Introduction

Questions to talk about at your table:

- What's one thing that brought you joy this week?
- Where's one place you need hope right now?
- Talk about a time when you felt like your spiritual life was at a "high." What was going on?
- Talk about a time when you felt like your spiritual life was at a "low." What was going on?

Becoming Like Jesus - The Jesus Sermon

- Read Matthew 5:1-12:

- Which of the beatitudes stands out to you? Why do you think so?

A Word from Pastor Matt Chandler

A Place for notes:

A Word about Baptism

Pastor Chandler spoke about the time you "came to Jesus" empty-handed. For some, as he described, it's later in life. But, for many, it began much earlier…perhaps only days after they were born. The command of Jesus to baptize (Matthew 28:18-20) and St. Paul's clear teaching of the benefits of baptism (Romans 6:3-4, Titus 3:5-6) have always guided the Lutheran Church to profess that baptism is the most empty handed one can be (especially as infants).

Luther notes in the Small Catechism, baptism *"works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare."*[i]

Discussion for your table:

1. As a reminder, how does the concept of the horizontal coil illustrate the process of spiritual growth and "ups" and "downs" you will go through in the journey?

2. Read Matthew 5:3. What does it mean to be "poor in spirit"? How does this kind of posture shape your relationship with God?

3. Reflect on Ecclesiastes 3:11. What does it mean that God "has put eternity" into your heart? How does this idea influence your longing for God?

4. Read Psalm 13:1–6. How does David honestly express his feelings to God? How could such honest prayers of lament help you navigate seasons of spiritual struggle?

5. What is the importance of rejoicing *and* mourning with others in community? What part does community currently play in your spiritual growth?

Wrapping Up

Share: share something that each person at the table could pray for.
Write: Take a few moments to write down how you could shift your perspective to view conviction as invitation to *the surprisingly better life*.

NEXT TIME: we pick back up with Philippians 3:1 and following…

[i] Luther, Martin *The Small Catechism,* Concordia Publishing House, STL p. 23