

Discussion Questions

For Friday evening gatherings



These questions are intended to help your group discuss Matthew Taylor's keynote presentation and to draw members into conversation on, *Empire Has a Gospel Too: Jesus, Caesar, and the Temptation of Christian Power*

Lecture summary:

Today many Christians in America are seeking and gaining greater power, political influence, and even Christian dominance over society. This dovetails with a broader authoritarian turn in our politics. But Jesus taught us differently: How do we live from the cultural margins, loving and serving human beings, choosing to not be like the lords and rules of the gentiles (Mark 10:42). Drawing especially on the narrative of Jesus's passion in the Gospel of Mark, this lecture will explore not only what it means to resist the pull of the temptation to power, but also what it means to challenge our fellow Christians who have succumbed to that temptation.

Discussion questions:

1. How does the temptation toward more Christian power manifest itself in your life or in your community?
2. What would it look like for your church or spiritual community to embrace marginality and follow the countercultural model of Jesus in these times?

Bio:

Matthew D. Taylor is a visiting scholar at the Center on Faith and Justice at Georgetown University. He is the author of *The Violent Take It by Force* and, forthcoming, *Defying Tyrants*. A public-facing theologian and religious studies scholar who specializes in American Islam, Christian nationalism, and Christian extremism, he is also the creator of two limited podcast series—American Unexceptionalism and Charismatic Revival Fury. Taylor holds a PhD from Georgetown University and an MA from Fuller Theological Seminary.

His new book, *Defying Tyrants*, is available for pre-order:

<https://www.broadleafbooks.com/store/product/9798341900370/Defying-Tyrants>