

**ST. ANDREW'S  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

*Slack Tide*

LIVING IN THE IN-BETWEEN





# SLACK TIDE; WEEK FOUR

We are in our fourth week of "Slack Tide" & This week, Shannon Coon is providing the questions for you and your group to discuss along with an overview of her sermon, and an application page which can all be found in the following pages !

- **IF YOU ARE DISCUSSING IN A GROUP, SHARE ABOUT A TIME WHEN AN EXPERIENCE YOU HAD APPEARED TO BE A "BAD" EXPERIENCE, BUT THEN AFTERWARD YOU REALIZED IT WAS ACTUALLY A "GOOD" THING (EG., YOU WERE REALLY NERVOUS TO SPEAK IN FRONT OF A CROWD OF PEOPLE BUT IT OPENED THE DOOR TO A NEW CAREER; SOMEONE CANCELED A COFFEE DATE WITH YOU BUT IT ALLOWED YOU TO BE PRESENT TO A FAMILY MEMBER WHO NEEDED YOUR HELP, ETC.). THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS AS THEY APPEAR TO BE, ARE THEY?**





## **SERMON OVERVIEW**

**AFTER JESUS ENTERED JERUSALEM FOR THE PASSOVER FESTIVAL, HE WAS SOUGHT OUT BY SOME "GREEKS" (GOD-FEARING GENTILES). HE TOOK THIS AS A SIGN THAT HIS HOUR HAD COME TO BE GLORIFIED. HE KNEW THAT IT WAS TIME FOR HIS PURPOSE TO COME TO FULFILLMENT. WHEN HE SHIFTED FROM TALKING ABOUT HIMSELF, HE FOCUSED ON HIS FOLLOWERS AND HOW THEY CAN CONTINUE TO LIVE GOING FORWARD. HE LIFTS UP A PARADOX REGARDING LOVING AND HATING ONE'S LIFE. SO MUCH OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A PARADOX. THE FACT THAT WE BELIEVE IN A GOD AND A REALITY THAT WE CANNOT SEE PUTS US IN A PARADOX. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS A PARADOX. IT IS OFTEN CONTRARY TO HOW THIS TEMPORAL WORLD OPERATES. JESUS EXHORTS HIS FOLLOWERS TO LIVE WITH A HEALTHY DETACHMENT TO THE THINGS OF THIS TEMPORAL WORLD SO THAT WE CAN EXPERIENCE THE ETERNAL REALITY NOW. AND ANYTIME WE FOLLOW THE THINGS JESUS TAUGHT AND THE THINGS JESUS DID, WE ARE EXPERIENCING ETERNAL REALITY NOW. IT IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE...WE CAN EASILY GET CAUGHT UP IN THE WORLD AROUND US AND START PRIORITIZING THE TEMPORAL OVER THE ETERNAL. WHENEVER WE CARE FOR KINGDOM OF GOD PRIORITIES LIKE LOVING ONE ANOTHER, BEING PEACEMAKERS, EXTENDING CARE AND COMPASSION, AND ENACTING JUSTICE, WE ARE LIVING IN THIS VISIBLE REALITY WITH A GOAL OF THE ETERNAL REALITY.**



## **DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP**

- Identify all the paradoxes in this passage (statements which seem to contradict themselves). Why do you suppose Jesus used paradoxes?
- When we live according to Jesus' teachings, we are living in the Kingdom of God, and allowing the "eternal" into our present reality. Look through Jesus' teachings, especially the Sermon on the Mount, and look for examples of these kinds of things. They are typically things which are done differently than how the rest of the world operates.
- Look at what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and Galatians 2:20. How do these relate to what Jesus taught?



## **DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP CONT.**

- It can be difficult and confusing to hear Jesus telling us to hate something. Elsewhere he says that unless someone hates their family, they cannot be his disciple (Luke 14:26). Jesus is using a Jewish idiom that indicates someone's preferences or priorities. He is not talking about literal hate. In a similar way, when Jesus talks about us taking our cross and dying with him (Mark 8:34), he is not literally instructing us to die. In all of this, Jesus is telling us that following him requires that we do not put ourselves and this temporal world as the most important priority, but rather we put Jesus and eternal life as our priority. What are some of the things that get in the way of us following Jesus' instructions?





## APPLICATION

- If we are removing ourselves as the "center of the universe," i.e., "hating our lives," one of the implications is that we "wear the world like a loose-fitting garment," as St. Francis said. That means that the things which happen in the world, especially in our own worlds, have less of a personal effect on us. Someone walks by you and doesn't say "hi?" Instead of obsessing about what you may have done to that person to make them treat you that way, you give that person the benefit of the doubt (having a bad day, didn't really recognize that it was you, etc.) and carry on with the rest of your day. What are some other examples that you could work on in your life? Maybe when someone pushes your buttons, you control your tongue and refuse to retaliate? Maybe when someone doesn't return your phone call or email you imagine there must be a good reason and pray for that person? Think of things that apply to you and your life.
- A self-centered person wants to get their way. Actually, most people would love to always get their way! But a Christ-follower who trusts God with their lives, their futures, their well-being, therefore putting God's will at the center of their lives, can deal with not getting their way. Dallas Willard says, "Being dead to self (referring to Matthew 16:24)- [or alternately, hating your life] is the condition where the mere fact that I do not get what I want does not surprise or offend me and has no control over me." Is this something you personally aspire to?