

PILGRIM HOME CHURCH

The smaller groups in our church community are inside our homes where we go deeper, build friendships, and walk out the Christian life with each other.

HOME CHURCH GUIDE

- + “Breaking the Ice” question (group facilitator)
- + **CHECK-INS:** Introduce, check-in
- + **CARE:** Needs in the group
- + **COMPASSION:** What is the group planning? Are you inviting your neighbours to join in?
- + **GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS** Church-wide, group-only
- + **DIG IN:** Discuss questions as a group
- + **END AND HOMEWORK:** Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

WARM-UP QUESTIONS:

- What comes to mind when you think of the very spiritual word “bless” or “blessing”?
- How do you think you have been blessed by others in your life (not God at this point, make it messy and human first)?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- There are three (and four, if you include blessing things/spaces) directions of blessing: **From God** (Receive), **Back to God** (Return), and (Reflect) **Pay-it-forward** (God’s blessing to others). Which one do you find easiest to embrace? Why?
- What does receiving God’s blessing look like in ordinary life? Think of scriptures that speak of the benefits of Jesus for his people. (e.g *1 Corinthians 10:13*; *Romans 5:6-11*; *1 Timothy 1:15-16*)
- What does **blessing God** look like? Think of practices that shape us differently than the “default” setting around us? (*2 Timothy 1:8-11*; *Revelation 4:8-11*; *Psalms 92:1-5*)
- What about **blessing others**? (*Colossians 3:13*; *James 1:22, 1:26-27*; *1 Corinthians 1:4-9*)
- Talk about these ideas:

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| + Giving someone the benefit of the doubt | + A personal touch (appropriate for the situation, of course!) |
| + Prayer-walking and blessing neighbours | + Crossing a divide with authentic “sorry” |
| + Being patient | + Being silent and non-anxious in outward emotion in the right time |
| + Serving | + Acts of courtesy and kindness (open a door, carry a load, give up a seat, etc.) |
| + Giving some of your treasure away | + Giving something |
| + Practicing gentleness | + Speaking a word of Biblical blessing to those near you |
| + Showing appreciation | + Placing a hand on a shoulder or head and speaking prophetic words of encouragement |
| + Slowing down and noticing | |
| + Inquiring of other’s well-being | |
| + Hand writing notes of blessing | |

- Read *Ephesians 4:25-32*. We bless with our mouths. This passage sends us to consider where corrupting speech has come from us.

PRAYER: Go into prayer huddles and reread *Ephesians 4:25-32*. Confess and receive forgiveness from God and in the prayer huddles. Whom do you need to forgive? Soften your heart to give the blessing of kindness? Is there anyone you need to apologize to? Ask your prayer huddle for prayer and encouragement.

HOMEWORK: Write a specific plan for reversing your use of speech and ask the Holy Spirit for power to enact it.

FEBRUARY 23, 2020

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE ON FIRE

THREE DIRECTIONS OF LIFE-CHANGING SPEECH - THE BLESSING

Do you want to speak words that heal and mend the world? The Bible contains consistent teaching about our words and their power. There are three speech acts, from three directions, that we can engage with to alter our perceptions and our realities. These ancient words empower action that heals the world if we can learn again the power of our words.

KEY TEXT: *1 Peter 3:9*

Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead bless others because you were called to inherit a blessing.

Opening Story: Lack of a Father’s Blessing

BIG IDEA: We need to become an _____ .

- *1 Thessalonians 5:11* Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing

- *1 Thessalonians 3:11-13*

What does it mean "bless"?

[Heb: barak, Grk: μακάριος, makarios; εὐλογητός, eulogetos.]

"To bless means variously to worship or to praise, to bestow goodness and favour, and to invoke such qualities upon another."

Dawson, Three Directions of Blessing

"If you don't know how to give, then you don't understand the Kingdom. To be trusted with more is the willingness to give your best. Kingdom is about giving our best as everything we have is from Him anyway.." -John Wimber

Nº 1 _____ THE BLESSING OF GOD

John 10:10 (NET) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.

Original Blessedness (J. Polkinghorne, Questions of Truth: God, Science and Belief, 72-3,)

Genesis 1:26-27

1. We are persons, capable of true love - and hence endowed with freewill and living in a universe with "free processes"--reasonably, but not totally, predictable.

2. We are capable of moral choices

3. We are intrinsically part of a loving community. The fact that the Trinity was present at creation adds an extra dimension to "let us make...male and female created He them."

4. We are intrinsically valuable in God's eyes.

5. We are creative - indeed called to be co-creators.

6. We are capable, by God's grace and redemption, of perfect union with God - Jesus is "the (perfect) image of the invisible God."

7. Science's power to fathom the deep structure of the universe, which I believe to be a pale reflection of our being in the Creator's image.

8. The granting of "dominion," understood in the sense of a caring shepherd-king rather than an exploitative despot, and perhaps also linked with the custom in the ancient world for absent kings to erect statuary images of themselves to recall their authority exercised through local vice-regents.

In Three: _____

Off the Rails and Re-Blessing of God

The Bible is the story of God initiating covenants (Israel in the Old Testament, Jesus the fullness) to restore. God is always adjusting to bring about His desire for creatures who will love Him freely. Abram, for example, *Genesis 12:1-4*.

Nº 2 - RETURNING IT TO GOD

This is the engine of all Christian blessing: Praising God.

Some of the How-Tos

A Freewill View of Praise and Worship

Nº 3 BLESSING OTHERS, REFLECTING GOD'S GOODNESS AND LOVE TO OTHERS

Acts 20:35 "In everything I have shown you that, by working hard, we must help the weak. In this way, we remember the Lord Jesus' words: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Three Acts of Blessing:

1. _____ *James 3:8-9, 1 Peter 3:9, Ephesians 4:31-32*

2. _____ *Luke 12:19-20, 2 Corinthians 8:5, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, 10-11*

3. _____

NOW WHAT? + HOMEWORK!

Send an encouraging word (cards provided!)