

Godspeed Fellowship Study Guide



Cherry Creek
Presbyterian Church



Godspeed—The Documentary

This is a story about slowing down. The pandemic has certainly forced a pause to many of our lives. How do you feel about slowing down?

Watch to the video together

First impressions?

Most of us can remember a time when we thought, like Matt Canlis, we were ready for a task or role only to discover that we had a great deal more to learn.

Tell one another a story of that time.

- Who came along to help you on the way? What did they do? What kind of help did they give?

There can be a painful, humbling process to this experience that may also lead to going deeper in knowledge and understanding of God and of oneself. Matt Canlis says he learned to “walk instead of run” and this slowing down changed everything.

- Share a story of that humbling process and of what you learned along the way.
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N. T. Wright refers to a book titled *Three Mile an Hour God*.¹ Wright says that humans walk at three miles an hour and that Jesus, the Incarnate God, walked around Palestine at that same pace. To truly follow Jesus, we need to slow down to His pace.

Read together Luke 24:13-35

- Imagine the seven-mile journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus walked at three miles an hour in the company of the risen Christ. What would these disciples have been able to process during this walk?
 - How do they describe the experience once Jesus reveals His identity to them?
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This week—Ask God to help you slow down to His pace.

Spirit, help me process life and learn the deeper things You want me to understand. I ask for courage to share my life with others. In Christ my Lord. Amen.

Stand at the crossroads and look;
Ask for the ancient paths. . .
Ask where the good way is and walk in it. Jeremiah 6:16

¹Kosuke Koyama, *Three Mile an Hour God*, SCM Press, 2015.

From the cover: “Love has its speed. . . . It is the speed we walk and therefore the speed the love of God walks.”



Session 2 Place—Where Are You?

How many places have you lived? Which ones were your favorites and why – the locale, the job, the people and relationships?

Watch to the video together

First impressions?

Alan Torrance, the red-haired fellow in the kilt, said, “I know most folks” and “I know where you live!”

- What do you think the phrase “to know and to be known” means?
- Why do you think we may prefer to hide rather than to be known?

Take a few minutes to reflect together on these scriptures of knowing and being known. “Lord, teach us Your ways. . . .”

Genesis 3:8-10

Psalms 139

John 10:2-5; 14-15; 27-30

Romans 12:9-16

- Make a list of each of the things these scriptures teach us about being known.
- How does being known by God impact your openness to being known by others?

Matt Canlis wears a collar and is ordained as a Pastor. However, 1Peter 2:9 tells us that we are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood. . . .”

- What is a parish?
- What makes someone a pastor? What is a pastor supposed to do or be?

“Largeness doesn’t have to be destructive. It’s dangerous, but it’s not destructive in itself.”

- What might Peterson mean when he says largeness is dangerous?
- What has been your experience of the dangers of largeness?
- How should we take care and stand guard against these dangers?

This week—Peterson said, “The gospel trains us in attentiveness to what is here.” Endeavor to pay attention to the small, and not-so-small ways, God’s Spirit is at work in you and through you and around you. Give thanks.

Lord, give us eyes to see and the will to love others with abandon. In Christ Jesus we pray. Amen.

There is no place on earth without the potential for unearthing holiness
right where we are with these people we are with. Eugene Peterson



**Session 3
Presence—Here I am!**

How do you feel about “change”? Do you pursue change – a job change, a home change, a location change, . . . ? Or do you prefer that life stay the same?

Watch to the video together

First impressions?

Colin Presly, the farmer and church elder, said, “Methlick is an exciting place. Thankfully, it hasn’t changed over the years.”

- How can Methlick be both “an exciting place” and a place that hasn’t changed? Consider together the differences between Methlick and America’s cultural attitude toward change.

Wright describes life in Capernaum in Jesus’ day and says that the majority of people of Jesus’ day had to know how to live open to their neighbors. “Everybody knows everybody’s business in a way which we in the west find that quite scary.”

- Why does Wright say that the fishbowl would be quite scary for many today?
- When have you lived in a fishbowl world where your every word and deed were seen? A small town, a large family, college dorm, missions trip, . . . ?
- Was it oppressive? Or, like Matt says, was it “liberating”?

Wright says that “private life” in ancient Israel was a privilege of the wealthy.

- How did that story strike you?
- What comparisons can you make today between privacy and privilege?
- How have we gained, how have we lost, in our culture of privacy?

Take a few minutes to reflect in silence on these scriptures about being in God’s Presence. “Lord, teach us Your ways. . . .”

Exodus 3:16

Isaiah 6:4-8

Although we may not have seen God in a burning bush or witnessed angel-worship, the gospel asks us to respond to God’s invitation to come to Jesus and to surrender to the Christ-centered, Kingdom life. When in your life have you said to the Lord, “Here I am!”? Describe that time to each other.

This week—Each morning, tell the Lord, “Here I am!”

Lord Christ, I want to live open and available to You and to the people in my life. Make me aware of opportunities to live and love like You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

“Parish is a physical piece of land that binds a community together . . . at the center are people living authentically, living face-to-face.” Matt Canlis



Session 4 Pace—God’s Speed

During the pandemic, many people have begun walking more. Are you a walker? Describe your experiences of walking.

Watch to the video together

First impressions?

In the last video, Colin Presly said that the community hoped to educate their new, fast-moving, American pastor in the “slower things of life.”

- How did America become a fast-moving culture?
 - What do we miss in our fast-moving, change-addicted culture?
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Tom Wright tells the story of stopping and getting out of his car and simply looking around to take in his surroundings. Eugene Peterson says that when we slow down and pay attention, “you see a lot you’ve never seen before,” and that one’s “observation sense is developed by slowing down.” Alan Torrance says, “Walking is the time to contemplate,” to re-engage with God. “If you learn to walk quietly,” he says, “things are revealed to you.”

- What are the slower things of life that you engage?
 - What benefits do you receive in slowing?
 - How do you feel during these times?
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Slowing gives us an opportunity to pause in a moment and to consider the layers of life, what Wright calls a “density of time,” that are present in that moment.

At the birth of a child a great many layers of life unfold. A new generation emerges from the joining of a son and a daughter—children themselves who have become adults. Also present in that birth are stories of grandparents and great-grandparents. Years of faithful living, suffering, disobedience, and reconciliation are all represented.

At the moment of Jesus’ last breath, all the participants in salvation history are focused upon this moment in time. As all hold their breath, in slow motion, at God’s pace, the power of God and Christ’s victory over sin and death gave new and eternal life to all generations that follow.

Read together these scriptures:

- Matthew 1:1-17
 - Remember and tell the stories of some of those represented in these verses.
 - What benefits do we receive from remembering the stories of these lives that have led to Jesus’ birth?

- Matthew 27:45-56
 - In the particular moment in time of this scripture, what important layers of meaning unfold? How are the past, the present and the future entwined?
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Wright says, “Sabbath is where God’s time and our time intersect. Sabbath is to time what the temple is to space. The Temple is the place where heaven and earth meet. Sabbath is where God’s time and our time intersect.”

- How do you practice Sabbath rest?
 - Imagine together what it might mean to have “God’s time and our time intersect” in our Sabbath-keeping.
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This week—Take a walk or sit quietly and listen for the whisper of God’s still, small voice around you and within you. When you hear, obey.

Lord, slow me down so that I can experience the density of time and experience that is all around me. Give me courage to live open and available to Your people. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

“For many of us in the modern western world it takes us all our lives to learn to go slowly enough.” N. T. Wright



Session 5 Identity—Loved by God

When someone asks you who you are, how do you introduce and describe yourself?

Watch to the video together

First impressions?

Eugene Peterson says, “We have to introduce people to themselves.”

Divide these scriptures among your group. What do these texts say about our identity in Christ? Make a list.

John 3:16-17

John 15:1-11

Romans 5:1

Romans 6:1-6

Romans 8:1

Romans 8:17

1Corinthians 2:12

1Corinthians 6:19-20

2Corinthians 1:21

Ephesians 1:13-14

Hebrews 4:16

Galatians 2:20

Galatians 3:26-28

Ephesians 1:3

Ephesians 2:18

Ephesians 3:12

Colossians 1:14

Colossians 2:7

Colossians 3:12

1Thessalonians 1:4

In life and in faith, a fear of failing can be powerfully motivating. It tempts us to forget who we are as the scriptures above describe. A fear of failing can keep us “living small.”

- When has a fear of failing kept you from taking a risk, compelled you to anxiety, or brought you to a decision you later regretted?
- Pray and lift to the Father those in your group who are vulnerable in expressing their fears.

What is the Gospel—the Good News? What is the message of the Gospel? Define it together.

Father Giles says, “I’m loved by God as I am. . . . He chose me as I am. . . . If God loves me, what else matters? If God loves me, there’s no line in the sand that I can cross that will make God say, ‘I’m finished.’ . . . He sees in me the Son’s DNA because I am baptized in Christ. . . . I am in-Christ. And so, I am a son. There’s nothing I can do that will stop that being true.”

- Read together Romans 8:31-39
- Speak these affirmations over each other and into the contexts of our own fears, disappointments, doubts, suffering and sorrows.

This week—Pay attention to the words you say to yourself and the words you hear others say of themselves—words of both affirmation and words of condemnation. Ask if these words reflect who God says you are.

Lord Jesus, remind me that I am loved by God, not for what I've done, but because of who You are. May the generous love I've received be the love I generously extend. In Jesus' name. Amen.

But now, this is what the LORD says—he who created you, Jacob,
he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine. Isaiah 43:1



Session 6 Stability—Being Here

What is the longest you've lived in one place? What were the benefits and difficulties of living for a long time in the same place?

Watch to the video together

First impressions?

In Father Giles' monastic community, stability means a commitment, a vow, to live and remain with one community until you die. Although we may think this is too restrictive, Father Giles says it is liberating. However, for many Americans, we are champions of *mobility* rather than *stability*.

- Divide into two groups. Take five minutes for one group to defend a lifestyle of **mobility** while the second group defends a commitment to **stability**.
 - Discuss what you learned.
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Father Giles says, "Very quickly, you see people's faults. But to see people's virtues takes longer. . . . To learn to know them takes time." Many of us prefer surface-level community where no-one gets too close or knows us too well. But God created us to be a *body* with many parts (1Cor 12; Rom 12:4) that work together in unity where there is a giving and a receiving of care and spiritual hospitality.

- How long have you been a part of this church body?
- Who knows you well and who do you know well—faults as well as virtues, sorrows as well as joys?

Read Romans 12:9-18

- Who could you call in the middle of the night or in a time of need? At CCPC, there is always a professional "Pastor on call," but who is the friend whose love is like a brother or sister?
 - Proverbs 27:6 says "Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy." Do you have a true friend who could see your error and would love you with a "wound"?
 - To whom are you a true friend? Whom have you told that you are always available for a midnight call?
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Father Giles says we see people's faults very quickly. "But to see people's virtues takes longer." Over time, when we do see someone's virtues, we may feel admiration and respect. But how often do we tell them that we 'see who they are and are becoming'? Hearing words of encouragement and affirmation makes the soul sing! To tell someone "thank you," "I see you," or "I see Jesus in you" increases connection in our community and serves to "encourage each other and build each other up" (1Thess 5:11). Our commitment to each other is solidified and

deepened when we freely share authentic words of affirmation.

- Why don't we more frequently say an encouraging word to one who has lived the virtue of patience or perseverance in suffering? Who walks in humility and service? Who is merciful and kind-hearted? Why are we stingy with an uplifting, encouraging word?
- When has a word of affirmation lifted your weariness and inspired you to keep growing?

This week—Ask God to bring you opportunity to speak words of encouragement and affirmation to those around you.

God of mercy, help me learn to truly love my neighbor. In Jesus' name. Amen

By means of His one Spirit, we all said goodbye to our partial and piecemeal lives. 1Cor 12:12



Session 7
Names—Face to Face

How well do you remember names? How do you feel when someone calls you by name?

Watch to the video together

First impressions?

Peterson says, “Language is at the center of our being. We’re the only animal who has words. . . . Names are the very basic life-giving term in language. . . . Until there’s a name, there’s no relationship.”

Peterson’s story about his father’s butcher shop and the customers who had names is memorable. He also says he sadly had pastors who never knew his name.

- Why is knowing someone’s name, and calling them by name, so important?
- “A name,” says Peterson, “is the easiest way to get around defensiveness.” Have you seen defenses lowered when you’ve called someone by name?

Eugene Peterson says, “There are no impersonal settings in the Bible—it’s all names, all stories.” Peterson says that we have a responsibility to introduce people to themselves and to their true identity in Christ.

Read together Luke 19:1-10

- How did Jesus use names to introduce Zacchaeus to himself?

Read together John 20:11-18

- How does being called by name shape this story?

This week—Learn someone’s name and speak it as a blessing over them.

Father God, I say that I am terrible with names. But Lord, help me to listen—really listen—to You and to those You have placed in my life. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

“Nobody in America gets listened to. . . .
You have to pay attention to get someone’s name.” Eugene Peterson



Session 8 Mission—Unearthing Holiness

A mission statement says who you are and how you will be in the world. Have you ever written a mission statement? If not, what things might you want in your mission statement?

Watch to the video together

First impressions?

According to Peterson, “There’s no place on this earth that is without potential of unearthing holiness right where we are with these people.” N. T. Wright follows saying, “Part of the creation mandate [stewardship] is to humanize [connection] the inhuman things [isolation] that our cities can become.”

God is present and active everywhere. Holiness is the character of God and the heart of God revealed in the lives of God’s people. So, how do we go about “unearthing holiness”? “Unearthing holiness” requires relationships of trust and for this, we look to Jesus.

Canlis says, “Jesus earned people’s trust in small communities with high accountability and a face-to-face exchange where He could earn people’s trust or lose it. Jesus earned people’s trust one person at a time.”

Read together Luke 4:31-44; Luke 8:22-25; Luke 8:40-56

- In these three stories from Luke, how does Jesus earn trust among the people and reveal the heart and character of God?
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Jesus’ two-fold mission was to **inaugurate the Kingdom** and to **call God’s people** into the service of Kingdom-Come.

Jesus inaugurates the Kingdom.

Wright says that Jesus was first about the “launching of God’s Kingdom. . . in and through His own public career climaxing on the cross.” Jesus’ “extraordinary obedience,” his suffering that culminates in the resurrection, “these are the things that changed the world.” “There is a new creation, and Jesus is the beginning of that new creation.”

God’s people are called into the service of Kingdom-Come.

“The New Creation,” Wright says, “has to be implemented because God wants us to be people and not puppets. . . . God wants humans to be His agents in taking forward His project for creation. God creates and calls humans in His own image to reflect His stewardship into the world and to reflect the worship of creation back to God.”

“God is a power sharing God. . . . God wants to do stuff through people. . . . Jesus does amazing things, then calls flawed disciples to do it too. . . . The disciples were very ordinary and flawed people who are caught up, despite themselves, into God’s purposes to be the ones through whom

the story can have its power in the next generation.”

“Each generation has to see how to tell that single story in a way which will do what needs to be done in this place and this time.”

- Each generation will learn and grow into the story of the triune God of the Scriptures and revealed in Jesus’ birth, life and relationships, death, and resurrection.
- Each generation will surrender self-will and receive the Lordship of Jesus.
- Each generation will learn to live by faith and not by sight.
- Each generation will hear and respond to God’s call to participate in Kingdom-Come.
- Each generation will listen to and learn of Jesus, attach themselves as disciples to Jesus, and grow into maturity as His followers.
- Each generation will receive their identity as God’s beloved sons and daughters who are inseparable from the Father’s love.
- Each generation will link arms in unity to become the hands and feet of Christ to their neighbors, to the lost, and to their brothers and sisters in Christ’s church.
- Each generation will receive the grace of God and extend God’s grace to the people they live with.
- Each generation will willingly risk knowing and being known in community and so reflect God’s triune nature.
- Each generation will learn to walk slowly enough to catch up to God.

How does this list inspire you?

What else might be in the list?

How does our community live out this list in this generation?

How do we bring along the next generation?

This week—Remember that God uses flawed and inadequate people who are called into Kingdom-Come service. Slow down, be attentive, learn the ways of Jesus, pursue the humility of Christ. Christ will lead you in His mission. He will do it.

Father, Son and Spirit, may Your Kingdom purposes be fulfilled in and through the members of Christ’s church, today and until You return. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

We are the ones through whom God’s story has its power. N. T. Wright