

*Gospel*  
**DNA**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

# WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Welcome to community group! We believe that people experience and grow in their faith when they get to spend time reflecting on God's Word, and also hearing from other Christians. That's what we're hoping for tonight. As we get started, here are some things happening in the broader life of the church:*

- **Women's Retreat | November 1st & 2nd**

Registration is open for our annual Women's Retreat. It'll be a time of worship, learning, prayer, and fellowship! You can come for the whole time, just Friday night, just Saturday, both, you can spend the night, or not. In any case, we hope all the women of New City will be able to join us! You can register via the Church Center App. If the cost is an obstacle let one of the church staff know and we'll make sure we get you there regardless.

- **Intro to New City | October 19th 8a-Noon**

Our next Intro to New City class is coming up in October! Intro to New City is a seminar designed to help you get to know the church a little better: hear the story of the church's origins, our Vision, Values, Beliefs, and Philosophy of ministry, some things that are distinctive about New City, etc. It also provides a basic framework for understanding the gospel, and the church's role in God's plan of redemption.

Intro is a pre-requisite to membership at New City, however, attending the seminar does not commit you to membership. It's something we hope all regulars at New City will experience and if nothing else you get some free food and books! If you need childcare for the class we will be glad to provide it though the REGISTRATION DEADLINE for adults and children is October 11th.

- **Thanksgiving Peanut Butter Drive**

It's October which means: PEANUT BUTTER FOR THANKSGIVING! Each Thanksgiving City Gospel Mission provides food for more than 400 families in need in their annual Thanksgiving Exchange. Our part is to collect 15oz containers of peanut butter (note: ONLY 15oz, please). Please drop off in the Commons when you are around the building.

- **Back2Back Haiti | February 29th-March 7th**

We are taking a group to Haiti with Back 2 Back this winter. If you'd like to join in talk with Pastor Ryan or Pastor Brian.

# Who is Jesus?

(Matthew 11.2-15)

>> *Open your group with a prayer* >>

>>SAY>> *We're trying to get to know each other a bit. So share your **name, where you're from, and where you live now, and answer:***

***If you had the chance to spend a whole day with one person you don't currently know (living or dead), who would it be? Why?***

## STUDY/DISCUSSION

*This fall we're doing a series together on the nature of the gospel. If the gospel is that God has come to save us ("Salvation belongs to the Lord!," Jonah 2.9), and he does this through Jesus Christ, it's natural to ask, "Who was Jesus?" We're going to talk about that tonight as we discuss Matthew 11.*

### >> READ >> Matthew 11.2-15

1. Why does John send his disciples to talk to Jesus? Why might he have had some doubts?
2. Do you think John's question was a good one? Why or why not? (*Follow up, How do you think Jesus felt about John's question?*)
3. v.4-5 - How does Jesus answer? What are some of the things that the Messiah does?
4. v.6 — What are some reasons people may be offended ("scandalized") by Jesus?
5. v.7-14 — Jesus then begins to talk about John the Baptist. What do we learn about John from these verses? What (indirectly) do we learn about Jesus?
6. Verse 12 is difficult to translate. Literally it says something like, "the kingdom of heaven is violence-ing, and the violent bear it away." On Sunday, Josh said it could mean, "The kingdom of heaven has suffered violence." If this is the case, what does this tell us about Jesus?
7. Because it's in the middle voice, it could also mean, "the kingdom of heaven brings violent upheavals." If this is the case, what implications does this have to your own life with Jesus?
8. "*Go and tell John what you hear and what you see...*" (v.4). What are some practical ways you can commit to hear what Jesus says and see what Jesus does?

## **PRAY**

Take some time and pray together. This can be done together as a whole group, or in smaller groups.

As the year is just beginning you may want to think about how you'd like prayer to go in your groups and plan diligently to start in that way. That is, figure out how sharing and prayer will be a priority in your group. For example, you may set a timer on your phone during the sharing time so that you get to prayer rather than spend all of the time sharing.

Either take notes yourself or have someone else write down all the prayer requests so that you can share them with the group and so that you yourself can be praying for your group members.

# Leaders' Notes

(from the ESV Study Bible)

**Matt. 11:2 when John heard in prison.** John had been imprisoned by Herod Antipas, and as he awaited death (see 14:1–12) he presumably heard about Jesus' ministry.

**Matt. 11:3–5 Are you the one who is to come?** John is probably concerned because his present imprisonment does not match his understanding of the Coming One's arrival, which was to bring blessing on those who repented and judgment on those who did not (see note on 3:11). Jesus' ministry, however, is in line with prophetic promises about the time of salvation, as seen especially in these descriptions that recall the words of Isaiah: **the blind receive sight** (cf. 9:27–31; Isa. 29:18; 35:5), **the lame walk** (Isa. 35:6; cf. Matt. 15:30–31), **lepers are cured** (Isa. 53:4; cf. Matt. 8:1–4), **the deaf hear** (Isa. 29:18–19; 35:5; cf. Mark 7:32–37), **the dead are raised** (Isa. 26:18–19; cf. Matt. 10:8; Luke 7:11–17; John 11:1–44), and the **good news** is preached to the **poor** (Isa. 61:1; cf. Matt. 5:3; Luke 14:13, 21). Jesus' deeds gave sufficient proof of who he was and that the prophesied time of salvation had come (“the year of the Lord's favor”; Isa. 61:1; cf. Isa. 62:1).

**Matt. 11:6 blessed is the one who is not offended by me.** The beatitude is a mild rebuke; John and his disciples must be open to God's unfolding plan, even though Jesus' ministry did not exactly match their messianic expectations.

**Matt. 11:10** who will prepare your way.

**Matt. 11:11 Those born of women** is a Jewish idiom for ordinary human birth (cf. Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4), and Jesus implicitly contrasts this with the new birth into the kingdom of heaven. **no one greater.** John's mission was uniquely privileged because he prepared the way for the Messiah and the kingdom. **greater than he.** But those **in the kingdom of heaven** have the greater privilege because they have actually entered the kingdom (in its new covenant reality) and become partakers in the new covenant through the blood of Christ. (On the salvation of believers in the OT, see Romans 4).

**Matt. 11:12** That the kingdom has **suffered violence** (Gk. *biazō*) probably indicates opposition from the religious establishment, and **the violent take it by force** probably refers to the actions of specific evil people like Herod Antipas, who had arrested John.

**Matt. 11:13 all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.** John the Baptist was the last of a long history of OT prophets that looked forward to the coming of Christ.

**Matt. 11:14 he is Elijah who is to come.** Malachi had prophesied that “Elijah” would prepare the way for the Messiah (Mal. 3:1; 4:5; see note on Mal. 4:4–6). He did not actually imply only a literal reappearance of Elijah, and John's earlier denial that he was Elijah (John 1:21) was probably an attempt to correct a popular belief that Elijah himself would reappear. Before John's birth, he was designated as the one who would minister in the “spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17), thereby fulfilling Malachi's prophecy.