



GOING DEEPER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

April 23, 2017

Discussion Guide

A COMMUNITY CALLED RECONCILIATION

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

- DO YOU EVER GET THE SENSE THAT YOU WERE MADE FOR MORE, TO DO SOMETHING OF GREATER SIGNIFICANCE? 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 CONCEPT OF RECONCILIATION AND ITS USE IN THE LETTERS OF PAUL.
- READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5.14-6.2 ALOUD. PAUSE AND READ THE TEXT ONCE MORE.
- ACCORDING TO PAUL, WHAT ARE THE EVERYDAY, REAL-LIFE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ATONING WORK OF JESUS ON THE CROSS? SEEK TO FIND AS MANY AS POSSIBLE.
- DO YOU THINK THAT MOST FOLLOWERS OF JESUS GRASP THESE IMPLICATIONS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE? COULD YOU EXPLAIN?
- PAUL ARGUES THAT WHEN ATONEMENT BEGINS TO TAKE ROOT IN THE REALITIES OF EVERYDAY LIFE, THINGS CHANGE IN HOW WE SEE THE WORLD (VERSE 16) AND IN HOW WE INTERACT WITH THE WORLD (VERSE 20) BECAUSE WE BEGIN TO SHARE IN GOD'S WORK IN THE WORLD (VERSE 18-19). IN YOUR MIND, WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE FOR A PERSON OF FAITH TO LIVE IN THIS WAY? WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE FOR A COMMUNITY OF FAITH TO LIVE IN THIS WAY?
- WHAT MIGHT HAVE TO CHANGE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES OF FAITH TO TAKE UP THIS WAY OF LIFE? WHAT, IF ANYTHING, PREVENTS THIS FROM BEING DONE?
- CONSIDER CLOSING BY DISCUSSING WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE TO STEP TOWARD THE EVERYDAY REALITIES BROUGHT ABOUT BY ATONEMENT AND HOW YOU MIGHT ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER ON THIS JOURNEY.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

RECONCILIATION

RECONCILIATION IS A WORD USED RARELY IN SCRIPTURE. IN CLASSICAL USAGE, THE WORD WAS USED TO REFER TO THE RESTORATION OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLE AFTER THE EXPERIENCE OF HOSTILITY OR DISPLEASURE. IT WAS RARELY USED IN RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS. HOWEVER, THE CONCEPT OF RECONCILIATION WAS COMMON IN MOST PAGAN RELIGIONS WITH THE GOD BEING THE OBJECT OF RECONCILIATION; THAT IS, THROUGH THE OFFERING OF SACRIFICES, THE GODS WERE RECONCILED TO PEOPLE.

IN SCRIPTURE, PAUL IS THE ONLY AUTHOR TO USE THE TERM RECONCILIATION, IN BOTH ITS NOUN AND VERB FORMS. HIS USAGE OF THE TERM LIES AT THE HEART OF HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL, AND APPEARS TO BE HIS EFFORT TO PROVIDE GREATER UNDERSTANDING TO TWO THEMES FOUND IN THE GOSPELS AND ACTS: THE NEED FOR FORGIVENESS AND GOD'S UNRELENTING PURSUIT OF THOSE IN NEED OF SUCH FORGIVENESS. (MATTHEW 6.12; LUKE 15; 19.10; 23.34; ACTS 2.38). IN PAUL'S MIND, GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF SIN INVOLVED MORE THAN PASSING OVER WRONGS DONE BY PEOPLE BUT WAS GOD'S WAY IN DEALING WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF WRONGS DONE, CONSEQUENCES WHICH AFFECTED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO PAUL, THE PRESENCE OF SIN CREATED A SEPARATION BETWEEN GOD AND PEOPLE. THIS SEPARATION WAS NO MERE DISTANCING WITHIN THE RELATIONSHIP, BUT A SEVERE RUPTURE WHICH CREATED ENMITY BETWEEN PEOPLE AND GOD (ROMAN 5.10; EPHESIANS 2.1, 12; 4.18). HOWEVER, UNLIKE PAGAN GODS WHO WAITED ON PEOPLE TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT IN THE RELATIONSHIP, GOD TOOK THE INITIATIVE AND PURSUED THE RESTORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE THROUGH THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS (ROMANS 5.10). IN THIS SACRIFICIAL DEATH, SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES WERE DEALT WITH BY GOD MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE AND GOD TO BE RECONCILED IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP (ROMANS 5.10; 2 CORINTHIANS 5.18-21). THUS, IN PAUL'S LETTERS, GOD IS ALWAYS THE RECONCILER AND PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS THOSE WHO ARE RECONCILED.

AS WE READ PAUL, WE MUST MAKE SURE TO TRACE HIS THINKING ABOUT RECONCILIATION BACK TO THE GOSPELS AND ACTS IF WE ARE TO PROPERLY UNDERSTAND THE POINTS HE IS MAKING IN HIS LETTERS, AND IF WE DESIRE TO PLACE HIS THOUGHT WITHIN THE LIFE, MINISTRY, AND MESSAGE OF JESUS. WITH THE IDEA OF RECONCILIATION, PAUL IS NOT CREATING NEW THEOLOGY OR EVEN DEVELOPING THE FIRST CHRISTIAN

THEOLOGY. HE IS SEEKING TO GET BEHIND THE GOSPEL CONCEPTS OF FORGIVENESS AND GOD'S RADICAL PURSUIT OF PEOPLE WITH THIS FORGIVENESS WHICH JESUS PROCLAIMED. PAUL IS SIMPLY ASKING WHAT NEEDS TO BE FORGIVEN. WHY DOES THIS NEED TO BE FORGIVEN? AND, BY WHAT MEANS DOES GOD PURSUE PEOPLE, IN ORDER TO GRANT THIS FORGIVENESS? HIS ANSWER IS WRAPPED UP IN THE CONCEPT OF RECONCILIATION.

IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL TO ROOT PAUL'S THINKING WITHIN THE MESSAGE OF JESUS, THE RESULT WILL BE THAT WE WILL HOLD TO THE MESSAGE OF PAUL AND THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF JESUS AS THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL, NEGLECTING THE MESSAGE AND LIFE OF JESUS HIMSELF. HOWEVER, TO LOSE THE MESSAGE AND LIFE OF JESUS IS TO LOSE HALF OF THE GOSPEL, A POINT PAUL HIMSELF MAKES. IN A DESCRIPTION OF HIS GOSPEL MINISTRY, PAUL NOTES THAT HE HELD FORTH THE LIFE AND MESSAGE AND SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF JESUS AS CENTRAL TO THE GOSPEL (1 CORINTHIANS 2.2). WHEN WE LOSE CONTACT WITH THE MESSAGE AND LIFE OF JESUS AND SUBSTITUTE THE WRITINGS OF PAUL AS THE DISTILLATION OF THE GOSPEL, WE OFTEN MAKE THE GOSPEL ABOUT PROPOSITIONAL TRUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP ABOUT LEARNING THESE TRUTHS, A TREND WHICH HAS GROWN SINCE THE ADVENT OF THE REFORMATION. HOWEVER, WHEN WE ROOT PAUL'S PROPOSITIONS ABOUT THE GOSPEL WITHIN THE LIFE AND MESSAGE OF JESUS, THESE TRUTHS WHICH PAUL DISTILLS BECOME GROUNDED IN A REAL LIFE LIVED WHICH MAKES DISCIPLESHIP ABOUT LIVING THESE TRUTHS RATHER THAN KNOWING THESE TRUTHS. PAUL TRIES TO MAKE THIS CONNECTION IN EACH OF HIS LETTERS AS HE SEEKS TO LEAD HIS CHURCHES TO REAL-LIFE APPLICATION IN THE PARENETIC (APPLICATION) SECTIONS OF HIS LETTERS. HOWEVER, THESE PORTIONS OF HIS LETTERS ARE OFTEN DISCONNECTED FROM HIS THEOLOGICAL TEACHING IN MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT PAUL'S THEOLOGICAL TEACHING IS DISCONNECTED FROM THE LIFE AND MESSAGE OF JESUS.

THE TEXT

2 CORINTHIANS 5.14-6.2:

MADE FOR MORE

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH IS A LETTER IN WHICH HE IS FIGHTING FOR THE CHURCH IN CORINTH AND HIS ROLE AS A LEGITIMATE SHEPHERD OF THE CONGREGATION. TEACHERS HAVE COME TO CORINTH WHO HAVE CAST DOUBT UPON PAUL'S CALLING AS AN APOSTLE BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF SUFFERING IN HIS MINISTRY (2 CORINTHIANS 1.6-11; 10-12). IT SEEMS THAT THEY REASONED THAT NO ONE WHO WAS AN APOSTLE OR FOLLOWER OF CHRIST SHOULD EXPERIENCE THE DIFFICULTIES PAUL HIMSELF WAS EXPERIENCING IF THEY WERE

TRULY FAVORED BY GOD. IN RESPONSE, THROUGHOUT THE LETTER, PAUL ARGUES THAT THE EXTERNAL APPEARANCES AND EXPERIENCES ON THE JOURNEY OF FAITH DO NOT MATTER SO MUCH AS WHAT GOD IS DOING INSIDE THE PERSON OF FAITH (2 CORINTHIANS 4.16-18). THEREFORE, THE BELIEVERS IN CORINTH SHOULD NOT JUDGE PAUL AND HIS MINISTRY BY THE OUTER APPEARANCE OF SUFFERING (2 CORINTHIANS 5.16). IN 2 CORINTHIANS 4, PAUL BEGINS THE DEFENSE OF HIS MINISTRY WHICH INVOLVES THE PRESENCE OF SUFFERING AND SEEMS TO BAFFLE THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS. IN CHAPTER 5, HE ARGUES THAT A LIFE WHICH IS FREE FROM SUCH EXPERIENCES IS LONGED FOR AND POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST. HOWEVER, WHILE LIVING IN THE PRESENT WORLD, SUCH EXPERIENCES WERE COMMON, CREATING A TENSION BETWEEN A DESIRE TO BE FREE FROM SUCH SUFFERING EVEN AS ONE EXPERIENCED THESE SUFFERINGS (2 CORINTHIANS 5.1-10). YET, IT IS BECAUSE OF PAUL'S REVERENCE FOR GOD THAT HE CONTINUED FORWARD IN HIS MINISTRY, EVEN IF THE CORINTHIANS DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WITNESSED (2 CORINTHIANS 5.11-13).

HAVING DESCRIBED THE PRESENCE OF SUFFERING IN HIS MINISTRY, PAUL THEN TURNS TO THE NATURE AND CONTENT OF HIS MINISTRY. PAUL'S MINISTRY WAS DRIVEN BY THE LOVE JESUS HAD DEMONSTRATED FOR PAUL AND PAUL'S RESPONSE OF LOVE IN RETURN. THIS LOVING OVERTURE OF CHRIST WAS NONE OTHER THAN HIS SACRIFICIAL DEATH FOR ALL PEOPLE WHICH SUMMED UP THE DEATH DESERVED BY ALL PEOPLE IN THE ONE DEATH OF CHRIST. HERE PAUL USES THE METAPHOR OF SUBSTITUTION TO REFER TO THE ATONING WORK OF JESUS UPON THE CROSS. WITH THIS METAPHOR, PAUL MAKES THE POINT THAT BECAUSE OF SIN, PEOPLE ARE DESERVING OF DEATH, A POINT PAUL MAKES ELSEWHERE (ROMANS 6.21-23). HOWEVER, IN HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS, JESUS TOOK UPON HIMSELF THE DEATH DESERVED BY ALL PEOPLE, DYING IN THEIR PLACE SO THAT THEIR PENALTY WAS PAID. IN HIS DEATH, ALL DIED.

PAUL UNDERSTOOD THIS ACTION OF JESUS TAKING UPON HIMSELF THE DEATH DESERVED BY ALL PEOPLE TO BE AN ACT OF LOVE WHICH REQUIRED A RESPONSE, IN HIS MIND, THE CHOICE TO GIVE UP SELF-DIRECTION AND LIVE FOR THE ONE WHO HAD DIED IN HIS PLACE. PAUL'S REASONING IS CLEAR. JESUS' WORK ON THE CROSS FREED PEOPLE NOT JUST FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR SIN, BUT IT GAVE PEOPLE THE FREEDOM TO LIVE IN A NEW WAY, A WAY DIRECTED BY JESUS HIMSELF. WHILE NOT STATED EXPLICITLY, IT IS HARD TO MISS THE UNDERCURRENT OF GOD'S CREATIVE INTENTIONS IN PAUL'S THINKING. IN THE BEGINNING, PEOPLE WERE CREATED IN

THE IMAGE OF GOD TO DO THE VERY WORK OF GOD (GENESIS 1.26-28). PEOPLE WERE CREATED LIKE GOD TO LIVE FOR HIM. THROUGH JESUS' SACRIFICIAL DEATH, GOD'S ORIGINAL PURPOSES FOR PEOPLE ARE MADE POSSIBLE ONCE AGAIN, AND IT IS THE ACCEPTANCE OF THIS PURPOSE WHICH CONSTITUTES A PROPER RESPONSE TO THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF JESUS.

WITH GOD'S ORIGINAL PURPOSES FOR PEOPLE NOW AVAILABLE, THE WAY PAUL UNDERSTANDS LIFE ITSELF HAS CHANGED. HE CAN NO LONGER UNDERSTAND THE WORLD THROUGH WHAT HE SEES AROUND HIM IN TERMS OF CULTURE OR EXPERIENCE. RATHER, HE MUST NOW UNDERSTAND ALL OF LIFE THROUGH THE REDEMPTIVE PURPOSES OF GOD, PURPOSES WHICH ARE ABOUT RESTORING CREATION; THAT IS, IN LIGHT OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE THROUGH THE CROSS, PAUL MUST NOW UNDERSTAND AND LIVE IN THE WORLD AS IF GOD'S REDEMPTIVE WORK WAS ALREADY COMPLETE! THIS EXPLAINS WHY PAUL BEHAVES AS HE DOES, EVEN WHEN HIS CIRCUMSTANCES SEEM TO RUN CONTRARY TO HIS MESSAGE AND CALLING. HE IS LIVING OUT HIS CREATED PURPOSE, DOING THE WORK OF GOD, AS IF GOD'S REDEMPTIVE WORK WERE ALREADY COMPLETED. HE IS LIVING FOR WHAT HE WAS MADE TO DO IN A WORLD HE WAS MADE TO LIVE.

PAUL NOTES THAT THIS WORK WHICH HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO LIVE FOR WHAT HE WAS MADE TO DO AS IF HE WAS LIVING IN THE WORLD HE WAS MADE TO LIVE ONLY BY GOD. GOD HAS DONE THIS WORK THROUGH THE RECONCILING WORK OF JESUS ON THE CROSS. AND, IT IS IN THIS RECONCILING WORK OF GOD THAT PAUL HAS FOUND HIS PURPOSE OF DOING THE WORK OF GOD. HE TOO IS CALLED INTO A MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. GOD HAS DEALT WITH SIN THROUGH THE PERSON OF CHRIST SO THAT PEOPLE MIGHT BE RECONCILED TO HIM, A RECONCILIATION WHICH MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO STEP INTO ONE'S CREATED PURPOSE WHICH EXPLAINS WHAT PAUL IS DOING. HE HAS STEPPED INTO A MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION WHICH INVOLVES NOT THE ACT OF RECONCILING PEOPLE AND GOD BUT THAT OF DECLARING THAT SUCH RECONCILIATION HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY GOD IN CHRIST. THIS PROCLAMATION OF RECONCILIATION IS NOT SIMPLY A VERBAL PROCLAMATION BUT ONE WHICH PAUL EMBODIES, DIVING INTO THE CHAOS AND TURMOIL OF LIFE AS GOD'S PHYSICAL REPRESENTATIVE (AMBASSADOR). IT IS IN PAUL'S WORK AND PRESENCE THAT GOD ISSUES HIS APPEAL FOR RECONCILIATION. THIS IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE WORK OF GOD UPON THE CROSS HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR PAUL AND ALL WHO ARE RECONCILED WITH GOD TO LIVE THE RIGHTEOUS LIFE OF GOD.

WITH THIS IN MIND, PAUL THEN URGES THE CORINTHIANS TO RESPOND TO GOD AS HE HAS RESPONDED. THE VERY POINT OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE IS TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR PEOPLE TO TAKE UP THEIR CREATED PURPOSE AS THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM

IS RESTORED. THIS WILL MEAN THAT THE CORINTHIANS MAY EXPERIENCE CIRCUMSTANCES LIKE THAT OF PAUL. LIFE MAY NOT BE EASY. HOWEVER, THIS IS THE CALLING UPON THEIR LIFE AND CONGREGATION, AND THE PRESENT IS THE TIME THEY MUST RESPOND.

REAL LIFE WITH BLAKE:

ATONEMENT. I AM MADE RIGHT IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, BUT FOR WHAT? IF GOD AND I ARE GOOD, THEN HOW DOES THAT WORK OUT IN MY LIFE TODAY? FOR SO MANY YEARS, I DIDN'T HAVE AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IF THERE WAS AN ANSWER. CERTAINLY NO ONE COULD GIVE ME ONE, OR ONE THAT WAS SATISFACTORY. I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS HAD DONE, I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE GOOD AND NICE BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT JESUS' PEOPLE WERE, GOOD AND NICE. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST BEING GOOD OR NICE. IT JUST SEEMS THAT JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS IS A HIGH PRICE TO PAY SO I CAN BE GOOD AND NICE. SURELY, THERE HAS TO BE MORE, AND THERE IS.

ON MY JOURNEY OF FAITH, I AM COMING TO REALIZE THAT JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS WAS A HIGH PRICE TO PAY BECAUSE IT MADE POSSIBLE SOMETHING INCREDIBLY PRECIOUS: REAL LIFE, A LIFE WITH PURPOSE. IN THE BEGINNING, YOU AND I WERE MADE TO LIVE, REALLY LIVE. WE WERE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD TO DO THE WORK OF GOD AS WE LIVED WITH GOD. THIS WAS OUR PURPOSE. IN A MOMENT, ALL OF THAT WAS LOST, THE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD SEVERED AS WAS THE LIFE OF DOING GOD'S WORK. WE LOST OUR PURPOSE, BUT THEN IT WAS RESTORED. IN JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS, A WAY WAS MADE BACK TO GOD AND WITH IT A WAY BACK TO THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH WE WERE CREATED. WE CAN ONCE MORE LIVE WITH AND FOR THE ONE WHO MADE US; THAT IS, IT IS POSSIBLE ONCE MORE TO LIVE WITH GOD DOING THE WORK OF GOD. IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE PURPOSE.

SOUNDS WONDERFUL, AND IT IS, BUT IT CHANGES EVERYTHING. FOR STARTERS, IT CHANGES HOW I VIEW AND INTERACT WITH THE WORLD. THE RULES HAVE CHANGED FOR ME. I CAN NO LONGER TAKE THINGS AS THEY ARE AND RESPOND IN KIND. I MUST NOW SEE THINGS NOT AS THEY ARE BUT AS THEY ARE MEANT TO BE AND MUST RESPOND IN A WAY WHICH MOVES SITUATIONS AND MY CONTEXT TO WHAT SHOULD BE RATHER THAN WHAT IS. I DO THIS NOT WITH MY WORDS BUT WITH MY PERSON, DIVING HEADLONG INTO THE CHAOS OF WHAT IS, DEMONSTRATING WITH MY ACTIONS, MY ATTITUDES, AND MY WORDS THAT A NEW WAY OF LIFE IS POSSIBLE, A WAY WHICH IS WITH GOD DOING THE WORK OF GOD WE WERE CREATED TO DO FROM THE BEGINNING, A LIFE OF PURPOSE.

REAL LIFE WITH YOU:

WHAT ARE WE HERE TO DO? WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE? WE SPEND MUCH OF OUR LIVES TRYING TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, MANY OF US NEVER REALLY FINDING A SATISFACTORY ANSWER. THIS IS BECAUSE OUR ANSWERS ARE OFTEN FAR OFF THE MARK, DEALING WITH OUR OWN ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS, MAKING A NAME FOR OURSELVES IN SOME WAY. HOWEVER, OUR PURPOSE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MAKING A NAME FOR OURSELVES. FROM THE BEGINNING OUR PURPOSE WAS ROOTED IN MAKING A NAME FOR GOD, LIVING WITH HIM DOING HIS WORK AS THOSE CREATED IN HIS IMAGE. THIS PURPOSE WAS LOST AS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WAS RUPTURED BY SIN, BUT ATONEMENT MAKES IT POSSIBLE ONCE MORE. THE REAL-LIFE APPLICATION OF ATONEMENT IS THAT WE NO LONGER HAVE TO LIVE FOR OURSELVES, TRYING TO FIND OUR PURPOSE IN MAKING A NAME FOR OURSELVES. WE CAN ONCE MORE LIVE WITH GOD DOING HIS WORK AS THOSE CREATED IN HIS IMAGE. HOWEVER, IF WE STEP INTO THIS REAL LIFE APPLICATION OF ATONEMENT, IT WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING FOR US. FIRST, IT WILL CHANGE HOW WE VIEW THE WORLD. NO LONGER WILL WE BE ABLE TO SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS. INSTEAD, WE WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS MEANT TO BE THROUGH GOD'S EYES OF REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION. SEEING THE WORLD AS IT IS TO BE, RATHER THAN IT IS WILL LEAD US TO JOIN OUR LIVES WITH GOD'S, DOING HIS WORK OF MOVING THIS WORLD TO WHAT IT IS MEANT TO BE, AND THIS WILL REQUIRE MUCH OF US. IT WILL REQUIRE MORE THAN OUR WORDS. IT WILL REQUIRE OUR BODIES. WE WILL PLUNGE HEADLONG INTO THE CHAOS AND TURMOIL OF WHAT IS, OUR BODIES BECOMING LIVING INVITATIONS, BEACONS OF HOPE TO A BROKEN WORLD THAT LIFE CAN BE DIFFERENT, THAT IT CAN BE LIVED WITH PURPOSE ONCE MORE.

THIS WEEK, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR LIFE BY ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTION: FOR WHAT AM I LIVING? AS YOU GO THROUGH YOUR DAY AT SCHOOL OR AT WORK, AS YOU INTERACT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AS YOU SEEK ENTERTAINMENT AND MORE, ASK WHAT THE POINT OF IT ALL IS. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH WITH HOW YOU ARE LIVING YOUR LIFE? AS YOU PONDER THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION, ASK YOURSELF WHAT LIFE MIGHT LOOK LIKE IF YOU WERE MADE FOR MORE, SOMETHING GREATER? IF THIS MORE WERE AVAILABLE, WOULD YOU WILLINGLY STEP INTO IT? TALK WITH GOD ABOUT YOUR RESPONSES.



SENIOR
PASTOR
BLAKE
SHIPP

 twitter.com/blake_shipp

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