time as judge of the world. Then they will sing the words of Psalm 118:26 and welcome Jesus as he comes in God’s name to deliver his people. But the song of praise will be too late for those to whom Jesus is speaking.