



WEEKLY STUDY

Week Four

Pastor Pierce Drake taught about the breaking open moment that happens in the arms of our God who loves us. He identified that the reason we sometimes resist the embrace of God is because we don't see the fullness of God—God is all powerful, good, and wise.

During these weeks leading up to Easter, we are intentionally seeking a deeper awareness of God. To help with that, you are invited to prepare your heart for Easter by taking part in weekly prayer and journaling using the Breaking Open Journal. [Download it today!](#)

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/signup and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then pray this prayer written by spiritual director Sally Sharpe:

Jesus, you could have saved yourself from the cross, yet you chose to lay down your life for our sake. You ask us to take up our cross and follow you. Help us, Lord. Enable us to choose vulnerability instead of relying on our own capability, so that your power may be made perfect in our weakness. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 7.2-10

...a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die.³ The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant.⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this,⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue."⁶ So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof."⁷ That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.⁸ For I myself am a man

under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." ¹⁰ Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

- The centurion was a Roman soldier who was living in an outpost. He was an outsider who was on the side of power. His servant was about to die and in his desperation the centurion called for help. Instead of wielding his position of power, he humbled himself and demonstrated belief that Jesus could heal...even through his words. He was vulnerable on behalf of someone else. When have you been desperate enough to give up your own power?
- *Pray that your own heart would be able to show vulnerability before the healing power of Jesus Christ.*

TUESDAY: ROMANS 8.35,37-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Accepting the love of God that does not go away is a challenge for many followers of Jesus. It seems too good to be true, but the love of God embraces the imperfect sinner. The love of God is in Jesus, he is how we see it—he is how we know it. Have you ever considered yourself to be unlovable? What leads to that kind of thinking?
- *Thank God for God's love that we can experience through Christ. As you speak to God, imagine yourself falling into God's loving embrace.*

WEDNESDAY: PROVERBS 1.7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- As we seek to be embraced by the fullness of God, it becomes clear that our vulnerability looks like surrender and awe in the face of the wisdom of God. We sometimes run from wisdom and instruction because it requires the acceptance that we are not in control. Falling into the arms of God means that we might be transformed. Do you ever feel like pushing against the instruction of God?
- *Pray for an increasing desire for God's wisdom and instruction in your life.*

THURSDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 12.9-10

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is

why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Paul writes about this relationship between our weakness and God's power. When we are embraced by an all-powerful God we give into our weakness and yet receive his power at the same time. There is no denying that it's risky to point out our own weaknesses. Others will know that we are not as strong as we pretend to be. Have you ever discovered new strength by first admitting your weakness?
- *Pray through your own weaknesses. Praise God for God's power in Christ Jesus.*

FRIDAY: PHILIPPIANS 2.5-8

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ *Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

⁷ *rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.*

⁸ *And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

- Jesus modeled vulnerability more fully than anyone else who walked this earth. He did so intentionally, laying down power that was his by his divinity, so that in his humanity we could see what the love, wisdom and power of God truly looks like. It looks like humility and obedience. What are you being asked to lay down so that others can see the nature of God in Jesus?
- *Thank God for the world-changing example of Jesus' vulnerability. Ask to have that same mindset.*

SATURDAY: REVELATION 22.1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

- God reigns whether we "let Him" or not. But we are invited to break open our hearts in God's embrace. In so doing, we will see the Kingdom of God take shape right here on earth. These images from Revelation help us to imagine the beauty of that reality.
- *Pray for Kingdom vision that allows you to see Jesus' face in the full light of his truth and mercy.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pastor Pierce broke down the story of the centurion into three movements. There was the sending out of the religious leaders to ask Jesus for help. There was the sending out of non-religious friends to redirect Jesus. And then there are the words those friends relayed to Jesus. "Just say the word and my servant will be healed." What did this statement say about the centurion? How did Jesus respond? Have you seen faithfulness from unlikely places?