
AND LET THEM **MAKE** ME
A SANCTUARY, THAT I MAY
DWELL IN THEIR MIDST.
Exodus 25:8
MAKE WAY
MAKE WAY *IN US*
MAKE WAY *THROUGH US*

Removing the Barriers | Isaiah 40

ICEBREAKER

Have you ever gone out of your way to prepare for someone's visit? What did you do to make them feel welcome?

OR

What's something you've had to move, fix, or get out of the way before you could accomplish something important?

SMALL GROUP WEEK 3 VIDEO (5:46)

Scan QR code found on your HOST RESOURCES Card to watch this week's video.
Before beginning the rest of your discussion, take time as a group to respond to the questions in the video.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout Scripture, we see God making His way toward people because He desires to dwell with us. As we experience His presence, our hearts and lives are transformed, and He invites us to help others encounter Him, too.

In Isaiah 40, God calls His people to prepare a highway for His coming. This picture reminds us that making way involves removing barriers in our own hearts and helping others see God's goodness more clearly.

What stood out to you most from this week's message?

INTO THE WORD

Read Isaiah 40:3–5 and Luke 3:3–6.
What does it mean to "prepare the way of the Lord"? Why do you think God often calls us to prepare before we can see what He is going to do?

Host Guidance:
Isaiah's imagery of preparing a highway describes removing obstacles and making a clear path for the coming of the Lord. Centuries later, John the Baptist fulfilled this prophetic role by calling people to repentance and preparing them to receive Jesus. While we cannot save people or change their hearts, we can help remove unnecessary obstacles that make it difficult for them to see God's goodness. This might involve demonstrating genuine love, extending hospitality, speaking truth with grace, or helping someone overcome misconceptions about God. Encourage your group to think about how their attitudes and actions can either help people move toward Jesus or unintentionally create barriers.

Read Luke 3:7–14.
John the Baptist challenged people to demonstrate repentance through their actions. What do his instructions teach us about removing barriers that might prevent others from experiencing God's love? How might our willingness to remove barriers today create opportunities for others to encounter Him tomorrow?

Host Guidance:
When people asked John what repentance should look like, he gave practical instructions about generosity, honesty, justice, and treating others fairly. His message reminds us that genuine faith should be evident in how we live and treat people. Sometimes our attitudes or actions can create unnecessary barriers for others, especially when what we say about Jesus doesn't align with how we treat them. We might speak about God's love while being impatient, talk about grace while holding tightly to judgment, or say everyone is welcome while unintentionally making people feel excluded. Encourage your group to consider how consistently demonstrating the character of Jesus can help others see Him more clearly.

Read Isaiah 40:4 and Psalm 139:23–24.
Before we can help remove barriers for others, we must allow God to work in our own hearts. What might the valleys, mountains, uneven ground, and rough places represent in our spiritual lives?

Host Guidance:
Isaiah uses the imagery of a landscape being prepared for the arrival of a king. This provides a helpful picture of how God prepares our hearts for His work. Valleys might represent discouragement or spiritual weariness that need to be filled with God's truth. Mountains can remind us of pride or self-reliance that

must be brought low through humility. Uneven ground may point to areas requiring repentance, while rough places can represent habits or distractions that hinder our walk with God. Psalm 139 reminds us to invite God to examine our hearts and reveal anything that needs to change. Help your group understand that making way for God begins with a willingness to let Him transform us.

Read Isaiah 40:9–11 and Isaiah 40:28–31.
What do these passages reveal about God's character? How might a clearer understanding of who God is help someone overcome barriers to trusting Him?

Host Guidance:
Isaiah 40 presents a beautiful picture of God's greatness and tenderness. He is the sovereign Creator whose power and understanding are beyond measure, yet He is also the gentle Shepherd who gathers His lambs in His arms. He comforts the weary, strengthens the weak, and gives hope to those who wait on Him. People may struggle to approach God because of fear, shame, painful experiences, or misconceptions about His character. When we understand that God is both powerful and personal, we can trust Him more deeply and help others see His goodness. Encourage your group to reflect on which aspect of God's character they most need to remember in their current circumstances.

Read Matthew 5:14–16 and 2 Corinthians 5:18–20.
How does God call us to help others see and experience His presence? What are some intentional ways we can respond with obedience?

Host Guidance:
Jesus calls His followers to be light in the world so that others may see their good works and glorify God. Paul describes believers as ambassadors for Christ, entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. Both passages remind us that God works through ordinary people to make Himself known. We don't have to have all the answers or be responsible for someone's response to Jesus. Instead, we can faithfully reflect His character through our words, relationships, generosity, and actions.

EMBRACE AND EMBODY

As we continue through *Make Way*, we're being invited to prepare today for what God alone sees tomorrow. That preparation begins in our own hearts and extends to

the people God has placed around us. Sometimes making way means surrendering pride, confronting sin, or allowing God's truth to replace discouragement. Other times, it means extending an invitation, building a relationship, showing compassion, or helping someone feel welcomed and valued.

As a group, read Psalm 139: 23-24 again out loud (ESV).

Create space for the group to reflect on and share the following: What is one barrier God may be asking you to remove in your own life? How might removing that barrier help someone else encounter Jesus through you?

PRAYER PROMPT

Close by praying for one another, specifically lifting up the barriers group members shared and asking God to help each person overcome what may be hindering His work in their lives. Pray for humility, repentance, and a greater awareness of His presence. Ask Him to help your group reflect His love in ways that make it easier for others to encounter Jesus. Pray specifically for the people God has placed in your lives who need to experience His hope.

This Week's Next Right Step — Make God Known:
Identify one person in your life who may be facing barriers to experiencing God's love. Pray for that person by name, and ask God to show you one intentional step you can take to help them see His goodness more clearly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Encourage group members to check out the *Make Way* tab in the Fairhaven app to access helpful resources including prayer guides, reflection questions, Participant Guides, and small group videos.
- This week, distribute *Make Way* stickers to group members and encourage them to place them somewhere to serve as a reminder that God has made a way and desires to work both in us and through us.
- Don't forget to post a weekly photo of your group in your campus Facebook group for a chance to win a pizza party.

Don't forget to take attendance for your group!