

## Small Group Guide

### SILENCE IN JUDGMENT AMID SHOUTS OF MERCY

---

*The Church at Brook Hills,*

*Dr. David Platt*

*September 2, 2012*

*Revelation 6-7*

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

## Relate . . .

*Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:*

*Welcome*—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

*Review*—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

*Prayer*—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

## Reflect . . .

*Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)*

### Message Outline

#### SILENCE IN JUDGMENT AMID SHOUTS OF MERCY

Revelation 6-7

#### Basic Reminders...

- Concerning the church...
  - In essentials, unity.
  - In non-essentials, liberty.
- Regarding Revelation...
  - The arrangement of Revelation seems cyclical, not chronological.
  - The visions in Revelation gradually build toward a climactic consummation.
  - The timing of Revelation involves the last days.
  - The theme of Revelation is the gospel.

#### Gospel Truths...

- God is ultimately sovereign over evil.
  - Satan can do nothing apart from divine permission.
  - Suffering is always used to fulfill divine purposes.
- Men and women are morally responsible for evil.
  - Men and women are decidedly sinful.

## Small Group Guide

### SILENCE IN JUDGMENT AMID SHOUTS OF MERCY

---

*The Church at Brook Hills,*

*Dr. David Platt*

*September 2, 2012*

*Revelation 6-7*

- Men and women are dangerously self-destructive.
- Men and women deserve death.
- God will judge men and women who turn from Him and live for this world.
  - The scope of His judgment will be cosmic.
  - The breadth of His judgment will be universal.
  - The effect of His judgment will be terrifying.
  - The duration of His judgment will be eternal.
- God will save men and women who trust in Him and live for another world.
  - Christians are secure on earth in the midst of tribulation.
    - God plans the persecution of His people.
      - They will suffer as they witness.
    - God promises protection for His people.
      - They are safe from God's wrath.
    - God empowers perseverance in His people.
      - They are sealed by God's Word.
  - Christians will stand in heaven at the end of tribulation.
    - They will shout God's victory.
    - They will serve in God's presence.
    - They will soak in God's glory.
    - They will be satisfied by God's goodness.
    - They will be soothed by God's mercy.

#### Practical Takeaways...

- Repent of sin with urgency.
- Proclaim the gospel with urgency.
- Humbly cry out for God's justice amidst persecution.
- Confidently cry out for God's mercy amidst suffering.
- Build your life and your family on that which lasts forever.
- Spend and sacrifice your resources on that which brings eternal reward.
- Always remember that this world is not our home.

*"Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."*

*Zechariah 2:13*

#### Message Summary

*Revelation 6-7 presents a vivid account of God's judgment on the earth, as seven seals are opened by the Lamb. While interpretations vary regarding the timeline and the meaning of various symbols, this passage spotlights the sovereignty of God as well as the intensity of His judgment on mankind for sin. While the earth is devastated through the six seals, God's people remain secure and will stand in heaven at the end of the tribulation, worshipping and serving the Lord as they experience His goodness and enjoy Him forever. This perspective of the future urges us to repent of sin, to proclaim the gospel, to cry out for God's justice, and to spend our lives for that which will last forever.*

#### Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Understanding that we do not have a clear interpretation for every number and symbol in Revelation, discuss as a small group how you will handle differing interpretations and beliefs within the group regarding this book. Pray for the Spirit to guide the focus of your times together and to enable peace and a willingness to learn from each other even if perspectives on Revelation differ.

## Small Group Guide

### SILENCE IN JUDGMENT AMID SHOUTS OF MERCY

---

*The Church at Brook Hills,*

*Dr. David Platt*

*September 2, 2012*

*Revelation 6-7*

- The theme of Revelation is the gospel. How does this understanding affect how you interpret this book? How did it affect the original hearers of this epistle? How does it affect your application of what you read in Revelation?
- Revelation 6:1 begins with the Lamb opening the first of the seven seals. Look back at Revelation 5:1-14. Who is the Lamb? Why is the Lamb able to open the seals?
- In Revelation 6:2, 4, 8; 7:2; 8:2, 3; 9:1, 3, 5; 13:5, 7, 14, 15, permission is given by God for all that occurs in these chapters, indicating that He is sovereign. Share about a trial that you have experienced or are experiencing in your life. Does your response to trials indicate that you believe God is sovereign? What does it practically look like to trust in the sovereignty of God, especially in the midst of a trial? Praise God together for always being perfectly in control and for His ability to orchestrate all circumstances to accomplish His purpose.
- Revelation 6 connects to Zechariah 1:7-17 and 6:1-8. How are these visions different from Revelation 6? How do they correlate with the vision in Revelation 6?
- In Revelation 6:1-8, what is the purpose associated with each horseman? (Conquering, war, famine, and death)
- Each horseman depicts a progression of sin and strife on the earth, which is the consequence of God giving humanity over to their sinfulness. What results on earth demonstrates the self-destructiveness of human sin. Knowing that sin destroys others and ourselves should lead us to repentance. What sinful tendencies are in your heart? What consequences are you facing because of sin you are holding on to? What sin do you need to confess to God and to others? If you have unconfessed sin in your life, how is that currently affecting your relationship with God and with others?
- How do you respond to sin in your life? Are you broken over your sin? Do you hate your sin? Are you urgent to confess it? Or do you have a laissez-faire attitude towards sin? What does your response to sin indicate about your relationship with God?
- Do you have someone in your life to hold you accountable? Is there trust and respect within the small group where people feel safe to share about their struggles with sin or about trials they are experiencing? How can your small group grow in encouraging each other in faithfulness as well as in lovingly confronting one another about sin?
- In the opening of the fifth seal in Revelation 6:9-11, the martyred saints cry for God to avenge them by judging those who are of the earth, and judgment comes in Revelation 6:12-17 with the opening of the sixth seal. In conjunction with Revelation 6:12-17, read Isaiah 13:9-12; 24:1, 6; 34:2-4; Joel 2:1-2, 10, 30-31; Matthew 24:29. How do these prophecies reinforce Revelation 6:12-17?
- Identify areas of injustice in Birmingham and in our world. Like the saints in Revelation 6, cry out to God together for His holiness and His justice to be made known and for things to be made right according to His righteousness.
- The sixth seal brings dread and despair for the wicked as they face God's wrath (see Revelation 6:16-17). For the Christian, knowledge of God's coming wrath on the unsaved should spur us on in gospel proclamation. Who in your life is unsaved and on the path to experience God's eternal judgment? Are you faithful in witnessing to others about the saving grace of Jesus Christ? Pray for personal boldness in gospel proclamation, and pray for unbelievers around the world to turn from their sin and to trust in Christ as Savior and Lord. Pray that unbelievers in unreached areas will have an opportunity to hear and to receive the truth in their lifetime.
- Discuss the significance of the silence in Revelation 8:1 when the seventh seal is opened.
- Christians are secure on earth in the midst of tribulation. Discuss your definition of "security." How does your definition of security align with Revelation 6-7 as believers are persecuted for the faith and facing great trials on earth? Is Christ your security, or are you depending on people or things (both of which are temporary) to provide that sense of protection and well being in your life?
- Christ promises persecution for those who trust and proclaim Him as Lord and Savior (Matt. 24:9). While you may not experience violent persecution for your faith, pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who are imprisoned or worse for the sake of the gospel. Pray for their families who are left behind when they are martyred. Pray for the church to rise up and care for each other when fathers or mothers are imprisoned or killed. Pray for perseverance and boldness in witness, and pray for their blood to be used to advance the gospel. Pray that we will not give up in freedom what they have not forsaken in persecution.

## Small Group Guide

### SILENCE IN JUDGMENT AMID SHOUTS OF MERCY

---

*The Church at Brook Hills,*

*Dr. David Platt*

*September 2, 2012*

*Revelation 6-7*

- Revelation 7:9 presents a shift in time to *after* the opening of the sixth seal. How does Revelation 7:9-17 describe the response of God's people to His judgment of the earth?
- Revelation 6-7 depict the transience of this world. What is your life built on? Are you investing your life in the eternal? Or are you living as though this world is your home? Are you preparing your kids, your family members, your neighbors, and your co-workers for eternity? Are you teaching the Word of God to others and modeling for them how to faithfully follow Christ? Are you spending your resources on things that bring eternal reward? Does your schedule reflect that you are living with eternity in mind?

## **Respond . . .**

*Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:*

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

## **Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from our worship guide)**

- *Church: This Sunday we will look carefully at Chapters 6 and 7, which begin a series of chapters in Revelation whose point is to remind Christians that God is ultimately going to judge the wicked and save the righteous. Such confidence in the justice and mercy of God enables bold, radical faithfulness to God, for we know how things will turn out in the end and we can trust in Him, no matter what happens to us. Pray that God would produce an unshakable confidence in us as we wait for His return. Pray that God would send laborers out from among us with a bold and radical faithfulness to His saving message to reach those who stand under God's certain judgment.*
- *Local: This week we are praying for college students as they return to classes and for our College Ministry as they seek to reach and support them.*
- *Global: This week we are praying for Brook Hills partner Compassion International and the mothers and babies who are part of the eleven Child Survival Programs (CSPs) in northern India supported by Brook Hills.*