

Sermon for September 28/29, 2024
"The Verdict" Pastor Jeff Manion



SMALL GROUPS

Share Life | Pursue God | Invest In Others

THREE THINGS TO KNOW

DON'T MISS THIS. How do we stay steady and avoid crumbling under pressure when life gets tough? Next week, we begin our new sermon series **UNSHAKABLE**. We will dig into 1 Thessalonians, where Paul writes to a group of new believers facing tough times. Their story shows us how to stand firm, no matter what comes our way. Whether you're feeling pressure at work, facing challenges at home or just the daily grind, this series is about finding strength in God's promises. Consider who God might have you invite to church next weekend as we begin this new sermon series.

GROUP VALUES. This September, we're focusing on our spiritual **STORIES**. We believe God designed us to grow in community. This week, consider the **CONNECTIONS** in your spiritual story. Reflect on how your story has intertwined with others – perhaps a mentor who guided you, a friend who walked alongside you or someone whose life was touched by your faith. Share with your group how these spiritual connections have enriched your journey and reveal the beautiful ways God weaves our stories together.

GROW AS A LEADER. Are you ready to **BE-KNOW-DO** this fall? A healthy small group leader should BE following Christ and growing in character. Healthy leaders also grow in what they KNOW and develop their leadership skills all year. We never stop growing as leaders! Small group leaders DO valuable things by preparing and leading week after week. We want to equip you to lead well. Keep an eye on this section each week for helpful leadership tips and resources, or contact your staff member for extra help and encouragement.

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Welcome to the fourth and final week of our sermon series, **IS JESUS WORTH FOLLOWING?** This week, we examine Jesus's interactions with various individuals and the crowd's response, ultimately leading us to consider our verdict about Jesus.

ICEBREAKER

Share about when you had to wait a long time for something. How did you feel during the waiting period, and how did you feel when it finally happened?

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Take turns reading Matthew 9:18-36 out loud.

Which emotions do you think each person in this passage experienced as they approached Jesus?

What do these interactions reveal about each person's faith?

What stands out to you about how Jesus responds to each person or situation?

THIS WEEK'S SERMON

Pastor Jeff Manion concluded our sermon series *Is Jesus Worth Following?* by examining Jesus's interactions with various individuals and the crowd's response. As a group, recall some of the sermon's big ideas and main points.

A central theme throughout the interactions in this passage is Jesus's restoration mission. Where do you see the need for restoration in our world today?

What does Jesus's restoration work in these stories reveal about the heart of God for the things that are broken in our world and our lives?

The woman with the hemorrhage suffered for a long time, spent all she had and only got worse. How have you experienced prolonged waiting or suffering? When have you witnessed waiting or suffering in another's life?

What hope does Jesus's restoration work in these stories offer you for situations like the ones mentioned above when you are waiting for restoration?

Jesus commends or encourages the faith (trust) of the people approaching him for help. Why do you think Jesus places such a high value on our trust in him?

The passage ends with two contrasting responses to Jesus's miracles. What have been your responses to Jesus's work in your life over the years?

Have someone read John 10:10-11 out loud. In what circumstances do you need to trust Jesus more as your Good Shepherd?

WRAP UP

Based on what we've learned in this series, how would you answer the question: "Is Jesus worth following?" What implications does this have for your daily life going forward?