Wrestling with Doubt: Finding Faith

Session 4: IS HEAVEN REAL? **Participant Copy**

**Joys and Concerns**

Session Goals

Through conversation, activities, and reflection, participants will:

* reflect on the question "ls Heaven Real?" explore what the scriptures say about heaven and an afterlife, and
* respond to the idea that having faith and believing in
* heaven and an afterlife is a choice.
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**Biblical Foundation**

• John 14:1-3

• Isaiah 25:6-8

**Leading into the Study**

**Opening Prayer**

**Watch # 4 video**

1. Did anything specific stand one as you watched the video?

2. What is one thing you learned that you did not know before?

Keep the video in mind as well as the book and Bible passages throughout the rest of the discussion,

**Bible Study and Discussion: Isaiah 25:6-***8 the setting for this scripture passage is Mount Zion, where the temple stood in Jerusalem***.**

**Read Isaiah 25:6-8,**

3. What will the Lord serve at this banquet?

4. Who will be invited to this banquet?

5.What will the Lord do at this future time of celebration?

6. How does the Lord's promise to "swallow up death" impact the way you live?

7. How does the Lord's promise to "wipe tears from every face" affect the way you live?

8. How does the Lord's promise to "remove his people's disgrace" (or sin) influence the way you live?

9. What similarities do you see between the vision of heaven in Isaiah's prophecy and your vision of heaven?

10. What differences do you see between the vision of heaven in Isaiah's prophecy and your vision of heaven?

**Book Study and Discussion**

Quote from *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*:

I*n the New Testament, most of Jesus's references in the Gospels to heaven refer not to "pie in the sky," but to the dwelling place of God where God's will is done, just as when we pray, "Our Father in heaven ... thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus's interest, as many have noted, is not focusing on people going to heaven. His focus is on how we might be a part of heaven being experienced on earth as we do God's will*. (p. 91)

**Lord's Prayer**

**Read Matthew 6:9-13**

**Read Luke 1 I: 1-4**

**Note the differences in the wording for Matthew 6:10 and Luke 1 l:2b**.

11. What are the characteristics of God's kingdom?

12 Have you experienced God's heaven on earth? If so, when and how?

13. How do you and your faith community bring heaven-God’s rule and God's will-to the here and now of earth?

**Read John 14:1-3.** *Jesus spoke these words in the upper room during his last supper with his disciples after he washed his disciples' feet*

*Jesus said to his disciples, “Don't be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in me.[a] 2 There are many rooms in my Father's house. I wouldn't tell you this, unless it was true. I am going there to prepare a place for each of you. 3 After I have done this, I will come back and take you with me. Then we will be together.*

14. What does this passage of scripture tell us about heaven?

**All four Gospels bear witness to the life, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus**.

**Read Mark 16:1-8**

15. On the morning of the Resurrection, how did Jesus's followers and disciples first react to the news of Jesus’s resurrection?

16. How do you think you would have reacted if you had been there on that first Easter morning?

The following questions are related to the last two paragraphs in the section titled "Is There Really a Heaven?" (pp. 95-96).

17. How do you respond to Hamilton's premise that faith is a choice?

In the text, there are reports from people who had near-death experiences as printed in *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith* (pp.98-101).

18.What do these reports seem to have in common?

19. How do these and other reports like them shape your understanding of what heaven is like?

20. Do they increase your confidence and undergird your faith? Why or why not?

21. Have you had a near-death experience that you would like to share with the group?

**Closing Prayer**