

## Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

### Luke 21:29-38

One of my favorite N.T. Wright-isms is that we (both collectively as the church, as well as individually) are sign posts of the Kingdom of God. So as Jesus said in this little parable, when you see trees starting to bloom, you know that summer is near; likewise, when people look at God's people they should see signs of the present reality of the Kingdom of God. (Granted, this is not the specific context Jesus was speaking about—He mentioned “when you see these things happening...” (what He mentioned in the previous passage), but the connection is nevertheless applicable.

**Q. Whereas Jesus had laid out some “signs” of the coming of the Kingdom, what “signs” do you see today that encourage you of the present reality of the Kingdom?**

Please keep in mind that much of the “signs” Jesus was referring to were pointing toward &) AD and the destruction of Jerusalem. We might wonder, “How is Jerusalem being destroyed a sign of the nearness of God’s Kingdom?” We must remember that the Kingdom of God is the reign and rule of God. Part of that reigning and ruling implies judgment (which isn’t something we like to think and talk about much, but it is nevertheless the case)...and God’s judgment befell Jerusalem—though not without much warning, calls for repentance, and patience and longsuffering on God’s part.

In general, the idea of “God’s judgment” throughout Scripture is seen as a positive thing. It presumes God intervening and making everything right and as it should be. This is certainly an expectation we have of God’s Kingdom, right? So, again, judgment is part of the reign and rule of God.

**Q. When you hear or think about God’s judgment, what thoughts/feelings does that evoke in you? And why is that?**

Something I try to do when I read Scripture, and particularly the words of Jesus, is to try to read them from the standpoint of someone who is completely unfamiliar with Him. (Which is kind of challenging, quite frankly.) But when I do so, I am amazed afresh at His words. If I didn’t believe Jesus to be God in the flesh, His words would sound completely outlandish. Who in their right mind could say what He said? It takes us right back to the classic argument: Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord...simply by looking at what He said. For example, from this passage, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.” (21:33 NIV). Those are some bold words! If anyone other than God in the flesh were to say something like that, we would respond with, “Dude, get over yourself.” I think it’s good to capture and remember these “zingers” by Jesus, just so we can remember who were actually dealing with.

**Q. Thinking beyond the present passage, what are some bold, outlandish, or difficult things that Jesus said that stop you in your tracks?**

Verse 34 contains some interesting imagery. “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life...” Jesus was blending images...the heart and the head. “Heart” shows up clearly in the translation, but the word “dissipation” literally means a headache, like the kind one has from a hangover/drinking too much. So our hearts can have a headache of sorts. Jesus seems to be saying that the cares/anxieties of this life can cause us to be painfully distracted, just as a throbbing headache or a hangover causes us to not be able to focus on anything else. The remedy, according to Jesus is to “be careful”, to “be watchful”, and to “pray”. While He had in mind something very specific for the time and place of His original hearers, that’s still good advice for us today, even if what we’re “watching” for is different. The warning about not getting burdened by the cares/anxieties of life stands true in all times and places, and has been a consistent part of His teachings (ex: Luke 8:14; 12:22-34)

- Q. How, or in what ways, do you get weighed down by the cares/anxieties of life?**
- Q. What captures your thoughts and desires? Are those more Kingdom-oriented thoughts/desires or worldly thoughts/desires?**
- Q. If you only had a week to live, what would you do? (Chances are, what’s really important to us would come quickly into focus...our true priorities would come to the foreground.)**

Jesus tells His hearers (then and now) what should be of ultimate importance to us, “...to be able to stand before the Son of Man.” A really good practice for us to undertake is to regularly spend time with Him. If that’s a regular, daily habit for us, then we will have no reason to fear meeting Him face to face some day. In fact, it will cultivate a desire for that day, as opposed to being afraid of such a day.

- Q. What sort of regular habit of praying/spending time with Jesus do you practice in? If that’s a new concept for you, or if you find it challenging/difficult, discuss how as a Home Group you can help each other out in that.**