

Adult Group Study Guide for April 26, 2020

Message: *The Thing That We Call Church*

Matt. 24:1-2, Matt. 27:50-52, Acts 5:12, 1 Cor. 3:9 & 3:16-17

Goal: To view ourselves (the people) as the church...extending the living church to our neighbors in the middle of this uncertain time.

Key Verses: *Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."* - Matthew 24:1-2

1. When Jesus said that the temple would be destroyed (Matt. 24:2), his disciples would have felt that to mean that their "church" (their faith) was somehow losing. With recent reports* saying that more Americans are leaving the church and their faith, how do you relate to the disciples feelings? Does it feel like the church is losing?
2. What is the significance of the temple curtain being torn from top to bottom in Matt. 27:51? Would it have sent the same message to the disciples if it had been torn from bottom to top? Reflect on the implications of where God's dwelling place would be.
3. What is the thing that we call church? What do we mean when we say "church"? Is it a building to visit where God's spirit dwells, as the temple was to the Jews? Or is it something more, as Paul seems to be indicating in 1 Cor. 3:9? How many addresses does Rosewood Reformed Church have?
4. Notice in Acts 5:12 that the early church still met together in Solomon's Colonnade (an outer part of the temple in Jerusalem...the one that Jesus left in Matt. 24:1). In light of that, it seems the disciples did not interpret Jesus' earlier statement (Matt. 24:2) to be a condemning worship gathering space. Yet, how does this nuance our understanding of the church building and the thing that we call church? Is church the building?
5. What is God revealing to you about yourself as you contemplate his Spirit dwelling inside of you? How might you think about yourself if you were able to grasp that the "most holy place" now lives in you as Paul indicates in 1 Cor. 3:16-17?
6. As we continue "church from our home," what might God be trying to show you about your life? What does the church in its "scattered form" look like at *your* address? In what ways can you live *as* the church to your neighbors (from at least 6 feet away of course :).

*<https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>