

Study Guide

Something to Think About: Sometimes life's circumstances are so challenging that there's no way forward and there's no way out. We encounter problems for which there are no solutions...questions for which there are no answers. During times like this, we hear voices saying things like: "I'll never be happy again", or "Nothing good can ever come from this". It feels like God is absent, apathetic or angry. But what if God isn't any of these things? What if it's possible to hang on to joy and hope even when there's no way out?

Think about a season of life—childhood, teenage years, college, early adulthood—that you look back on fondly. What did you enjoy about that season? Do you ever wish you could go back to this time? Why or why not?

When have you faced a difficult event or season in life that caused you to feel you'd never be happy again or that no good could come from what you were experiencing? What happened?

Have you ever seen someone demonstrate great faith in God despite their "no way out" circumstances? If so, how did that person's faith influence your own?

In **Matthew 4:12-13** we learn that upon hearing of John the Baptist's arrest, Jesus immediately went to Galilee...first to Nazareth and then to Capernaum. John was imprisoned in a place called Machaerus. Find these places on a map of first century Israel. (Google works!) Are you surprised by Jesus' sudden move to Capernaum? Why or why not?

Read **Matthew 11:1-6**. Consider John the Baptist...the one who had recently introduced Jesus to the world by saying, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Why would John now be questioning Jesus' identity?

Using your own words, restate what Jesus says in **Matthew 11:6**.

Are you (or is someone you love) currently in the middle of a "no way out" situation? What are some practical ways to remember that God is present and still cares?

Daily Prayer: God, help me know you're present even when it feels like you aren't, and help me know you care even when it feels like you don't. Amen.