



# GOING DEEPER

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

March 12, 2017

## Discussion Guide

### WHAT IS WRONG?

#### CONNECTING:

45 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A WAY OF CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER SO THAT YOU MIGHT PARTNER IN THE WORK GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIVES.)

- IN WHAT WAYS DID GOD MOVE IN YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU RESPOND TO HIM?
- WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DID YOU INVITE GOD INTO THIS CHALLENGE?
- HOW HONEST HAVE YOU BEEN WITH US? (GRACIOUSLY THANK GROUP MEMBERS FOR THEIR HONESTY IF THEY STATE THEY HAVE HELD BACK.)

#### GETTING STARTED:

10 MINUTES

- IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, MIGHT ANSWERING THE QUESTION OF WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD SERVE AS A MAJOR FOUNDATION FOR UNDERSTANDING LIFE AND HOW IT IS TO BE LIVED? COULD YOU ELABORATE?

#### DIVING INTO THE TEXT:

60 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A SIMPLE ROAD MAP THROUGH THE TEXT. FEEL FREE TO USE THESE QUESTIONS IN WAYS THAT BEST FIT YOUR GROUP AND THE DYNAMICS OF YOUR OWN MEETING.)

- USING THE NOTES, DISCUSS THE NATURE OF JUDGMENT AND CONDEMNATION AND HOW IT WAS PRACTICED IN JESUS' DAY.
- READ LUKE 6.37-42 ALOUD. PAUSE AND IMAGINE JESUS SPEAKING THESE WORDS TO A CROWD OF WHICH YOU ARE A PART. READ THE TEXT ONCE MORE, ALLOWING JESUS' WORDS TO ADDRESS YOU PERSONALLY.
- WHAT DOES JESUS SAY ABOUT WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD AND WHAT HIS FOLLOWERS ARE TO DO ABOUT IT? SEEK TO FIND AS MANY ANSWERS AS POSSIBLE.
- WHAT, IF ANYTHING, SURPRISES YOU ABOUT WHAT JESUS SAYS? COULD YOU EXPLAIN?
- IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DO YOU SEE THE PURPOSE OF BLESSING OTHERS FLOWING INTO HOW TO DEAL WITH WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?
- IN WHAT WAYS DO PEOPLE TYPICALLY SEEK TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS WHAT IS WRONG IN THE WORLD? IS THIS LIKE OR UNLIKE JESUS' APPROACH? IN WHAT WAYS?
- JESUS SEEMS TO SAY THAT WHEN WE USE TRADITIONAL WAYS OF ADDRESSING WHAT IS WRONG THAT WE ONLY DEEPEN WRONG (LUKE 6.37) BECAUSE WE ARE NOT EQUIPPED TO APPROACH WRONG IN THESE WAYS (LUKE 6.39-40). WOULD YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE? COULD YOU ELABORATE?
- IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, MIGHT DEALING WITH WHAT IS WRONG WITHIN US ACTUALLY ADDRESS WHAT IS WRONG IN THE WORLD? DO YOU FEEL THIS IS EASY OR DIFFICULT? WHY MIGHT THIS BE?
- IMAGINE A LIFE WHICH SEEKS TO LOVE OTHERS IN AN UNCONDITIONAL WAY AND HAS THE ATTITUDE WHICH SAYS, "WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD BEGINS WITH ME."

WHAT MIGHT THIS LIFE LOOK LIKE IN EVERY DAY TERMS? WHAT DIFFERENCE MIGHT THIS KIND OF LIFE MAKE IN TERMS OF GOD'S COVENANTAL DESIRES? WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MIGHT KEEP YOU FROM MOVING TOWARD THIS LIFE BY GOD'S GRACE?

- CONSIDER CLOSING IN PRAYER AS A GROUP, DISCUSSING WITH GOD SOME OF THE ANSWERS YOU GAVE TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTIONS, ASKING FOR HIS SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION.

## CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

### JUDGMENT AND CONDEMNATION

IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, THE CONCEPTS OF JUDGING AND CONDEMNING WERE SOMEWHAT OVERLAPPING. IN THEIR CLASSICAL USAGE, BOTH WERE LEGAL TERMS, JUDGMENT REFERRING TO THE PROCESS OF SIFTING AND DECIDING WHILE CONDEMNATION REFERRED TO THE PUNISHMENT METED OUT BASED UPON ONE'S JUDGMENT. HOWEVER, OVER TIME, THE TWO TERMS SOMEWHAT COLLAPSED IN MEANING AND CAME TO BE ASSOCIATED NOT JUST WITH THE LEGAL PROCESS OF DEALING WITH CRIMES BUT CAME TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAKING OF STATEMENTS ABOUT THE VALUE OF PEOPLE. IN THIS CONTEXT, JUDGMENT AND CONDEMNATION WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROCESS OF STEREOTYPING PEOPLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PLACING THEM WITHIN A CATEGORY. THIS CATEGORY COULD BE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE AND WAS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH LABELS SUCH AS POOR, RICH, SINNER, PATRON, PROSTITUTE, WISE PERSON, ETC. IN OTHER WORDS, PEOPLE WERE SIZED UP AND THEN SEPARATED INTO PREVIOUSLY DEFINED AND LABELED CATEGORIES. ONCE CATEGORIZED, PEOPLE WERE THEN ASSIGNED THEIR PLACE IN SOCIETY WHICH ALSO DETERMINED HOW OTHERS WERE TO TREAT OR RELATE TO THEM.

WITHIN THE COMMUNITY LIFE OF ISRAEL, JUDGMENT AND CONDEMNATION HELD SOMETHING OF A DIFFERENT MEANING, THOUGH THE PRACTICE OF THESE DRIFTED TO BECOME VERY MUCH LIKE THAT OF THE CULTURE AROUND THEM. ORIGINALLY, JUDGMENT WAS THE PROCESS OF ADDRESSING WRONGS DONE SO THAT PEACE COULD BE RESTORED IN THE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL. IT IS THIS VIEW TOWARD RESTORATION OF THE COMMUNITY RATHER THAN PUNISHMENT OF THE OFFENDER WHICH SETS ISRAEL'S UNDERSTANDING OF JUSTICE APART FROM THE CULTURES AROUND THEM. WITHIN THIS CONTEXT OF JUDGMENT, SIFTING AND ACTIONS BASED UPON THE SIFTING WERE INCLUDED IN THE PROCESS OF JUDGMENT. HOWEVER, CONDEMNATION WAS AN ACTION ASCRIBED SOLELY TO GOD AS HE ALONE WAS JUDGE (DEUTERONOMY 1.17). AS JUDGE, GOD WAS ULTIMATELY THE STANDARD OF JUSTICE (PSALM 7.11) AND HIS ACTIONS WERE FINAL. IN THIS ROLE AS JUDGE, IT WAS GOD'S DUTY,

NOT THAT OF ISRAEL, TO DETERMINE THE PUNISHMENT OF PEOPLE FOR THEIR WRONGS, A PUNISHMENT WHICH WAS TO BE EXACTED ON SOMETHING WHICH THE PROPHETS REFERRED TO AS THE DAY OF THE LORD (ISAIAH 2.12-18; 13.9; JEREMIAH 46.10; EZEKIEL 30.3; ZEPHANIAH 1.7-18).

IN JESUS' TIME, THE ISRAELITES MAINTAINED THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD, A FINAL DAY ON WHICH GOD WOULD JUDGE AND PUNISH THOSE WHO HAD DONE WRONG. JESUS HIMSELF REFERRED TO THIS DAY IN MATTHEW 24. HOWEVER, IN DAILY LIFE, THE ISRAELITES ENGAGED IN THE PRACTICE OF STEREOTYPING AND LABELING FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING HOW TO RELATE TO PEOPLE. THIS PRACTICE IS ESPECIALLY PROMINENT IN THE PHARISEES' INTERACTIONS WITH JESUS, SOMETHING FOR WHICH HE REBUKED THEM (MARK 2.13-17).

JESUS ENCOURAGED HIS DISCIPLES TO REFRAIN FROM THE COMMON PRACTICE OF JUDGING AND CONDEMNING; THAT IS, HE URGED THEM NOT TO ENGAGE IN THE PRACTICE OF CATEGORIZING AND LABELING PEOPLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING HOW THEY INTERACTED WITH THEM (MATTHEW 7.1-2; LUKE 6.36). WITH THIS EXHORTATION, JESUS DID NOT FORBID THE PRACTICE OF DISCERNING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT OR WRONG, THE DECLARATION OF SUCH WITH RESPECT TO ACTIONS, OR EVEN ACTIONS TO PROTECT THOSE WHO ARE BEING WRONGED. WHAT JESUS DID DO WAS FORBID NEGATIVE OR RETRIBUTIVE ACTIONS OR REACTIONS AGAINST THE WRONGDOERS ON THE PART OF HIS DISCIPLES IN RESPONSE. RATHER, JESUS ENCOURAGED HIS DISCIPLES TO REFRAIN FROM TREATING PEOPLE IN ANY WAY OTHER THAN WITH GRACIOUS LOVE (LUKE 6.38). IN THIS MANNER OF LIFE, JESUS HOLDS HIMSELF AS THE EXAMPLE TO BE FOLLOWED (JOHN 3.17). HOWEVER, THIS RAISES THE QUESTION AS TO HOW WRONGS WILL BE ADDRESSED. IT IS HERE THAT JESUS POINTS TO THE DAY OF THE LORD AND GOD'S ROLE AS JUDGE. IT IS GOD'S ROLE TO CONDEMN (JOHN 3.18) AND PUNISH. HE WILL PUNISH UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. THIS IS HIS ROLE ALONE, A ROLE FOR WHICH THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST ARE NOT EQUIPPED (LUKE 6.39-40) NOR ARE THEY CALLED

## THE TEXT

### LUKE 6.37-42:

#### *WHAT IS WRONG AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT*

IN LUKE 6, JESUS PREACHES A SERMON WHICH HE LIKELY PREACHED MANY TIMES ABOUT THE NATURE OF LIFE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (SEE MATTHEW 5-7.) IN THIS SERMON, JESUS ADDRESSES SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE, THUS PROVIDING SOMETHING OF A KINGDOM-ORIENTED WORLDVIEW FOR THOSE WHO WOULD FOLLOW HIM. THIS WORLDVIEW BEGINS WITH ONE'S IDENTITY

WITHIN THE KINGDOM OF GOD (LUKE 6.20-26) WHICH IS THEN FOLLOWED BY THE PURPOSE OR WAY OF LIFE TO WHICH THIS IDENTITY LEADS.

BEGINNING IN VERSE 37, JESUS BEGINS TO TRANSITION TO ANSWER A THIRD MAJOR QUESTION, THAT OF WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT JESUS DOES NOT SIMPLY BEGIN TO ADDRESS A NEW QUESTION WITH A NEW ANSWER. EACH ANSWER JESUS HAS GIVEN TO THIS POINT INFLUENCES THE NEXT. THE NATURE OF IDENTITY NATURALLY FLOWS INTO PURPOSE, AND PURPOSE NATURALLY FLOWS INTO THE QUESTION OF WHAT IS WRONG AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. THINKING IN TERMS OF COVENANT, THIS MAKES SENSE AS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR PEOPLE IS INHERENTLY TIED WITH HIS DESIRE TO ADDRESS WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD. THE ORIGINAL COVENANT PURPOSE OF GOD HAS BEEN BROKEN, BUT GOD IN FAITHFULNESS IS SEEKING TO RESTORE PEOPLE TO THEIR ORIGINAL COVENANT RELATIONSHIP, AND IS USING A CHOSEN, BLESSED PEOPLE WHO BLESS OTHERS TO DO SO.

AS JESUS TRANSITIONS, HE REACHES BOTH BACKWARD AND FORWARD WITH FOUR MAXIMS AND A GUIDING PRINCIPLE. AT FACE VALUE, THESE FOUR MAXIMS ARE MOST LIKELY BEST VIEWED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF WISDOM LITERATURE, A GENRE WHICH MAKES ASSERTIONS ABOUT LIFE AND THE WAY IT GENERALLY GOES. HOWEVER, THERE MAY BE SOME POINTING TO DEEPER ESCHATOLOGICAL TRAJECTORIES WHICH ARE CERTAIN RATHER THAN GENERALLY TRUE. JESUS BEGINS WITH A COUPLING OF TWO MAXIMS WHICH LOOK FORWARD. JESUS FORBIDS THE PRACTICE OF JUDGING OTHERS BECAUSE IT LEADS TO JUDGMENT AND THE PRACTICE OF CONDEMNING BECAUSE IT LEADS TO MORE CONDEMNATION. WITH THESE TWO MAXIMS, JESUS POINTS TO A NEW TOPIC, ADDRESSING WRONG. SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD AND PEOPLE AND IT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED. THE QUESTION IS HOW? JESUS IMMEDIATELY TAKES OFF THE TABLE THE COMMON, CULTURAL MANNER OF ADDRESSING WRONG THROUGH JUDGMENT AND CONDEMNATION. WHAT JESUS HAS IN VIEW IS THE PRACTICE OF STEREOTYPING AND LABELING PEOPLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF GAUGING HOW TO RESPOND TO THEM, PARTICULARLY IN NEGATIVE WAYS. AT THE LEVEL OF MAXIMS, JESUS SEEMS TO BE SAYING THAT ENGAGING IN THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOR ONLY LEADS TO MORE OF THIS BEHAVIOR. IT DOES NOT BREAK THE CYCLE BUT DEEPENS IT. ON THE ESCHATOLOGICAL LEVEL, A LEVEL SUPPORTED BY THE CONCLUDING GUIDING PRINCIPLE, JESUS SEEMS TO BE SAYING THAT GOD WILL TREAT PEOPLE AS THEY TREAT OTHERS.

HAVING NOTED THAT THERE IS WRONG IN THE WORLD AND THAT IT MUST BE ADDRESSED BUT NOT IN THE TYPICAL MANNER, JESUS REACHES BACKWARD TO HIS STATEMENT OF PURPOSE. WHEN IT COMES TO ADDRESSING WRONG, HIS FOLLOWERS ARE TO APPROACH PEOPLE IN KEEPING WITH THEIR PURPOSE TO BLESS OTHERS IN LOVING WAYS.

THEY ARE TO GIVE AND FORGIVE ALL THEY ENCOUNTER, EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE DONE WRONG. THIS DOES NOT IMPLY THAT WRONGDOING IS PASSED OVER OR IGNORED, NOR DOES IT MEAN ACTIONS CANNOT BE TAKEN TO PROTECT THOSE WHO ARE BEING WRONGED. IT SIMPLY MEANS THAT THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS ARE CALLED TO TREAT ALL PEOPLE, EVEN THOSE WHO DO WRONG, IN LOVING WAYS WHICH POINT THEM BACK TO COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. AT THE LEVEL OF MAXIMS, JESUS SEEMS TO BE SAYING THAT SUCH BEHAVIOR ACTUALLY BREAKS CYCLES OF WRONGDOING. AT THE ESCHATOLOGICAL LEVEL, JESUS SEEMS TO BE SAYING THAT SUCH BEHAVIOR LEADS TO A STANDARD BY WHICH THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS ARE TREATED BY THE FATHER. THIS FINAL GUIDING PRINCIPLE PLACES JUDGMENT WHICH INCLUDES PUNISHMENT AND RETRIBUTION FIRMLY IN GOD'S HANDS.

AT THIS POINT, TWO QUESTIONS NATURALLY ARISE. WHY ARE GOD'S PEOPLE FORBIDDEN FROM JUDGING? AND, WHAT IF ANYTHING OTHER THAN LOVING ARE GOD'S PEOPLE TO DO TO ADDRESS WRONG IN THE WORLD? JESUS ADDRESSES THE FIRST WITH TWO PARABLES WHICH MAKE THE SAME POINT: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE NOT EQUIPPED TO ENGAGE IN JUDGMENT. THEY ARE BLIND WITH RESPECT TO THIS TASK AND THUS TO ENGAGE IN JUDGMENT LEADS TO DISASTER. FURTHER, THEY HAVE HAD NO ONE TEACH THEM HOW TO ENGAGE PROPERLY IN JUDGMENT AND THUS ARE NOT EQUIPPED FOR THE PRACTICE.

AS FOR WHAT TO DO IN RESPONSE TO WRONG, JESUS IS CLEAR THAT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE, BUT THAT SOMETHING STARTS WITH THE PERSON OF GOD FIRST. THE PERSON OF GOD MUST BEGIN TO ADDRESS WHAT IS WRONG IN THE WORLD BY FIRST HAVING AN ATTITUDE WHICH SAYS, "WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD IS ME." IT IS THIS HUMBLE INTROSPECTIVE APPROACH WHICH ROOTS OUT DEEP WRONGS WHICH ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN THE PROCESS OF JUDGMENT AND CONDEMNATION BECAUSE IN THIS PRACTICE THE ATTITUDE IS MORE AKIN TO "WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD IS YOU!" IN THE HUMBLE DEALING WITH ONE'S OWN WRONGDOING, WRONGDOING IS DEALT WITH AND A PATH IS CLEARED FOR THE LOVING APPROACH WITH OTHERS.

## REAL LIFE WITH BLAKE:

WHO AM I? WHAT AM I HERE TO DO? THESE ARE BIG QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS WHICH INFORM NOT JUST WHERE I AM GOING BUT HOW I LIVE MY EVERY DAY. HOWEVER, THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY QUESTIONS I HAVE. THERE IS ANOTHER QUESTION WHICH NIGGLES AT MY BRAIN, ONE WHICH CONCERNS WHAT IS WRONG. IT IS HARD NOT TO NOTICE THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG. THE WORLD IS BROKEN, ON JUST ABOUT EVERY LEVEL. A PHRASE I LIKE TO USE IS "THIS IS NOT THE WAY IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE." I SUPPOSE WE ALL KNOW THIS AT SOME LEVEL, BUT WE ARE NOT REALLY SURE WHAT IS WRONG OR WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. WHEN I CONSIDER THE NARRATIVE ARC OF SCRIPTURE, GOD'S PURSUIT

OF A COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US, WHAT IS WRONG BECOMES PRETTY CLEAR. WE ARE OUT OF PLACE, OUT OF A PROPER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND IT IS WRECKING US. MAKES SENSE, BUT WHAT AM I TO DO ABOUT IT? SOME MIGHT SAY NOTHING, BUT THINKING IN TERMS OF COVENANT THAT CAN'T BE THE ANSWER. I AM CHOSEN TO LIVE AS A BLESSED PERSON WHO MOVES THROUGH THE WORLD BLESSING OTHERS WITH LOVE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVITING THEM BACK INTO COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. BY DEFINITION, I AM AND SHOULD BE DOING SOMETHING. THE QUESTION IS, WHAT? WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GOOD AND UPRIGHT, THE ANSWER IS PRETTY CLEAR. LOVE THEM AND POINT THEM TO GOD. WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT, PEOPLE WHO DO WRONG, PEOPLE WHO HURT OTHERS, OR ME, PEOPLE WHO I WOULD CLASSIFY AS VILE, FILTHY AND TERRIBLE. . .WHAT THEN? I WOULD LIKE TO SHAKE THEM UP, CALL THEM OUT, OR JUST WRITE THEM OFF, BUT JESUS SAYS THAT JUST CAN'T BE. I AM TO LOVE THEM TOO, AND SOMEHOW IN LOVING THEM IN SPITE OF WHAT THEY DO, THEY ARE POINTED TO GOD. BUT THIS FEELS UNJUST AND UNFAIR. WHO MAKES THINGS RIGHT? I WANT JUSTICE TO BE DONE. I WANT THESE PEOPLE TO SUFFER FOR WHAT THEY HAVE DONE, SOME MORE THAN OTHERS, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT COMES TO MATTERS OF INJUSTICE SUCH AS SEX TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY. BUT JESUS SAYS, THAT IS NOT MY PLACE. IT ISN'T EVEN HIS PLACE. THIS BELONGS TO THE FATHER AND I NEED TO LEAVE IT THERE BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE THE CHOPS FOR IT. OK. I CAN TAKE THAT, BUT THAT STILL FEELS UNSATISFYING. AM I JUST TO GO THROUGH LIFE LOVING PEOPLE, NEVER REALLY DOING ANYTHING CONSTRUCTIVE TO DEAL WITH WRONG? NO. I AM TO DO SOMETHING, BUT THAT SOMETHING STARTS WITH ME, NOT OTHERS. JESUS INVITES ME TO STOP LOOKING OUTSIDE MYSELF, AT OTHERS THINKING THAT SOMEHOW THEY NEED TO BE CORRECTED. HE INVITES ME TO LOOK INSIDE, TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I AM A LARGE PART OF WHAT IS WRONG AND IF ANYTHING IS TO BE CORRECTED, I MUST BE CORRECTED. THIS IS HARD TO SWALLOW BECAUSE IT MEANS THAT I MUST ADMIT THAT I AM PART OF THE PROBLEM, PERHAPS A LARGE PART OF THE PROBLEM IN MY CORNER OF THE WORLD. IT IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE IT MEANS I MUST BE HUMBLE AND ALLOW GOD TO ADDRESS AND HEAL ME FIRST BEFORE I CRUSADE AGAINST OTHERS. IT MOST LIKELY MEANS THAT MY OWN ENCOUNTER WITH MY UNIQUE OUT-OF-PLACENESS WILL MAKE ANY CRUSADE FRIVOLOUS AND SILLY. IT WILL DO ALL THESE THINGS AND MORE, BUT IT WILL ALSO MAKE MY CORNER OF THE WORLD MORE RIGHT AND ME MORE FREE TO SIMPLY LOVE.

THIS SUSPICION THAT PERHAPS WHAT WE ARE SEEING IS A BIT OFF. OUR SENSE IS CORRECT. THE WORLD AND PEOPLE ARE BROKEN. WE ARE OUT OF PLACE, OUT OF OUR INTENDED COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, AND WE ARE CALLED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. THIS IS ACTUALLY THE LIVING OUT OF OUR PURPOSE, BUT WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE, REALLY? OUR TEMPTATION IS TO RAIL AGAINST WRONG AND THOSE WHO ENGAGE IN IT. WE CAJOLE, COERCE, AND SOMETIMES THREATEN TO MOVE PEOPLE FROM WRONGDOING TO RIGHT LIVING. WE THINK IT WORKS. JESUS SAYS IT DOESN'T. THESE KINDS OF ACTIONS NOT ONLY TAKE US FAR FROM OUR CREATED PURPOSE. THEY FURTHER THE CYCLES OF WRONGDOING WE ARE BENT ON STOPPING. SO, WHAT ARE WE TO DO ABOUT IT? JESUS SEEMS TO SAY THAT WE BEGIN BY CHANGING OUR ANSWER TO WHAT IS WRONG FROM "YOU ARE WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD," TO "I AM WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD." WHEN WE DO THIS, AND ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE ADDRESSED, WHAT IS WRONG BEGINS TO DISSIPATE IN OUR CORNER OF THE WORLD AND WE ARE MORE ABLE TO LIVE OUT OUR CREATIVE REDEMPTIVE PURPOSE. BUT WHAT, EXACTLY, DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN REAL LIFE? IT BEGINS WITH BEING HONEST THAT WE DO NOT HAVE IT TOGETHER, AND THAT WE ARE OFTEN LIVING OUT-OF-PLACE IN WAYS WE DO NOT EVEN RECOGNIZE. THIS IS CALLED CONFESSION, AND IT IS TO BE A REGULAR, IF NOT DAILY PART OF OUR LIVES. FOLLOWING CONFESSION, WE MOVE TO REPENTANCE, A DESIRE TO CHANGE OUR PATH, RELYING ON GOD'S GRACE AND DIRECTION IN THAT PROCESS. BECAUSE THESE ARE OFTEN NOT PRACTICED OR HAVE BEEN MISAPPLIED IN MANY CASES, THIS WEEK WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO PICK UP THE PRACTICE OF CONFESSION. CONFESSION CAN TAKE MANY FORMS, BUT PERHAPS YOU COULD USE THE FOLLOWING PRAYER TO GUIDE YOU, A PRAYER WHICH HAS EXISTED FOR MANY YEARS WITHIN THE CHURCH. CONSIDER CLOSING EACH NIGHT WITH THIS PRAYER OR ONE BASED UPON IT AND ALLOW GOD TO LEAD YOU FROM THAT SPOT AS YOU ARE AUTHENTIC AND HUMBLE WITH HIM. AS YOU OFFER THIS PRAYER, REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE A LOVING FATHER WHO DOES NOT FROWN OVER US BUT DELIGHTS IN OUR OPENNESS AND HONESTY WITH HIM, FOR THIS IS THE NATURE OF COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE DESIRES.

ALMIGHTY GOD, MY HEAVENLY FATHER: I HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU, THROUGH MY OWN FAULT, IN THOUGHT, AND WORD, AND DEED, IN WHAT I HAVE DONE AND IN WHAT I HAVE LEFT UNDONE. FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR SON OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, FORGIVE ME ALL MY OFFENSES; AND GRANT THAT I MAY SERVE YOU IN NEWNESS OF LIFE, TO THE GLORY OF YOUR NAME. AMEN.

## REAL LIFE WITH YOU:

WHO ARE WE? WHY ARE WE HERE? THESE ARE BIG QUESTIONS BUT THEY LEAD TO A THIRD. WHAT IS WRONG AND WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT? AS WE MOVE THROUGH THE WORLD FULFILLING OUR PURPOSE, IT IS HARD NOT TO RECOGNIZE THAT THINGS ARE NOT THE WAY THEY SHOULD BE. SOMETIMES IT IS PRETTY OBVIOUS, AND SOMETIMES WE JUST HAVE



SENIOR  
PASTOR  
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