

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Spring 2025 - Signs - "The Glory of His Signs"

Monday, Apr. 7 - Sunday, Apr. 13 (Week 10)

EMPHASIS FOR THE MONTH: **Going Deeper Through Vulnerability**

This month, we're focusing on what it means to go deeper: not just in our discussions, but in our relationships with one another. Depth doesn't happen without vulnerability, and vulnerability starts with us as leaders. When we open up first, we create a safe space for others to do the same. Whether it's sharing a personal story, being honest about struggles, or asking questions that move past the surface-level, let's model what real community looks like. Depth takes courage, but it also leads to the kind of growth and connection we long for in our groups. Let's be the first to go there. Let's create a culture where people are known, seen, and loved. I'd love to hear how you're encouraging deeper connection this month, feel free to share stories, wins, or ideas!

ICE BREAKER: If you could instantly gain one new ability or skill, what would it be and why? How do you think this new ability would change your perspective on life?

CAB ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Celebrate the hope and joy of Easter with us! We invite you to our Good Friday service on April 18 at 5:45 PM (Childcare: Nursery - Pre-K 4) and our Easter Sunday services on April 20 at 9:15 & 11 AM (Childcare: Nursery- 5th grade). Come as you are and bring your family and friends... we can't wait to worship with you!
2. We're excited to invite you to the BergenKIDS Family Easter Party on Saturday, April 12, from 10–11:30 AM! Join us for games, crafts, food, story time, and an Easter egg hunt. This event is for children ages 2 through 5th grade, and we ask that you bring a basket or bag for egg collection. It's also a great opportunity to invite friends and family to join you. Please email info@churchatbergen.org to let us know you're coming by Wednesday, April 2. We can't wait to celebrate Easter with you!
3. We hope you will join us every Tuesday evening at 6:30 PM for our weekly corporate prayer gathering.

PRAYER FOR DISCUSSION: Leader or Co-Leader prays for the discussion time. Pray that the The Holy Spirit would assist in the conversing, processing, and listening of the discussion.

SERMON DISCUSSION TIME: Have someone read the passage: John 9, and then read this sermon summary to jog everyone's memory:

In his sermon, Pastor Mike explores John chapter 9, focusing on the miracle of Jesus healing a man born blind. He emphasizes that the miracles Jesus performed, referred to as "signs" by the Apostle John, point beyond themselves to deeper truths about Jesus' identity and mission. The healing of the blind man serves as a significant lesson about spiritual blindness, where many may physically see but lack understanding of their own sinful nature and need for God's grace. Throughout the sermon, Pastor Mike highlights that spiritual blindness is not just a lack of knowledge but a profound inability to see one's own depravity: a blindness that afflicts not just the man in the story but all of humanity. Pastor Mike elaborates on the dynamics of the man's healing,



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illustrating how Jesus challenges societal norms and religious legalism. He conveys that true sight involves recognizing one's weakness and turning to Christ for forgiveness. The parents of the healed man contrast this transformation, as they fear losing their social status by acknowledging Jesus, revealing the paralyzing grip of the fear of man in human approval. Ultimately, Pastor Mike powerfully concludes that spiritual sight is marked by recognition of Jesus as Lord, confession of faith, and worship. He exhorts listeners to confront their own willingness to see the depth of their sin and embrace the grace available through Jesus, reminding them that acknowledging their need for grace is the pathway to true freedom and a deeper relationship with God.

- Reflect on a time when you realized you were "blind" to something in your life. How did that realization change your perspective or actions?
- How does Jesus' healing of the blind man challenge the cultural assumptions about suffering and sin during that time?
 - Jesus' healing of the blind man challenged the cultural assumptions of His time that equated physical suffering or disabilities with personal sin or the sin of one's parents. The disciples' question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" reflects a common belief that suffering was a direct result of sin. This assumption led to stigmatization and marginalization of those with disabilities, viewing them as guilty or deserving of their condition. Jesus refutes this belief by stating, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him." This response shifts the focus from blame and guilt to the purpose and glory of God. Jesus dignifies the man by connecting his condition to a divine purpose, demonstrating that suffering can be an opportunity for God's power and glory to be revealed, rather than a punishment for sin.
- Consider a difficult situation in your life. How might God be using it to display His glory or teach you something important?
- The sermon discusses the fear of man as a form of spiritual blindness. Identify an area in your life where the fear of others' opinions might be influencing your decisions. What steps can you take to prioritize God's opinion over others?
- Why is it important to recognize the depth and degree of our sinfulness?
 - **Understanding Our Need for Grace:** Acknowledging the full extent of our sinfulness helps us understand our profound need for God's grace. Without recognizing how deeply sin affects us, we may underestimate our need for a Savior and the transformative power of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. It is only when we see the seriousness of our sin that we can truly appreciate the magnitude of God's grace and forgiveness.
 - **True Repentance:** Genuine repentance requires an honest assessment of our sin. When we recognize the depth of our sinfulness, we are moved to a deeper level of repentance, turning away from sin and turning toward God. This recognition leads to a heartfelt desire for change and transformation, aligning our lives more closely with God's will.



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- **Humility and Dependence:** Understanding our sinfulness fosters humility, as we realize that we cannot save ourselves or achieve righteousness on our own. This humility leads us to depend more fully on God, acknowledging that our strength and righteousness come from Him alone. It also helps us extend grace and compassion to others, knowing that we are all in need of God's mercy.
- **Growth in Holiness:** Recognizing our sinfulness is a step toward spiritual growth and maturity. It allows us to identify areas in our lives that need transformation and invites the Holy Spirit to work in us, refining us and making us more like Christ. This ongoing process of sanctification is essential for growing in holiness and deepening our relationship with God.
- **Appreciation of Christ's Sacrifice:** When we grasp the depth of our sin, we gain a greater appreciation for the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. We understand the cost of our redemption and the incredible love that God demonstrated by sending His Son to die for us. This recognition deepens our worship and gratitude, as we are continually reminded of the price paid for our salvation.
- Reflect on your current community. How does it shape your identity? What changes might you need to make to ensure your identity is rooted in Christ?

PRAY TOGETHER: Spend time taking **and recording** prayer requests and then pray together as a group (*I strongly encourage you to send out the prayer requests weekly to your group to keep everyone informed and in the loop on how to pray for one another throughout the week. This also makes it easier to check-in with people who have shared requests to see how the Lord has been working in their lives*).

