

SERMON BASED CURRICULUM

**Date & Sermon Series:**

March 5/6, 2016; Altars

Speaker:

Pastor Mark Batterson

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 7:2-12

Note To Leaders:

This weekend we discussed the Altar of Prayer and how sometimes when we are chasing our dreams, we can't see the "So Far So God" moments. Instead, we end up seeing the "So Far So Bad" moments. These questions provide a framework to prompt or foster discussion in your small group. Don't feel you have to use all or any of these questions and you don't have to make it to the end! Use the questions that best fit your group and let discussion flow.

Icebreaker Suggestions: What are some dreams that you have helped others chase after or conspire? Are there dreams you have felt the Lord prompt you to go after? What dreams have you chased after recently?

Sermon Series Questions:

1. What thoughts are still resonating with you from the sermon?
2. What was most encouraging or challenging about this weekend's message?
3. In what ways did the sermon on the Altar of Prayer challenge you?

Specific Questions:

1. Ebenezers Coffeehouse is a dream within a dream based off of 1 Samuel 7:12, where Samuel states, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." Are there areas in your life that you need to start declaring, "Thus far the Lord has helped us?" If so, how can you start declaring that today?
2. Pastor Mark talked about Ebenezers as one example of a dream that is covered in prayer. Have you ever gone after a dream that you didn't cover in prayer? What was the result? What would it look liked you covered all of your dreams in prayer?
3. Have you ever had a time in your life where it only looked like "so far so bad"? What did you do when you couldn't see the hand of God in your life?

4. What comes to mind when you hear, “The best is yet to come. Your best days are ahead of you?” Does that give you comfort and hope? Is it easier for you to think your best days are ahead of you or your best days are behind you? Why?

5. If the Ark of God represents His presence, His power, and His provision, have you ever tried to accomplish things without the “ark”? Are there areas in your life where it appears easier to do the will of God without the ark of God? Are there times you've tried to accomplish things on your own? What are the times in your life you've been desperate for the “ark” of his provision?

6. In 1 Samuel 7, Mizpah is the watchtower. Symbolically speaking, where is your watchtower? What place, person or memory serves as your watchtower and helps you recall the promises and miracles of God in your life?

7. Pastor Mark said, “Don't let what you can't do keep you from doing what you can.” In the video we saw of Mana, the CEO talked about how we may not all be called to do something that appears big on the outside. God may not give you a dream to launch a non-profit or start a church, but he has given you a dream that is a part of His greater story. What are some action items you can do this week to go after the dreams that are a part of God's Story? Maybe you can give someone a cup of coffee or help a child or feed a homeless person. Ask God what you can do to be a part of what He is already doing.

Challenge/Read/Pray/Act:

Pastor Mark quoted Brother Edward, who is a pastor from Syria, saying, “We survive on prayer.” How can you be interceding on another's behalf by praying for them? Who are you interceding for? Who are you praying for in your life that they may come to know the faithfulness of God?

The challenge for this week is to pick 3 people who don't know Christ. If you don't need to go to the altar for yourself, go on behalf of someone else. Who do you need to go to the altar for this week?

Once you have those names, write those names in a journal, on a wall, or on a whiteboard. Keep circling those individuals in prayer