



Sharing

Circle Up: Get settled; Reach out to anyone we expected to be here but isn't.

Opening Prayer: Risen Christ, you make all things new through the gift of your resurrection. In this time of reflection and fellowship, lead us to discover and commit to your transforming power in our lives and in the life of our church. By your Spirit, lead us in discerning the new life that you desire for us. Amen.

The Question: Go around the circle answering, "Where have you seen God this week?"

Studying

Scripture: Matthew 23:29-39 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, 30 and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' 31 Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. 33 You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape the judgment of hell? 34 For this reason I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, 35 so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. 36 Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you, desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Reflection Questions:

- Describe a home improvement project that you've experienced that needed "demo". What had to be removed or destroyed to make way for the new? Why?
- Read the Matthew scripture out loud. Paraphrase Jesus' critique of the religious leaders. What do you believe was the motivation for the choices of religious leaders (that Jesus criticizes) through the centuries?
- Read v. 37 again. What does this say about human beings? What does it say about God? What does it say about the relationship between human beings and God?
- If Jesus were to offer a critique today of the church, what might he say? What might he say needs to be demolished and rebuilt?

Praying

Pray for each other in silence or aloud.

At the end of the silent prayer, pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Encouraging

What's your next step on the discipleship path?

What can we do to help each other?

When are we gathering next?