



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

WEEK THREE

CHAOS & CALM

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Instead I have calmed and quieted my soul.

This week we look at the first half of verse 2, “Instead I have calmed and quieted my soul.” In the midst of the chaos of life, we are given a choice. We can allow the chaos to control our lives and wreak havoc on our soul, or we can invite Jesus to calm our heart and quiet our soul.

ICEBREAKER: Each week the discussion begins with a question that allows the group to share from their own personal experiences.

Icebreaker Question:

- Where do you like to go to find calm and quiet? (either past or present)
- What makes that place special to you?

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon

Psalm 131 “is one of the shortest Psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn. It speaks of a young child, but it contains the experience of a man in Christ. Lowliness and humility are here seen in connection with a sanctified heart, a will subdued to the mind of God, and a hope looking to the Lord alone. Happy is the man who can, without falsehood, use these words as his own; for he wears about him the likeness of his Lord, who said, “I am meek and lowly in heart.”

PRAYER: Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me.

Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen.

SERMON DISCUSSION:

On Sunday, Pastor Dave Reiss continued to explore themes found in Psalm 131. Take some time to review the sermon, discussing the themes, application, and questions .

- What were some of lessons of Psalm 131 that were discussed during the sermons?
- How did these lessons connect with you and your spiritual life?
- How were you encouraged to apply the lessons from this psalm to your life?

Share any questions or concerns that came to you have been wrestling with over the past few weeks.

READ: Psalm 131:2a “*Instead* I have calmed and quieted my soul”

INSTEAD: **Instead** is a preferred alternative or a replacement in place of something else. It suggests that of the choices available, one is favored. It invites us to choose the preferred over the popular. In Psalm 131 we see that the popular choice might be pride and arrogance, but the preferred is to calm and quiet.

- Why is pride and arrogance the popular option?
- Why is a calm and quiet soul preferred?
- Which do you tend to lean toward?

QUOTE: David Guzik

Instead of proud pursuits, [the Psalmist] is determined to find satisfaction and serenity of soul, content with God and His works.

A CALM AND QUIET SOUL

Psalm 131:2a “Instead I have calmed and quieted my soul”

- What is a calm and quiet soul and how does one acquire it?
- Would you say that your soul is calm and quiet? Why or why not?
- What do you do to try and calm and quiet yourself? Does it work?
- What keeps you from fully reaching a state of calm and quiet?

- How do you think the psalmist is able to claim that in their life?

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon

“It is no easy thing to quiet yourself: sooner may a man calm the sea, or rule the wind, or tame a tiger, then quiet himself. We are **clamorous, uneasy, petulant;** and nothing but grace can make us quiet under **afflictions, irritations, and disappointments.**”

There are so many things that keep us from quiet. There are the internal voices; our thoughts and emotions that make us *clamorous, uneasy, petulant*. There are also those things outside of us, our external *afflictions, irritations, and disappointments* that fuel our chaotic lives.

- Have you ever felt “clamorous, uneasy, petulant” during difficult times?
- How do you typically respond to afflictions, irritations, and disappointments?
- What are some external elements that keep from quieting our soul?
- What are some of the internal conflicts that keep us from quieting our soul?

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon

“It is no easy thing to quiet yourself: sooner may a man calm the sea, or rule the wind, or tame a tiger, then quiet himself...”

JESUS CONNECTION: Jesus was the only person to calm the sea and rule the wind, and he provides the ultimate example of living our calm, quiet, hope, and trust even during the most chaotic times.

MARK 4:35-41 (also found Matthew 8:23-27, and Luke 8:22-25)

On that day, when evening had come, he told them, “Let’s cross over to the other side of the sea.” So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat.

A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So, they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?"

He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Then he said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

- Why were the disciples feeling distraught? Did they have a right to feel that way?
- What does it say about Jesus that he could sleep during the storm?
- While the storm did not wake him, the panicked disciples did? What might that say about Jesus' love for his people in distress?
- What do you think the disciples expected Jesus to do when they woke him up?
- Why does his response of calming the sea shock them? Why was Jesus' action so surprising to them?
- How does Jesus' response differ from their understanding and expectation of Jesus? Why does that cause them to fear?

MAKE IT PERSONAL:

- What storms are you facing in your life? How are you trying to bail yourself out on your own strength?
- Does it ever feel like Jesus is asleep during your life?
- What do you expect Jesus to do to your storms? How do you respond when he does not meet your expectations?

REREREAD VERSES 40-41

Jesus asks, "Do you still have no faith?"

- How does the disciple's faith, or lack thereof, shape their response?
- How does your faith shape your response to Jesus' working in your life?
- Why does Jesus' control over nature and chaos break their paradigm of who they think Jesus is?
- If we were to truly believe this story, how would Jesus' control over chaos reshape our understanding of who Jesus is?
- How can your answer to the disciple's question, "Who then is this?" lead you to calm, quiet, hope, and trust?

FIX OUR EYES: HEBREWS 12: 1-2 (NIV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

The author of Hebrews puts a different perspective on these external and internal forces that keep us from finding calm and quiet; "everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles." The things that hinders, external forces that keep us from calm and quiet, are our afflictions, irritations, and disappointments. While sin that leads us to being *clamorous, uneasy, petulant*

- How do our internal thoughts and emotions keep us from finding calm? What role does sin play?
- How do our external situations fuel our chaotic lives? What things in our lives hinder us from calm?
- How does "fixing our eyes on Jesus" help us calm and quiet our soul?
- How can keeping our eyes on Jesus keep us from being clamorous, uneasy, and petulant?
- What is keeping you from fixing your eyes on Jesus?

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon

“It is no easy thing to quiet yourself: sooner may a man calm the sea, or rule the wind, or tame a tiger, than quiet himself. We are clamorous, uneasy, petulant; and **nothing but grace** can make us quiet under afflictions, irritations, and disappointments.”

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- How can grace from God and grace for ourselves help lead us to quiet?
- How can God’s grace help us quiet our souls during afflictions, irritations, and disappointments?

CLOSING QUOTE: Eugene Peterson

Being a Christian means accepting God as our maker and redeemer, and growing day by day into increasingly glorious creatures in Christ, developing joy, experiencing love, maturing in peace. By the grace of Christ, we experience the marvel of being made in the image of God... The soul, clamoring for attention and arrogantly parading its importance, is calmed and quieted so that it can be itself, truly.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, my heart is proud and my eyes are haughty. I get involved with things greater than myself. I surrender control to you. Guide my spirit toward peace. Help me discover the calm and quiet of a weaned child. Lead me into maturity. I put my hope in you, for there is faithful love and redemption in abundance. I am trusting you to guide me both now and forever. Amen.