Discussion Guide

The Road to a Hard Heart

GETTING STARTED

How would Jesus challenge Christianity and Christians today? What would He be most concerned about? Why? What would He be least concerned about? Why?

QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?
What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

In what way can you see the religious leaders of Jesus' day harden their hearts to Him?
Dave said that the road to a hard heart (towards God and others)
1. Grows in Fear
2. Is pre-occupied with self-preservation
3. Comes to the wrong conclusion (about what matters)

How did you see this happen with the religious leaders of Jesus' day?
What did they fear?
What did they seek to preserve?
How did they come to the wrong conclusion about Jesus?

How often do the things we fear end up being nothing? Describe a time for yourself?
In what way can what we fear draw us away, or distract us from following Jesus?
In what ways can we be pre-occupied with preserving what we have rather than risking what we have for the cause of Christ?
What do we lose when we are pre-occupied with self-preservation, keeping what we have, and worrying about what we don't have?
How can living out of fear, focusing on what we preserve ultimately result in coming to the wrong conclusion about what matters, what God has called us to and what is worth investing our time, talent and treasures to?
Of the three roads, what needs a course correction in your life?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE DEEPER [John 11:45-52]

(Yes, these questions can seem silly, however, good discussion and interpretation of the Bible begins with having a proper understanding of the basic facts; who, what, when, and where in the text.) Work through this quickly, the answers are fairly obvious.

How did many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary respond to Jesus' miracle? (11:45)
Who was told about Jesus' miracle? (11:46)
What did the Sanhedrin fear? (11:47-48)
What did Caiaphas say about Jesus? (11:49-50)
How did Caiaphas prophesy? (11:51-52)

QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

What motive other than ministry might people have for engaging in Christian service?
What personal ambitions might subvert the goal of serving God and others?
When have you intentionally or unintentionally used the church to pursue your own agenda?
Why is it so difficult to have pure and selfless motives in life?
How do you respond when your goals and your motives conflict with one another?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?
What do you need to stop, start or do differently as a result of reading this passage?
How can we pray for each other?