

EKKLESIA

"I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH"

Discussion Guide

May 6-7, 2023

"EKKLESIA" Week 4: "For The Nations"

GATHER

- Talk about travel! How many countries have you visited? Who has been to the most countries in our group? What's the furthest place from Abbotsford you have been to? Do you have a trip you'd like to plan or are currently planning? (This question connects to the larger themes of being exposed to people and places outside of our immediate context.)
- If you were at a weekend service, share your takeaways from the message you heard. What was something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?

GROW

This weekend's message was anchored in **Psalm 96**. Talk through the topic more thoroughly as a group by using the outline below. *Feel free to select a suggested question or two in each section to guide your conversation.*

1. Understand Their Story

Read Psalm 96.

- Why should we praise God according to this text? (eg. what does it tell us about who God is & what he has done for us?)
His salvation (96:2), his glory and marvelous works (96:3), his greatness (96:4), he's above all gods (96:4), his glory and strength (96:7), his holiness (96:9), his sovereignty (96:10), his righteousness, faithfulness and judgment (96:13).
- Who is this psalm encouraging to participate in the worship of the LORD? Does this tell us something about who God is?
All the earth (96:1), all families of nations (96:7), the heavens, the earth, the sea (96:11), the fields, the forests, and everything in them (96:12), all of creation (96:13). God is worthy to be worshipped by the totality of existence because he's the source of life for all existence!
- Psalm 96:5 declares, "the gods of the nations are idols". What does idol worship look like today? How do we know if we ourselves are worshipping idols? Some good diagnostic questions are:
1) Jesus + _____ = my happiness (ask people what they would put in the blank? eg. financial stability / comfort / a spouse / a child / a good job etc. What do they think they need in order to be happy?)
2) The thought of _____ being taken away paralyzes me with fear, or anger and despair. (again, ask people what they would put in the blank!)

- How does this Psalm connect “worship of God” with “witness to God”? Do we view worship in the same way today? In what circumstances could people be influenced by Christian worship to see God rightly?
Look at Psalm 96:9-10. The proclamation of praise is evangelistic in nature. Imagine people being converted in our worship services because of the passion of people. Imagine neighbours, friends or co-workers seeing our proclamation of God’s character and nature amidst public difficulty (like illness or grief).
- Look at the language of Psalm 96:13. Why is creation rejoicing? God is a righteous judge! Judgment is celebrated in scripture because of the character of God. Is it hard for us - even as Christians to rejoice for the same reason? Why or why not? Sometimes, even as Christians, we don’t think we (or other people) are really that bad, we don’t really deserve judgement! This causes us to think of God’s judgement as a negative thing. If, however, we understand the depths of our sin, what we have been saved from (our own sinful nature & evil itself), and the just judgement we deserve, we will rejoice in our salvation, and call others to follow the LORD to escape his judgement.

2. **Connect To His Story**

Psalm 96 is a call to declare God’s glory to the nations (96:3). This truth is weaved throughout the whole Bible. *Feel free to select a text/question from this section to process this further as a group.*

Jesus’ “Great Commission” in Matthew 28:18-20 highlights the same scope and urgency of the church’s mission. His command extends to “all nations”. Read Matthew 28:18-20.

- What things does Jesus say about himself? What things are cause for those present to worship? How do these truths encourage us today?
1 - “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given” to Jesus (Mt. 28:18). Although it is not fully here, the kingdom of God has already come. Jesus is already ruling and reigning. The Lord indeed reigns (Psalm 96:10) now! Despite how things may appear, this truth allows us to live and be on mission with the encouragement that our King has triumphed and history is working towards a glorious end. Remember, Jesus is building his church and nothing will stop that (Mt. 16:18).
2 - As Immanuel, (see the start of Matthew’s gospel - 1:23), Jesus is still “with us” to “the end of the age (Mt. 28:20). Despite his departure from the first followers, and despite our inability to physically see him today, he is very much near and present.
3 - Additionally, the fact that Jesus appeared *alive* to them would have been cause for worship!

Look up 1 Peter 2:9-10 and notice how we, as New Testament believers, can apply Psalm 96 (verses 1-3 especially).

- When you think of the “marvellous deeds” (Psalm 96:3) or the “excellencies” of God (1 Pet. 2:9) what do you think of from your own life? Share these with your group.

How does Jesus’ global vision impact your view of God?

How does Jesus’ global vision impact your view of others/the world?

GO

3. **Apply To Our Story**

Northview aspires to make more and better disciples, leaders, and churches. Unto what end? Primarily: that God be glorified (as we saw week 1), but also for the good of our city (as we saw week 2), and for

the good of one another (as we saw last week), and for the good of the nations. *Feel free to select a section or two to use in your group time.*

Discuss the idea of “mission” and “witness”.

- Are there negative ideas that come to mind from these terms? Why?
- How do you think the nations are being reached through the church in our city? How could they be better reached?
- Are there things you have been involved in or regular practices you have that you would consider “mission” or “for the nations”?

Pray!

- Spend time praying for missionaries serving around the world. You could check out <https://northview.org/global-missions/> to pray for our supported missionaries by name and even send them a note of encouragement!
- All of our activity is unto God’s glory and for our mission to help every person become a “deeply rooted follower of Jesus”. Who are those who don’t currently follow Jesus that you could pray for by name?