

Imperfect #1
A Line in the Sand

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 4:14–30

Discussion Questions

1. Describe some good things that come about when you return to your hometown or to a place you consider a second home.
2. Read Luke 4: 14-30. Jesus returned to Galilee, and news about Him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by everyone (v. 14-15). Then He came to Nazareth, His hometown, the city where He was brought up. What did He normally do on the Sabbath (v. 16)? How would you feel if you were in the crowd there with Jesus?
3. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah from which He read a messianic prophecy about God reaching out to the outcasts or the imperfect people (sinners). The Messiah came to minister to the needy, a mission every follower of Christ should fulfill. As Christians there are three things that we should cultivate in order to reach out to the imperfect people to make them perfect in Christ. First, we should cultivate a heart for imperfect people (v. 17-19). Having a heart for imperfect people is not because you pity them, but because like them, you are also imperfect, but are now made perfect through the cross. Read Isaiah 61:1, 2. Who are the imperfect people that the Messiah was sent to minister to? Who are the imperfect people around you? How do you treat them? When someone messes up, how do you react to that person's mistake? How do you want to be dealt with when you mess up? Discuss why the way you respond to other people's mistakes says a lot about your heart.
4. Secondly, as a follower of Christ you must be ready to accept rejection by your own (v. 20-24). Jesus basically said that He was the fulfillment of the prophecy—that He is the Messiah (v. 21). Everyone was amazed at the gracious words of Jesus, but despite their amazement, what problem did the people have with accepting Jesus' words (v.22)? Describe how did Jesus took their unbelief. Discuss why people who are "perfect" do not want to associate with people they think are beneath them? How do you deal with those who reject you because you are a

follower of Jesus? Would negative responses keep you from sharing your faith to others, or would you keep sharing it to those who are willing to listen?

5. Finally, as Christians we need to realize that all people are equally loved by God (v. 25-27). Jesus did not try to change the minds of those who didn't believe Him, but instead continued to reach out to the imperfect people. Those people in the fringes of society are the ones for which He came. Similarly, Elijah and Elisha, two great prophets of the Old Testament, were sent by God to reach out to the people He loved, including the Gentiles (non-Jews). Does God give preferential treatment to one culture over the other? How do you feel that God loves even the person you dislike the most? Share how you can reach out to people whom you dislike to associate with. How can you make your church a safe place of healing for the broken? Does your attitude towards them exude grace?
6. How did the Nazarenes react when they heard Jesus preach that God loves all people (v. 28)? What did they try to do to him (v. 29)? Describe what Jesus did in response (v. 30). The Bible records only one other instance that Jesus went back to Nazareth, and He never performed any miracles there. What blessings did these people miss when they rejected Him? What would you miss if you allow Jesus to draw "a line in the sand" between you and Him instead of allowing Him to be the Lord of your life?

Walk

Jesus Christ came to earth for the people He loves: for sinners, for imperfect people like us. As imperfect as you are, you are blessed to be saved by His grace in order to be perfect in Him. As a response to God's amazing love, are you willing to persevere more to be Christ-like, reaching out to those outside the church? Are you satisfied in coming to church without rising up and reaching out with the good news of Christ? Ask for God's help to give you a heart for the imperfect, courage to face rejection when you try to reach out, and a conviction that God equally loves everyone in spite of their backgrounds or their imperfections.

Worship & Prayer

*"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but not I'm found; was blind, but now I see."*

Thank You, Father, for the love that cleansed my sin and made me perfect in Your eyes. Thank You for the grace and hope I found in Christ. May you grant me a heart that seeks to reach those who need You, courage to face rejection, and eyes that see people as equally loved by You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Imperfect #2 “Selling” Jesus

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 5:12–32

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been talked into buying a product that you originally had no intention of purchasing? What made you buy it? Share with the group.
2. How do you present Jesus Christ to the imperfect world, so that people would come to Him and be made perfect in Him? In selling a product, there are three elements you need to consider: attitude, product, and target group. Three sequential events in Jesus’ ministry demonstrate how you are to use these elements to “sell” Him to other people. Read Luke 5:12-32. First. You need to have the attitude of sacrificial willingness. Leprosy is a contagious disease that affects the skin, mucous membrane, and nerves, causing lumps or disfigurement. In biblical times lepers were cast out of society because they were considered unclean. Describe how the leper appealed to Jesus (v. 12). How did Jesus respond (v. 13)? What made Jesus’ action a sacrificial kind of willingness? Why is willingness that is sacrificial important in reaching out to imperfect people? What is one thing you will be sacrificially willing to do in order to bring someone to the Lord?
3. The second account where Jesus demonstrated how you are to present Him to others is found in verses 17-26, when He healed a paralytic man. Who were in the crowd to listen to Jesus in verse 17? Describe the way the men in verses 18-19 called Jesus’ attention so that He would heal a paralytic man? Like these men who made the extra effort to bring the paralytic man to Christ, what extra effort would you be willing to do to bring someone to Christ? What was Jesus response to these men’s efforts (v. 20)? In “selling” Jesus to the imperfect people of this imperfect world,

you need to offer a product that meets their needs—something they are desperate to buy. The emphasis on this account is not in the miraculous healing of the paralytic, but on Jesus’ ability to forgive sin, which nobody else can do. What was Jesus attesting about Himself each time He healed diseases and forgave sinners?

4. The third element to consider when selling a product is the target group. In verses 27-32 Jesus made it clear that He came to bring sinners to repentance, and so you as a believer need to be “selling” Him to sinners. Who was Levi (v. 27)? What made him an outcast in the society? Why would Jesus call Levi (whose name was changed to Matthew) to follow Him? Are you exposed to unbelievers? Who are the usual sinners—imperfect people—around you? Why should you care about them? Share how you can reach out to someone whom others neglect or ignore. Do you find it difficult to do? What makes it possible to go out of your comfort zone and reach out to someone whom you don’t usually associate with?

Walk

As you share Jesus to the imperfect people around you in order to make them perfect in Christ, reflect on how Jesus changed you. What is it about Him that is so evident in your life that you can “sell” it to those who need Him? Sinners need a Savior and that Savior is Jesus Christ alone. He is the exclusive distributor of the forgiveness of sins. Jesus put you in a place where you can reach out and tell others about Him. Would you do it? Many believers say that reaching out to others is difficult, but would you trust God to give you the heart, wisdom and compassion for those who need Him? Only one Product meets people’s needs 100% of the time, no strings attached, and is absolutely free. You and I have tasted it. How desperate are you for others to have it, too?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your Son who died in my place so that I can be forgiven. I know I don’t put much effort into telling people about the Savior who gave His life for me and for them. Forgive me, Father. I’ve become too used to being comfortably ensconced in the church that I forgot those outside it. I ask for wisdom and courage to go out of my comfort zone and intentionally tell people about Jesus. Give me also the strength of heart to be willing to make sacrifices and give the extra effort. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Imperfect #3
A Moment of Crisis

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 7:1-10

Discussion Questions

1. Everyone goes through a life crisis. What usually triggers or causes it? Discuss.
2. How do you deal with crisis, especially in the context of reaching out to those who need Christ? How do you display your faith in the unbelieving world so that others see that you are different? What kind of faith causes people who see you to come to Christ and be made perfect in Him? Read Luke 7:1-10. In Capernaum, a Roman centurion experienced a moment of crisis that led him to desperately ask Jesus for help (v. 1-2). (A centurion is a commander of about 800 Roman soldiers). There are two things about life crisis that we need to understand:
 - a. First, our faith is often tested when we are in crisis. It is at a moment of crisis when we are attuned to spiritual matters and sensitive to spiritual counsel. Discuss how you, as a Christian friend, family member, co-worker or classmate, can be a minister as a spiritual guide to those who are in crisis? Share a personal testimony how God had used your faith and spiritual guidance to step in as an encourager to someone who was in crisis.
 - b. Secondly, everyone goes through crisis regardless of their position. Even those we consider social elites have the same spiritual needs. No matter your social status or accomplishments, you are still a human being with the same felt needs as others. What presumptions do you usually have about people who are in higher positions, or about the rich and famous? As a believer aiming to bring people to Christ, how you can reach out to them? Share and discuss.

3. When a person experiences a life crisis, it results in desperate actions (v. 3-5). Whom did the centurion send to present his appeal to Jesus? What caused the centurion to do it? Why were the elders so willing to approach Jesus and ask Him to honor their appeal on behalf of the centurion? Why would their request to Jesus have wrong notions? Do you think that out of desperation, you are capable of trying to buy Jesus' favor? Discuss why your past good actions can not be used as bargaining chips when you appeal to Jesus?
4. The centurion didn't appeal to Jesus personally, but in the centurion's belief that Jesus could heal his servant even without physically being present, Jesus saw the kind of faith the centurion had (v. 6-10). The centurion's faith demonstrates two actions you must show to those who are in crisis in order to reach them for Jesus and for them to know that there are solutions to their problems:
 - a. First is a faith that recognizes the worthiness of Jesus and your own unworthiness (v. 6-7). Why did the centurion stop Jesus from going to his home? What can you say about the centurion's faith in spite of his high position? How do you view your own worthiness in comparison to that of Jesus? Does your pride hinder you from coming to Christ? Do you tell Jesus what to do instead of trusting Him to do what He can do?
 - b. Second is a faith that recognizes the authority of God (v. 9-10). What did the centurion understand about authority? How have you demonstrated that the unwavering Christ is Lord of your life? In what areas have you given Him authority over your life?

Walk

Jesus was amazed at the faith of the centurion. He did not go to the centurion's home, but still the centurion's servant was healed. The centurion's faith was rewarded in a time of crisis (v. 9-10). What happens when you rest on God? Take time to assess your faith to see if it recognizes your own unworthiness and lead you to fully recognize the worthiness of Jesus and His authority.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I am unworthy to be in Your presence, but through the shed blood of Christ You see me as worthy to be called Your child. Many times I have failed and chose to disobey Your will, yet through Christ you have forgiven me and given me second chances. I doubt Your plans, yet You still choose to bless me. Thank You, Father. Forgive me for my sins and my imperfections. I pray for the strength of will to trust when life's crises push me to doubt You. I pray for a broken, contrite, and humble spirit that lets You lead. I pray for a gentle and compassionate heart that brings people to You. In Christ's name. Amen.

Imperfect #4 Expressions of Simple Faith

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 8:40–56

Discussion Questions

1. If a loved one is suffering from an illness, how far would you be willing to go (what are you willing to do) for him or her to be healed?
2. Read Luke 8:40-56. During this time, Jesus was the most popular teacher. Everywhere He went, throngs of people would welcome Him. Some came to listen; some came to see Him perform miracles, which authenticated His message to the people. Who was Jairus? What did he desperately want Jesus to do (v.41-42)? Have you ever wanted something so badly that you had to beg to get it? What would make you do it?
3. Jesus teaches that we should be child-like in our faith. What does this simple expression of trust in God look like? How do we cultivate child-like faith so that we can reach out to the imperfect, lost, and unbelieving world, that they, too, can be made perfect in Christ?
4. Our passage shows that a simple faith knows no protocol. More often than not, Christians tend to put up barriers that hinder non-Christians from coming to God. What kind of protocols or conduct/behaviors may a Christian be guilty of doing that would hinder someone from coming to Christ? How about you?
5. On His way to Jairus' home, Jesus had a crowd of people following Him, almost crushing Him in their zeal to touch Him. Who came behind Him to touch the edge of His cloak? Why did the woman do it (v. 42b-44)? How did Jesus recognize that someone had been cured (v. 45-46)? Describe the woman's reaction to being discovered (v. 47). Does this biblical account mean that touching something like religious relics could heal a person who is sick? According to Jesus, what cured this woman (v. 48)? What can you learn from this woman's simple faith? Do you think there is a proper way or protocol to approach Jesus?
6. Simple faith acknowledges Jesus' claims (v. 48). It is simply believing that Jesus is who He says He is. Why does the intellectual knowledge of Jesus not save a person? What are the claims Jesus makes about Himself that are so important to share with an unbelieving person?
7. A common problem in Christian faith is that we pray "in faith," but what we really pray for is the result. Does simple faith mean that you will always get what you want? Share with the group about a time when God didn't answer your prayers the way you wanted Him to do. Did it make you trust God more or less? Examine yourself. Is your faith in Jesus Christ based on His claims of who He is and what He can do, or is it based on the results?
8. Thirdly, simple faith affirms the ability of Jesus. While Jesus was still speaking with the woman, someone from the house of Jairus came to tell Jairus that his daughter had died. How did Jesus comfort Jairus (v. 49-50)? Jesus spoke of assurance ("do not be afraid"), action ("believe") and ability ("she will be made well"). Which of these is unique to Jesus? Why? Discuss the order of events inside Jairus' house (v. 53-56). What was Jesus's instruction to the parents after the girl was raised up (v. 56)? What does unbelief in God's ability imply?

Walk

Simple faith is having a heart that comes to know Jesus. It doesn't know protocol, but acknowledges Jesus' claims and His ability. It is not necessarily how you are assured, nor is it the action taken. It is in how you believe in the ability of Christ to save you. Simple faith is the foundation stone that affirms that Jesus has the ability to do what He claims He can do. This is the faith that assures our standing before Him and the kind of faith that He commends. How do you plan to share this truth to the people around you who need to hear it?

Worship & Prayer

Father, thank You for making it that simple to come to You: with a simple acceptance of what I am, and simple acceptance of who You are. I sometimes make it more complicated than it actually is, but I know I am a sinner, and that I need a Savior, and that Savior is Your Son Jesus Christ. Thank You for the gift of forgiveness and salvation. Give me the ability to keep a child-like faith that tells others about the God who loves them. May my actions encourage unbelievers to believe. Keep me from putting up barriers that may hinder people to come to You. Give me wisdom, give me strength, give me eyes that see Your hand at work in my life every day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Imperfect #5

When Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 10:25–37

Discussion Questions

1. Can you recall a time when someone went out of their way to help you when you were in desperate need of help? Share with the group.
2. Words and affirmation may be important to help others know Christ, but actions that reflect Christ speak a greater volume than our words ever could. Yet somehow, professed Christians' actions do not compel others to seek Christ. We may be doing something good, but more times than we care to admit, those good deeds are done out of convenience or obligation; and good deeds borne out of that attitude are not helpful to bring others to Christ. Read Luke 10:25-37. Describe what prompted Jesus to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan (v. 25-29). Is knowledge of the law enough to save a sinner? What does living it out mean?
3. The Jewish legal expert in the passage asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" but he was really asking who is he compelled to love. How did Jesus answer? Discuss how the priest and the Levite in the parable reacted when they saw the man who was robbed and beaten (v. 31-32). Why were their actions wrong? If you were in their shoes, would you help this person? Discuss why many Christians are like the priest and the Levite, whose jobs were to actually help others? What happens when you do not do anything? Why are many Christians, who are saved and have eternal security, immune to the plight of fellow men who are suffering?
4. The third traveler was a Samaritan. Jews despised Samaritans because they were not pure Jews. Unlike the priest and the Levite, the Samaritan's reaction to seeing the robbed and beaten man on the ground is a helpful kind of action that compels non-Christians to know Christ:
 - a. The MOTIVE of helpful action: COMPASSION (v.33). The Biblical standard of reaching out is compassion. What happens when there is lack of compassion in helping others? Is it possible to develop a compassionate heart or attitude? How?
 - b. The CONSEQUENCE of helpful action: SACRIFICE. Describe what the Samaritan did (v. 34). What did he sacrifice as a consequence of helping the injured man? Looking at your life, what sacrifice have you done to help someone else in great need?
 - c. The EXTENT of helpful action: GOING THE EXTRA MILE. Aside from cleaning the wounds of the man with oil and wine, what else did the Samaritan do to care for the man (v. 35)? Discuss why such action could stun the world and draw men to Christ?
5. In concluding the parable, what did Jesus help the legal expert realize about loving one's neighbor? (v.36-37)? What did Jesus charge him to do in response (v. 37)? As a Christian who should love God with all your being, how can you be more like the Samaritan?

Walk

Our Lord Jesus not only spoke of love, He also displayed it. He was compassionate and went the extra mile to manifest His love by sacrificially giving Himself for us. His sacrifice was not about what He did, but about how He helped us. In response, is your helpful action so compassionate, sacrificial and above and beyond the normal that it stuns the world (the lost) and compels them to ask you what caused you to do it? Can others say that our church is full of Samaritans? How can you be a Samaritan in your community?

Worship & Prayer

Father, forgive me for getting so comfortable and complacent in my salvation that I forget that others need Jesus to save them, too. I remember Your compassion and the extent of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and I feel truly loved. Help me make known that kind of love to people who need it, especially those I interact with on a daily basis. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Imperfect #6
A Traitor Among Us

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 22:1–38

Discussion Questions

1. The essence of betrayal is this: that I am willing to hurt you to get something for myself. Have you ever been betrayed? How did you react to that betrayal?
2. Judas's betrayal of Jesus is one of the worst betrayals in history. He was with Jesus for three years, heard His teachings and saw miracles that authenticated Jesus' messages, and yet sold out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Do you ever wonder what caused him to do it? How did Jesus respond to Judas' betrayal? Read Luke 22:1–38. While the people were anticipating the Passover—a feast commemorating the night the Israelites were freed from Egypt when God “passed over” homes marked by the blood of the lamb—what were the chief priest and teachers of the law plotting to do to Jesus (v. 1-2)? Satan definitely had a part in the betrayal of Jesus, but Judas was also responsible for his own actions. Discuss how Judas betrayed Jesus (v. 4-6). What did he get from betraying Jesus? What does this passage teach us about human flaws? What are the causes why Christians walk away from their faith?
3. Our passage shows us three ways Jesus responded to those who betrayed Him. First, He desired fellowship with traitors (v. 7-23). Why did Jesus eagerly want to share the Passover meal with His disciples (v. 15-16)? If you knew that your time on earth was about to end, who would you want to have your last meal with? Could it possibly be someone who had betrayed your trust? Why or why not?
4. On this occasion, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (v. 17-23). Discuss what the Lord's Supper is about. Why is it so important to commemorate it? The Lord's Supper was followed by Jesus' revelation that there is a traitor among the disciples. Did anyone among the disciples suspect who the traitor could be? Why do you think they could not have suspected that it was Judas? Would God have forgiven Judas if Judas acknowledged his sin?
5. Second, Jesus promised those who betrayed him great things to come (v. 24-30). Why did argument started among the disciples (v. 24)? What principle did Jesus give in response to the disciple's argument (v. 25-27)? Judas should have

understood what Jesus meant about the greater things to come, but he didn't. How is the Lord's system of greatness different from the world's system? Why is it so appealing to seek greatness and credit? How did Jesus exemplify greatness? What opportunities has the Lord already given you to serve Him and others?

6. Lastly, Jesus gave traitors a second chance (v. 31-34). It was not only Judas who betrayed Jesus; Simon Peter did as well. Discuss how it happened. Whose betrayal do you think is worse, Judas's or Peter's? Why? What set them apart from each other? How did Peter turn out? Share with the group how you have messed up in your work, studies or in relationships, but turned your life around after being given a second chance.
7. Jesus reminded the disciples that he had always taken care of them (v. 35-38). How did Jesus warn them of the tough times ahead? It is a question of trust whether we trust Him or the world. Do you trust Him enough not to betray Him?

Walk

Towards the end of his poem *Thirty Pieces of Silver*, William Blane writes,

*It may not be for silver: it may not be for gold;
But still by tens of thousands is this precious Saviour sold.
Sold for a godless friendship, sold for a selfish aim,
Sold for a fleeting trifle, sold for an empty name!
Sold in the mart of science! Sold in the seat of power!
Sold at the Shrine of Fortune! Sold in Pleasure's bower!
Sold, where the awful bargain none but God's eye can see:
Ponder, my soul, the question, 'Shall He be sold by thee?'
O Shall Jesus be sold by thee?*

Judas sold Jesus out for mere 30 pieces of silver. Simon Peter denied Jesus three times. Every one of the disciples left Jesus when He died. They were not, however, the only ones guilty of betraying Jesus. We are traitors as well when in our hearts we say we trust Jesus, but we hurt Him to advance ourselves. It is like saying, “I am willing to hurt Jesus to get something for myself.” We sell out Jesus and we do it everyday. How are you guilty of betraying Jesus? What do you plan to do about it?

You are so blessed that He gives second chances. His unconditional love is evident when He forgives traitors, as He did to Peter. But unlike Judas, how did Peter deal with his guilt? How would you deal with your guilt of betraying Jesus? Would you turn your eyes to Jesus?

Worship & Prayer

Father, thank You for making me realize the many ways I betray You everyday. I don't want to be that kind of believer. I want to be someone who trusts You with my whole heart. Thank You for the gift of second chances found only in Christ. Help me make the most out of those chances and help others to turn back to You. In Christ's name. Amen.

Imperfect #7
Garden of Sorrow

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 22:39–53

Discussion Questions

1. Was there a time in your life when you consented to do something that you didn't look forward to doing? How did you manage to go through with it?
2. As a believer, reaching out to a lost world means that you need to tell people to follow God's perfect plan for their lives. But if you have a complaining attitude towards submission to God's will, you may not be an effective witness. The will of God is clearly revealed in the Word of God, but maybe you have not really thought through the realities of following God's will and how it might affect the development of your entire character. Read Luke 22:39-53. Describe what happened after Jesus instituted the Lord's supper and revealed that one of His disciples was going to betray Him. How do you think the disciples were feeling at this point?
3. In His prayer to God the Father at Gethsemane, Jesus said, "Not My will but Yours be done," even knowing what would happen to Him. What did Jesus mean when He implored God the Father to "take this cup from Me?" (v. 42) What does Jesus' prayer tell you about His character and His relationship with the Father?
4. Submission to God's will is a willingness to do what He desires You to do, regardless of what it is. Doing this will bring you joy and satisfaction, but with it also come painful realities. First is that you will experience suffering and sorrow (v. 44). How did this verse describe Jesus' physical and emotional condition while He was praying? Discuss why He was in such a state. Describe the agony and suffering that Jesus had to endure. Do you know for whom He shed His blood? How do you react to painful and crushing events in your life? Do you still choose to follow God's will even if it comes with suffering and sorrow?

5. Secondly, when you follow God's will, you will experience abandonment and isolation (v. 45-46). What were Jesus' disciples doing while He was praying? How do you think they felt knowing that their leader was about to die and leave them? What must Jesus have felt when He saw that none of His disciples stayed up with Him to pray during His greatest moment of need? Share about an experience when you felt abandoned and isolated in your journey with the Lord. What kept you going?
6. Thirdly, when you follow God's will, you will experience injustice and unfairness (v. 47-51). Why did Judas kiss Jesus? Share why Judas's actions were hypocritical and dishonest (v. 47-48). How did Peter react to this incident? Jesus had every right not to heal the man whom Peter hurt, but what did Jesus do for this man? One of the most difficult things to understand in being a follower of Christ is that obedience and submission have nothing to do with fairness. Whether something is fair or not does not determine your submission to God's will. In what way do you think that following God's will may not be fair? Is this something that you struggle with? What can you possibly do about it?
7. Lastly, when you follow God's will, you will experience earthly loss (v. 52-53). What did Jesus say to the religious leader who came to capture Him? What did Jesus mean when He said, "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Discuss how, in allowing His enemies to win, Jesus honored the will of God. Why would it be so hard to follow God's will if you are not willing to take a loss?

Walk

In following His Father's will, Jesus experienced suffering, sorrow, abandonment, isolation, injustice, unfairness, and loss. But His submission to the will of the Father was all worth it because it bought you your salvation. What can you learn from Jesus' demonstration of obedience to His Father's will? Are you struggling to trust and follow the will of God for your life? Think about what God's will entails and pray for a submissive heart to obey.

Worship & Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Son whose humble submission to Your will despite the painful experiences that came with it ensured that I can be called Your child. You gave me new life, one where following You means unlimited grace, unspeakable joy, incomprehensible peace, but also expected suffering and pain. You never promised me a pain-free life; what You promised is that in this world I will experience pain, loss, injustice; but You also promised it is temporary. Thank You for giving me hope through Your Son. And so I pray for strength. I ask for comfort. I ask that if possible, spare me from those things. But above all I ask that not my will, but Yours be done. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Imperfect #8
Deny, Deny, Deny

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 22:54-65

Discussion Questions

1. How does peer pressure influence your decision making?
 2. It's a sad truth that followers of Jesus Christ deny their faith in Him every day by their words and actions. Read Luke 22:54-65 and John 18:15-27. This well-known passages of Peter's denial of Jesus shows us three factors that cause believers to deny their faith in Christ. First is that we deny Jesus because of fear (Luke 22:56-57; John 18:17-18). After His arrest at Gethsemane, Jesus was taken to a high priest's courtyard where He was illegally questioned. Peter followed Jesus there at a distance. At the courtyard, what did the servant girl accuse Peter of being (v. 56)? What was Peter's response? How did the servant girl know that Peter was lying (John 18:17-18)? What impression do you think Peter's denial gave to the girl? What situations might you be tempted to deny knowing Jesus? Discuss how a Christian denies knowing Christ by his/her words, actions or lifestyle.
 3. Secondly, we deny Jesus because of pressure (Luke 22:58; John 18:25). It is human nature to give in and conform when opposition gets in the way and we feel pressure being applied to our convictions. With ten other disciples with Him at Gethsemane, Peter was brave enough to fight for Jesus; but at the courtyard, alone, with people chiming accusations at him, Peter experienced pressure. Who else challenged Peter's denial that he was associated with Jesus? How did Peter react to this second allegation (22:58; 18:25)? In what situations are other people able to sway you to act in ways you know you should not? How can you stand up for the Lord despite these pressures?
 4. Lastly, we deny Jesus because of identification (Luke 22:59-60; John 18:26). Sadly, a lot of Christians do not want to be identified with Jesus outside of the church because of the implications being associated with Christ brings. Who was the third person that accused Peter of being Jesus' follower (John 18:26)?
- If you were Peter, what consequences would you be afraid of that you would deny being associated with Jesus? What "consequences" does a follower of Christ avoid when he/she refuse to be associated with other believers? In what situations (when and where) do you find it very difficult to openly admit your relationship with Jesus Christ? How can you overcome those instances in your life when identifying with Christ is a challenge?
5. While Peter was denying his association with Jesus, it seemed that he didn't feel ashamed doing it. Describe what happened the very minute of the third time he denied his association with Christ (Luke 22:61-62). What do you think Peter saw in Jesus' face when their eyes met? What do you think could he have felt at that moment? How did Peter react to the recognition that he had denied his Lord? What can you learn about repentance from Peter's experience? As a believer in the midst of several other voices, how than should you respond to the compelling voice of God?

Walk

The Lord Jesus Christ's life as Someone who chose to obey God is very different from Peter's. Jesus never wavered, never allowed fear and pressure to cause Him to deny His identity as the Son of God and our Savior. He never denies us despite severe consequences (Luke 22:63-65). Would you do the same for Christ? Because you are a follower of Christ who should be effectively reaching out to fellow imperfect people in your home, office, school or other circles of influence, what could you do to strengthen your stand for Jesus Christ, who died to save you from your sin and give you eternal life, in the face of fear, pressure, and consequences of being associated with Him?

Worship & Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word that allows us to look back at the lives of imperfect believers from long ago, learn from their mistakes, and be encouraged in our walk with Christ despite the struggles. Thank You for the eternal assurance that the fear, pressure, and worldly consequences I will experience on earth because of my faith in You will be but temporary, and that the rewards of being faithful to You is eternal. Give me strength to withstand those hardships. Bless me with people who will keep me accountable in my obedience to You. Mold me also, Father, to be the kind of believer who has the courage to stand up for You, and in so doing bring honor to Your name and draw others to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Imperfect #9
Digging Yourself a Deeper Hole

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 22:66–23:25

Discussion Questions

1. When Christians compromise their stand one time, it becomes easier to make compromises whenever their faith in Christ get tested. Unbelievers see it and may wonder why we don't hold to our convictions, instead getting manipulated and pressured to do things we are not supposed to do. We dig ourselves a hole when we compromise the first time, and dig ourselves a deeper hole by compromising again and again and not standing on our convictions. What holes of compromises do Christians usually fall into? Why would a lot of Christians rather stay in or even dig themselves deeper hole instead of getting out?
2. Luke 22:66-23:25 gives us a clear picture of how we get ourselves into more serious trouble by compromising our faith instead of standing up for our convictions based on the Word of God. Discuss how a false charge was given against Jesus (v. 66-71). How did Jesus reply to the interrogation about His identity? What did the Jewish council condemn Jesus of claiming? Would that be a sufficient reason for Jesus to be put to death? How do you respond when someone puts your Christianity into a bad light? Do you feel intimidated? Share and discuss how you have stood your ground as a Christian despite intimidation from others.
3. When Jesus was taken to Pilate, what other accusations did the crowd charge Jesus of doing (v. 23:1-4)? What verdict did Pilate give? Pilate had the authority in the land of Palestine to free Jesus despite the Jewish leaders' accusations, but why did Pilate not do so?
4. How did Pilate, finding nothing wrong with Jesus, dig himself a deeper hole where he could not get out. As Christians, we are guilty of digging ourselves into a deeper hole, and the Scriptures describes it in this progression:
 - a. First, it happens when we have no convictions (v. 5-7). Why did Pilate send Jesus to Herod? How do you as a believer act like Herod when you know the right thing to do, but instead of standing your ground for what you believe you should do, you pass on the responsibility to someone else? What's the

danger of asking the question "What would I do?" instead of "What should I do in light of what the Bible says?" when it comes to spiritual matters?

- b. Secondly, we dig ourselves into a deeper hole when we associate with people who also don't have convictions (v. 8-12). Why was Herod delighted to see Jesus (v. 8-9)? When he didn't get what he wanted from Jesus, what did Herod do (v. 11)? Why did Pilate and Herod become friends despite hating each other before (v. 12)? Discuss what happens when we try to rationalize our wrong behavior by pointing to others who may be doing the same thing. Are you afraid to make a stand because you don't want to be the "bad guy?" If someone (especially a fellow believer) makes a stand for something that is good and right, do you back that person up or do you just keep quiet? Discuss how you can discern if a person has conviction. How can you surround yourself with people like them?
- c. Thirdly, we dig ourselves into a deeper hole when we make decisions not based on convictions (v. 13-25). Pilate who didn't find Jesus guilty of any wrongdoing wanted to release him three times. What kept Pilate from doing it (v. 23)? How did Pilate dig himself an even deeper hole? What decision did he make when he didn't stand on his own convictions (v. 24-25)? Do the voice of the majority sway you even if you know that what they want is wrong? How do you react when majority in the group decide to do something that is obviously wrong?

Walk

Many of us Christians find it hard to live in this world surrounded by imperfect people. We are in a deep hole, one which we dig even deeper for ourselves when we have no convictions, when we surround ourselves with people who don't have biblical beliefs or principles, and when we make decisions that are not based on convictions. Think about what is the main purpose of the Scripture in your life. Do you think the Word of God was given to make you feel better? Stop and assess your life if you are living out Biblical convictions. If you have made compromises on your faith in Jesus Christ, how do you plan to change that?

Worship & Prayer

Father, Your Word is the lamp unto my feet and the light unto my path. You have been faithful in clearly letting me know what choices I need to make in my life. You have been faithful in providing strength and protection in the midst of opposition. You are faithful in giving me the courage of conviction to stand against sin. Through the risen Savior Jesus Christ you have assured victory over sin, yet I continue to compromise my faith left and right, in the process besmirching Your name when You deserve nothing but praise and honor. Forgive me, Father. I ask for wisdom, strength, resolve, and courage to stand firm in my faith, in Christ's name. Amen.

Imperfect #10
Mirror of the Heart

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 23:26-43

Discussion Questions

1. When do you find it difficult to conceal what is in your heart? Why? Share with the group.
2. The mirror of a man's heart is his action. In other words, what a man does is an indication of what is in his heart. Read Luke 23:26-43. This passage tells us the actions of Jesus as He was led to death on the cross, which gives us very clear ideas on what was in His heart at that moment. First, He was thinking of others until the end (v. 26-31). Condemned to die on the cross after severe beating and enduring a long evening of trials, and carrying the cross that every condemned person to crucifixion must bear the entire way were just too much for Jesus' humanity. Who was Simon of Cyrene? What did the soldier make him do (v. 26)? Why was a large crowd following Jesus (v.27)? How did Jesus respond to the women who were mourning for Him (v. 28-31)? What was Jesus thinking of them on His way to die? Share what possible thoughts would cross your mind if you were accused unfairly and charged with a crime that you never committed. Would you still be thinking about others at that moment?
3. Second, Jesus was thinking of forgiving until the end (v.32-38). There were two others, who were real criminals, with Him to be put to death. What other horrible things did the people do to Jesus while He was nailed on the cross? What did Jesus say on the cross that reveals His character (v.34)? What does it tell you about Jesus' capacity to forgive? Discuss how a normal person would usually react to unfairness from others. What would

it take for you to forgive someone who had hurt you quite deeply? Is it possible to do so? How?

4. Third, Jesus was saving others until the end (v.39-43). If in an hour of death and a person still claim his own righteousness and is not afraid of death, then that person won't believe at all. How did the first criminal react to Jesus? What did he demand Jesus to do (v.39)? In contrast, what appeal did the other criminal on the cross make of Jesus (v.40-41)? What was Jesus' reaction to the criminal's plea? That common criminal was the last person to come to know Christ as His Savior before Jesus died. How is his salvation so fitting to Jesus' only purpose for coming to earth? How does Jesus' acceptance of the repentant criminal tell us about man's salvation and transformation?

Walk

Knowing Jesus thoughts in His last moment on earth through His actions, forgiveness and saving of others until His last breath give us glimpses of God's love for us. Why did Jesus decide on not saving Himself from His pain and misery on the cross? How can you thank God for His sufferings in order to give you the gift of salvation?

Worship & Prayer

Our gracious and loving Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to know You through Your Son the Lord Jesus Christ who gave us a perfect image of what God's heart is. We thank You that we no longer have to guess the content of God's heart as it has already been lived out by our Saviour Jesus - a heart of love, grace, and mercy. Empower us to emulate Him - to still love you and our fellow believers even in the midst of suffering and difficulty. Cause us to be gracious especially to those who seem undeserving and to those who we simply overlook. Fill our hearts with the love of Jesus until it overflows to our relationships, our behavior, our words, and our lifestyles - that our actions may be a witness to all those who have never experienced the profound love of Jesus in their lives. May we be the Jesus that other people have never encountered. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Imperfect #11

Put Your Life on the Line

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 23:44-56

Discussion Questions

1. What is the greatest thing you have ever given up for someone else?
2. Read Luke 23:44-56. As Jesus hung on the cross, He took upon Himself all the sins of the world. Because of this He was separated from God the Father in heaven who in His holiness could not have anything to do with sin, especially sin of that magnitude. Have you ever wondered who killed Jesus? Why could no one kill Him? If no one could kill Him, who initiated His death (v. 46)? Why did Jesus do it? How does it affect you that you, who because of your sins deserve to die, were saved by Jesus' voluntary death on the cross?
3. What uncommon occurrence took place while Jesus hung on the cross, and what did it signify (v. 44-45)? If you were there to witness the death of Christ, how would you have responded? Luke recorded four different responses of different people to Jesus' death. See how can you identify with these responses in your own life:
 - a. *Response #1: Acknowledge.* The first person to respond to Jesus' death was the centurion. Who was he? What did he acknowledge about Jesus (v. 47)? Is acknowledgement of Jesus being a righteous man sufficient to change a person and be transformed? Discuss why acknowledgement, though it may be a good thing, is insufficient to impact one's life?
 - b. *Response #2: Sympathize* (v. 48). How did a group of people who had gathered to witness Jesus' crucifixion react to His death? What did they do after sympathizing with Jesus? Why is sympathy, or just

feeling sorry, insufficient as a response to Jesus' death? When you hear an inspiring story, or of a compelling story of someone needing help, how do you respond? Why would plain sympathy be an insufficient response to what Christ did on the cross?

- c. *Response #3: Observe* (v. 49). How did all those who knew Jesus react to His death? How does their reaction remind you of the actions of many Christians today? Discuss how you can become involved in the spiritual lives of those around you, instead of just being an observer. Have you ever asked a family member what they had learned at church? Or have you ever shared with them what part of the message you heard in church specifically blessed you?
- d. *Response #4: Transformation to action* (v. 50-53). Who was Joseph of Arimathea? How did he put his life on the line in relation to Jesus? Describe how he took care of Jesus' dead body. Share what you can learn from his example. How does your transformed life reflect in your action?

Walk

In response to His death, Jesus wants your changed life. He died so that you may live. Anything short of transformation of your heart is an inadequate response to Jesus Christ's death on the cross. As you commemorate Holy Week and Easter, how would you show your appreciation for what Jesus did? What risks might you have to take as you live for the Lord? Are you willing to take those risks and put your life on the line for Christ's sake?

Worship & Prayer

Father, I praise and thank You for Your Word that reminds me of Christ's sacrifice. His gift of grace was given to me for free, but paid for with His precious blood on the cross. Forgive me for the many times I took that for granted, for the many times I simply acknowledged, sympathized, or observed without effecting a changed life. Through the Holy Spirit you have begun to work in my heart. Through Christ You gave me the capability to live a changed life. Give me the courage and the guidance to use that ability to step out in faith, to take risks in living in obedience to Your will. I may lose some things, but my desire is to gain Your favor, Father. May Your will be done in my life, and may You be pleased in how I live it starting today. I ask these in Jesus' name. Amen.