

LIFE Group Leader Handout
Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015
Alloy—Working with God in the Realities of Life
Pastore Mike O'Connor

Scripture—Luke 19:28-44

[28] And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. [29] When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, [30] saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. [31] If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" [32] So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. [33] And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" [34] And they said, "The Lord has need of it." [35] And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. [36] And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. [37] As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, [38] saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" [39] And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." [40] He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

[41] And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, [42] saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. [43] For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side [44] and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Main Idea—In this Life, Good and Bad Co-exist; God's Plan Prevails

While many cheered, other jeered.
Jesus receives praise, weeps for the city of Jerusalem.

Is this how the world really works?

- The vanity of seeking the perfect
- Jesus promises tribulation; He also has triumphed over it.

The answer:

- There are two sides; be sure to be on the right one. Do not let the presence of evil make us chummy with it.
- Recognize that we don't need a perfect environment; neither does God. His plan is unfolding in the midst.
- Control what you can control, and fill your life with what is pure—God and His word. Invest in others. Weep for—do not abandon—the lost.

Application—

- How did the "alloy" concept hit home for you?
- What applications do you have for this right away?

5 GROUND RULES FOR EFFECTIVE GROUPS

By Bill Donahue

Setting ground rules is one of the things we encourage groups to do, so that everyone is clear about how to create an environment for growth in a group context. Here are five to think to incorporate into your group process.

Care: Being for each other and coming alongside one another on any group or team is essential. We need more encouragement and less criticism; more urging onward than looking backward. To say “I care” means we not only have empathy with others, but we show that in a tangible way with words, ideas, support and compassion.

Safety: Creating a “come as you are culture” you make it safe for full participation and risk-taking. It means we can show up angry, tired, strong, weak, tired, excited or cautious--and that’s all ok. Sure, you need to monitor how you express those realities depending on the setting and culture of the group. But the basic premise remains.

Authenticity: Yes, authenticity is an overworked word...but it remains an underutilized practice. I believe it is because it is often misunderstood. Sometimes it is interpreted as putting all your cards on the table all the time, totally revealing everything about yourself. Not healthy. And we have reality TV to thank for that perspective. Unbridled and unwise communication and action is not authenticity--it is simply overexposure. And like too much sun without sunblock, it does more damage than most relationships can tolerate.

Growth: We are told to “urge one another toward love and toward good deeds” and groups are a great place for that. We get so selfish, so cynical, so absorbed in personal realities that pushing one another toward growth is neglected. But if I am listening, I am eager to call the best out of you and watch you thrive.

Help: Groups and teams flourish when members help one another in tangible ways. “Mike, I can get that report for you online and save you some time” or “Christine, let me take care of the kids for an hour while you get some quiet time--or just go shop!”. Little helps make a big difference.