

## **SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**April 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Pastor CJ Johnson**

### **Opening Questions**

- Welcome! In this week's sermon, CJ spoke about Jesus being the "Bread of Life!" He started this conversation by discussing his affinity for restaurants that provide food before meals; Italian restaurants often serve bread, and Mexican restaurants often serve tortilla chips. What is your favorite type of pre-meal appetizer? Make a case for why your favorite cuisine is truly the best.

### **Open Your Group with Prayer**

- Ask someone to open the group in prayer and bless your discussion together.

### **Scripture Passages**

- Groups will begin the discussion by reading some of the message's key scriptures aloud. Please assign the following to read: Matthew 16:24-25; Matthew 16:1-12

### **Questions from the Message**

- CJ opened the message by talking about self-denial. When was the last time you told yourself, "No!" Do you believe that true freedom is self-denial, not self-gratification? As followers of Christ, how do we lay down our preferences and embrace Christ's promises?
- In verse one, The Pharisees gave Jesus a test they thought he would fail. They were out "to get" Jesus and prove him wrong. Often, individuals or circumstances are working to get us to fail in our ability to glorify our Heavenly Father. When have you had to stand up for your faith to the "naysayers?" Have people ever questioned the validity of your faith or identity in Christ? How have you responded? How can we be the type of followers who are faithful in the good times and the bad times? Even in the face of spiritual opposition.
- In verses 9 and 10, Jesus reminds his disciples of the miracles he had just completed when they mention that they had forgotten the bread. What things in your life have you "gathered" that speak about the goodness of what Christ has done in your life? When going through challenges or trials, we too often, like the disciples, quickly forget everything He has done. We all need to develop a rhythm of reflection. How do you do this? How can our group encourage a sense of gratitude and a reminder of His goodness and faithfulness?
- Have someone read Matthew 16:15. Can you effectively answer Jesus' question? How do we stay focused on Christ and what is truly important? How do we "pick up our crosses" and follow Him?

### **Challenge or Response**

- Based on your discussion, what do you think God is leading you to do in response? Get practical. What will you implement this week to live this out? In what ways do you feel like God is challenging you to grow in your faith? How can you respond to this challenge by seeking out opportunities for spiritual growth?

### **Close Your Group with Prayer**

- Pray together for your application and response points from your discussion as a group. Share any praises, joys, or areas of concern. How can this group be praying for you and your family this week? *(Please ask someone to distribute these via GroupMe, text, or email so you can pray for one another throughout the week.)*