

Questions God Asks Us

Chapter 9: Why are you crying?



Welcome

- What question or insight from the last gathering have you continued to think about or wonder about (if any)? Have the readings or discussion changed how you connect with God or with others in any way?

Opening Question

- We can be moved to tears by sadness, joy or a number of other emotions. For some of us tears come quickly and easily, others may feel the same depth of emotions without the tears. What is something that moves you and may bring tears of joy, gratitude or appreciation?

Responsive Reading – Psalm 139

One: O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

All: *You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.*

One: You search out my path and my lying down

All: *You are acquainted with all my ways.*

One: Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee from your presence?

All: *If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.*

One: If I take the wings of the morning

and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

All: *Even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast. Amen.*

Bible Text

Read John 20: 11-18

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, ¹²and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did

not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Questions

1. What did you notice in the Bible reading or in the chapter? What spoke to you or surprised you? What resonated with you? What was a new idea?

Allow for a few minutes of silence as you gather your thoughts.

2. The angels ask Mary, "Why are you crying?" Consider this question in the context of the world today. What circumstances in the world might bring tears today?
3. What answers would this question (the angels' question to Mary) receive today if it were asked of you, your family, and your friends? In what ways do you identify with Mary weeping outside the tomb?
4. Mary recognizes Jesus when he calls her name. What reminds you that Jesus also calls out *your* name? How does it feel to know Jesus calls you – and calls you by name?*
5. How is Jesus' intimate presence an answer in difficult or unsettling times—as it is in Mary's? How has the presence of Jesus comforted you in the midst of tears?
6. When have you experienced someone sharing your pain and holding your sadness. What qualities did this person have? What did this mean to you?
7. Jesus' resurrection signaled the beginning of God's new creation. For Mary, hearing the voice of Jesus calling her name in the garden began her movement from tears to new beginnings. Share one experience when you have moved through tears to new beginnings. What made this possible?
8. Read Revelation 21:1-5. What do these words mean to you right now? How do you feel when you hear the promise that God "will wipe every tear from [our] eyes," and that "there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" and that God is "making everything new"?

What's Next?

- If this session has brought up sadness or other emotions for you, share your thoughts and feelings with a friend/family member or someone who is a professional listener (pastor, spiritual director, counselor, therapist, medical professional...). Spend some time

in prayer with Jesus, whether in silence or by journaling or in whatever way you are comfortable praying.

- At the end of the small group or between gatherings, spend some time in silent reflection using "Answering God's Question" at the end of the chapter.

Closing Prayer - *Share the date, location and reading for the next gathering.*

Loving and ever-present God, when we awaken and when we sleep, you are there; in our striving and in our stillness, you are there; in our failure and in our success, you are there; in living and in dying you are there. We thank you for your enduring love that will never leave us and will always sustain us. Amen.

One: God is with you no matter what. Go, now, in God's presence and love. Amen.

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This outline is to be used alongside Questions God Asks Us by Trevor Hudson. Some of the questions and reflection prompts questions listed here also come from Questions God Asks Us.

**Some questions are also based on Let Me Ask You a Question: Conversations with Jesus by Matthew Croasmun, published by The Upper Room. <https://upperroombooks.com/?s=croasmun>*

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