

STUDY GUIDE:

Are We There Yet | Week #7: Restoration: the way things will be.

The writer of Ecclesiastes says there is nothing new under the sun; while this is true, sometimes we uncover something that was there all along, but feels new. This winter we will focus on the big story of what God has been, is currently, and will be doing in our world; how our *salvation* and *redemption* fits into God's larger plan to *restore* His *good creation*.

INTRODUCTION

This week we get to talk about restoration; the fourth stop on our journey through God's BIG story. The story began in the Garden and it was good in every sense of the word and even though things seem broken now, the promise of restoration is that things will be good once again. God's plan, His whole story is the ongoing process of renewing his creation. All of it. Making everything new. The problem is that we live in the 'ING'. Things are not new yet. This restoration project is still in progress. But that's where things get exciting! We have a role to play in this restoration! Using Jesus as our template we can begin to discover what it means to restore God's creation by bringing glimpses of God's kingdom into everyday brokenness.

CHAT

- What, if anything, has changed in your theology over the last month and a half. Have you seen any part of God's story with new eyes? What excited you about your new understanding?
- What do you believe about God's kingdom? How is it different than what you believe about heaven?

READ & DISCUSS

This week we are going to mix it up a bit. There are three main questions to focus on and several Bible passages and sermon quotes to help you percolate on the topic of restoration!

Thought provokers:

"As Jesus lived a redeemed life in the midst of this fallen world what he did was this: He saw things that were broken and dead and he grabbed a piece of the kingdom and he planted it in that brokenness. He saw death and he brought life. This is what it means to do the work of restoration. This is what he meant when he said that the kingdom was near. It is accessible. There is life after death!"

"Think of all the ways in which our world is dying. The promise of restoration is that life...true life can be restored to those dead places. There is life on the other side of death! This is what the kingdom of God is all about! This is the good news! And if Jesus is our template then we not only get to experience being brought to life but we get to breathe life...plant life...speak life into all the dead places of this world."

- John 11:25
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Revelation 21:3-5
- Matthew 6:9-10

“This idea of God’s kingdom can be difficult to understand especially since we aren’t all that familiar with the notion of Kingdoms anymore. But I have seen enough movies and read enough history to know this: in a kingdom, the king gets what the king wants. So what is it that God wants? Well this is what Jesus’ ministry was all about to preach and proclaim that God’s kingdom was near and to show people what that means when God gets what He wants! THIS kingdom coming - God getting what He wants was the good news that Jesus could not stop talking about.”

Mark 1:14-15

Discussion Questions:

1. What is restoration and what is our role in it?
2. How did Jesus model restoration or Kingdom building? Write down examples. What would it look like for us today to do those things (practically speaking!)?
3. How do these ideas of life after death and restoration and God’s kingdom all fit together?
4. Where do you see brokenness? Take a minute in silence to write down several things that you know are not the way they are supposed to be.
5. How might God be challenging you to restore those broken places?

APPLY

“Our job, as we become more and more like Jesus, is to see things that are not the way that God intended and to rain down pieces of God’s kingdom into those broken, dead places. Our job is to declare to the world that hope is not lost! This is not the way that it’s supposed to be but there is good news we follow a God who is in the business of making all things new! And his kingdom is near! And I don’t mean it’s near in the ‘we will go to heaven one day’ kind of near. I mean it’s near because I, we, all of us believers in Jesus are actively building his kingdom by restoring one broken thing at a time. This is God’s plan. Restoration. The way things will be.”

The challenge of restoration is simple yet so, so difficult. What do you see that’s broken and how can you restore that brokenness?

If you see brokenness, then assume that God is calling you to action. Don’t sit back and wait for him to tap you on the shoulder. You are called. What are you going to do about it?

CLOSE IN PRAYER FOR ONE ANOTHER

