

2026-04-05 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: Overcoming Through Christ

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to speak to each person's heart and help you be real with one another, just as the sermon encouraged.

Ice Breaker

Share a childhood memory of a "terrible day" that seemed devastating at the time but now seems minor in retrospect. (Examples: standing in the corner, losing at a game, a friend moving away)

Key Scripture References

John 13:1-17 (Jesus washes the disciples' feet)

John 13:33-35 (The command to love one another)

John 14:27 (Peace I leave with you)

John 16:33 (In this world you will have trouble)

Romans 8:28 (All things work together for good)

Main Takeaways

Life isn't a fairy tale - Following Christ doesn't guarantee a trouble-free life
Jesus understands our struggles - He was "troubled in spirit" even knowing God's plan

Love is a decision, not just a feeling - We're called to love like Jesus loved
Trouble will come, but it's not the end - We overcome by trusting God, not by avoiding difficulty

God works all things for good - Even our worst days can be used for His purposes

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

The pastor mentioned that Jesus never promised health, wealth, or an easy life to His followers. How does this contrast with what our culture (or even some churches) promises? How does this truth challenge or encourage you?

Read John 13:1-17. Jesus washed His disciples' feet at the Passover meal, knowing Judas would betray Him. What does this teach us about serving people who might hurt us?

In John 13:35, Jesus says people will know we're His disciples by our love for one another. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think your life demonstrates this kind of love? What makes it difficult?

Going Deeper

The sermon emphasized that Jesus was "troubled in spirit" even though He knew God's plan. Why is it important to know that Jesus experienced real human emotions and struggles?

John 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." What's the difference between the peace Jesus gives and the peace the world offers?

Read John 16:33: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Share about a time when you experienced trouble but saw God's faithfulness through it. How did that experience change you?

Personal Application

The pastor said, "Most of our troubles we brought on ourselves." This is a hard truth. Can you share (if comfortable) about a consequence you've faced from your own choices? How did God meet you in that situation?

The sermon mentioned that we often treat God like a cosmic vending machine—only coming to Him when we need something. How can you develop a relationship with God that goes beyond just asking for things?

"Love is laying down your life" was a key theme. What does "laying down your life" look like in practical, everyday situations? (Think: marriage, parenting, work, friendships, church)

The pastor shared that he and his wife have learned to "deescalate" conflicts by choosing love over being right. Who in your life do you need to love this way? What would it look like to "deescalate" instead of escalate?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Serve Someone You Don't Naturally Like

Identify someone who irritates you or with whom you have conflict
Do one act of service for them without expecting anything in return
Pray for them daily

Option 2: Replace Trouble with Trust

When you face a difficult situation this week, pause before reacting
Instead of dwelling on the problem, pray: "God, I don't know what You're doing, but I trust Your will, not mine"
Journal about the experience

Option 3: Practice Gratitude in Difficulty

Each day, write down one way God has NOT treated you as your sins deserve
Thank Him specifically for His mercy and grace
Share your list with the group next week

Option 4: Love Check-Up

Evaluate your relationships: family, friends, coworkers, church members
Ask yourself: "Am I loving them the way Jesus loved His disciples?"
Choose one relationship to invest in more intentionally this week
Group Prayer Time

Prayer Prompts:

Confession: Acknowledge areas where you've failed to love others as Christ loved you

Gratitude: Thank God for not treating us as our sins deserve

Trust: Pray for current troubles in the group, asking for faith to trust God's plan

Strength: Ask for the Holy Spirit's power to overcome through Christ

Specific Prayer Requests:

(Allow time for group members to share current struggles and celebrations)

Looking Ahead

Reflection for Next Week: Come prepared to share one way you saw God working "all things together for good" (Romans 8:28) in a difficult situation—either recently or in the past.

Memory Verse: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." - John 16:33

Closing Thought

The sermon reminded us that it's not over yet. Whatever you're facing—whether it's a consequence of your own choices, someone else's sin against you, or just living in a broken world—Jesus has overcome. Your worst day is not the end of your story. Trust Him, love others, and take heart.

Leader's Notes

Be Vulnerable First: As the leader, be willing to share your own struggles and "worst days" to create a safe environment

Don't Rush: These questions are meant to go deep. It's better to cover fewer questions well than to rush through all of them

Encourage Authenticity: The sermon emphasized "keeping it real" and avoiding "plastic people." Model and encourage honest sharing

Follow Up: If someone shares a significant struggle, check in with them

during the week

Celebrate Overcoming: Make space for testimonies of God's faithfulness, just as the sermon concluded with personal stories