

## Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of May 21, 2017     Luke 18:18-23; John 19:38; Acts 8:1-3

*These questions are to be used as a spring board for discussion.*

*Answers may or may not be found in the sermons.*

### **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<sup>18</sup> A certain ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>19</sup> Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. <sup>20</sup> You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.'" <sup>21</sup> He replied, "I have kept all these since my youth." <sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." <sup>23</sup> But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich.  
-Luke 18:18-23

<sup>38</sup> After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body.  
-John 19:38

<sup>1</sup> And Saul approved of their killing him. That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup> Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup> But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.  
-Acts 8:1-3

### **New Living Translation (NLT)**

<sup>18</sup> Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: "Good Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>19</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "Only God is truly good. <sup>20</sup> But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.'" <sup>21</sup> The man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young." <sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard his answer, he said, "There is still one thing you haven't done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." <sup>23</sup> But when the man heard this he became very sad, for he was very rich.  
-Luke 18:18-23

<sup>38</sup> *Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away.*

–John 19:38

*Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup> (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.) <sup>3</sup> But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.*

–Acts 8:1-3

### **Connection Questions:**

1. The rich young ruler would have had all the conveniences and privileges of his time at his day. What do you think motivated him to approach Jesus?
2. The rich young ruler professes that he has followed the Law which is what is required for a Jewish person to find favor with God. How does Jesus' message challenge this message?
3. The only time Jesus says you must sell all you have and give it to the poor is to the rich young ruler. Is Jesus' demand to the rich young ruler the same for all Christians? If not, what was Jesus' purpose behind this statement?

4. We don't know how the rich young ruler ultimately responds to his second chance. Why do you think it is difficult in a capitalistic culture to find our balance between faith and our possessions? If you are willing, share how you personally try to reconcile the two.
  
5. Apparently Joseph of Arimathea, a Sanhedrin, is a devoted follower of Jesus. Why didn't he speak up for Jesus prior to his crucifixion? What do you think caused him to openly express his devotion after Jesus' death?
  
6. Edwin Burke said, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to remain silent." How do we speak a word of truth in our partisan political culture or can we?
  
7. What are the pressures you face to be silent and go along with the crowd and refrain from expressing your faith?
  
8. Saul had hundreds of Christians jailed and oversaw the stoning of Stephen. Can religious leaders murder in the name of God? Maybe you believe there are certain exceptions. If so, discuss when it is appropriate and when is it not?

