



GROUPS

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Series: Picking up and Letting Go - Part 2, Jan 14, 2024

Scripture: John 1:43-50 (NIV11)

Community is shaped by the conversations we share.

These questions are just a tool to help you meaningfully engage with the themes of this week's teaching.

Message Summary: This week we wrap up the Picking Up and Letting Go series by looking at another Epiphany text and reflecting on ways that picking up looked like for Jesus and what we can pick up in the new year.

- **Saying Yes** - In his family, Scott is known as “Team No,” but he believes that Epiphany encourages us to take a posture of assent, to find ways that renewal and regeneration, similarly to how it played out in Jesus’ life, appear in the simple things of life and say yes to them.
- **Where you left off** - The story of Jesus finding followers and his followers finding their way to Jesus invites us to keep searching for faith where we left off and to be open to surprises.
- **Moving on** - Jesus “decides” (determines) that it is time to head north. And that decision of Jesus to move on shapes the unfolding story. And in Jesus’ decision and his choice of followers we can be assured that it is also ok for us to determine where and how we

want to move forward this year, and who we want to bring along with us.

- **Finding the trail** - Scott shared a poem about hope, how hope has holes in her pockets and leaves us breadcrumbs, and how for Scott oftentimes the decision to move forward and find the trail of hope lies in saying yes to life. And hope appears in our lives in different ways. In case of Jesus in our text, it was determination. For Nathaniel, hope appeared in the unexpected people and events. Where are the bread crumbs of hope are appearing in your life this season? What do you need to pay attention to?

Connect: We’ve been talking about the themes of picking up and letting go. Scott shared how picking things up are harder for him than letting go. His risk aversion doesn’t let him plunge into new things easily. What is easier for you or what comes more naturally, letting go or picking up?

Share: *“Each year, on the heels of Christmas, as a new year begins Epiphany invites us to assume a posture of assent.*

To consider how - in Jesus - Divine Love let go a measure of its power and its security in picking up and putting on humanity.

To consider how, in the stories we have about Jesus, renewal and regeneration sprang up simply in the splashing of water and in the wine of a wedding feast, right there in the simple and shimmering

moments of a human life. And it invites us to consider, to imagine, to believe even...that this still happens. And to be ready to say yes when it does."

Share your thoughts in one of these two ways:

- The Epiphany season takes us all the way to Lent and begins to reveal to us both Jesus' humanity and divinity. How do those two truths about Jesus impact your own spiritual journey?
- Or, take a more practical approach and share about one thing that helps you believe that newness in your life, or in the lives of your loved ones is still possible? What simple human things shimmer with divine love for you and keep you from despair?

Reflect: Read John 1:43-50. What stands out to you in the text or piques your interest? What are the surprising elements?

John tells us about how followers are finding Jesus, and Jesus finding followers. And we need to acknowledge the background to this searching: 1st century jews, in the midst of political and social tension, economic pressure and uncertainty.

"In that climate some of them, no doubt, had had enough of the religious powers and personalities of their time. Some of them are in full on deconstruction mode which is why they'd flocked to hear John the Baptist, why they're intrigued by Jesus. Perhaps they were eager to see a version of faith rooted in integrity and justice. Maybe they were seeking something real and embodied. Perhaps they wanted to find some alignment between a faith that was changing...and their sense of who they were becoming. But what this story offers is a picture of how, wherever you are in your relationship to faith, you can pick up wherever you left off. With 2024 offering you another opportunity to search for a faith worth finding — and another chance to be surprised by a faith worth being found by."

What has been your experience with picking up where you left off? Or, how are you finding alignment between your faith and who you are becoming? What does that alignment look like for you at this point in your life?

Engage: In Jesus being determined to move on, we see a picture of God discerning direction and figuring out a way forward. And he surrounds himself with a particular group of people for where he intends to go.

What do you think about this idea that Jesus also needed to choose a path and discern direction, and find companions for the journey? And what does this tell you about choosing companions or community for you own life's journey? How do you do that?

Take away: A poem by Rosemary Wahtola Trommer:

*Hope has holes
in its pockets.
It leaves little
crumb trails
so that we,
when anxious,
can follow it.*

What is your way of paying attention to the breadcrumbs of hope? What are some of the breadcrumbs that you encountered in 2023? What crumbs can you be on a look out for in 2024?

Benediction:

My prayer is that you'd be honest and wise and tenacious with your limited energy as you choose to pick up the new this year. And in doing so, that you'd follow the trail that hope has left, A path that follows God's good and patient and faithful work in you All the way home to where Grace is always waiting. Amen.