



GOING DEEPER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

NOVEMBER 4, 2018

Discussion Guide

LIVING LIKE JESUS

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

- IF YOU COULD RULE THE WORLD FOR A DAY, WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOU WOULD DO?

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.)

- READ PHILIPPIANS 2.1-18 SLOWLY. PAUSE. READ THE TEXT AGAIN, SEEKING TO BE PRESENT AND ATTENTIVE TO WHAT THE SPIRIT MIGHT BE WISHING TO SAY TO YOU IN AND THROUGH THESE WORDS.
- WHAT GUIDANCE, IF ANY, DOES PAUL PROVIDE FOR NAVIGATING THE WORLD AS PEOPLE OF FAITH?
- ACCORDING TO PAUL, IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DOES JESUS EXEMPLIFY WHAT IT IS TO LIVE IN THIS MANNER?
- IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE THE WAY THE MODERN CHURCH

IS NAVIGATING THE WORLD WITH THE WAY PAUL DESCRIBED AND JESUS LIVED, HOW MIGHT THEY BE SIMILAR? DISSIMILAR? COULD YOU ELABORATE?

- WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE AS PAUL DESCRIBES TODAY?
- WHAT KIND OF COMMITMENTS OR STEPS MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO STEP INTO THIS LIFE?
- WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MIGHT STAND IN THE WAY OF TAKING THESE STEPS? HOW MIGHT THESE BE ADDRESSED IN COMMUNITY?
- CONSIDER CLOSING BY PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER, FOR GRACE TO NAVIGATE THIS WORLD AS CHRIST NAVIGATED THIS WORLD.

CONTEXT, BACKGROUND, AND COMMENTARY

SANCTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION IS THE PROCESS OF SETTING APART OR MAKING A PERSON, ANIMAL, OR OBJECT HOLY. IN ANCIENT RELIGIONS, SANCTIFYING THESE INVOLVED GIVING THEM FOR SPECIAL SERVICE OR USE OF A GOD. THESE USES COULD INCLUDE THINGS LIKE SERVICE IN A TEMPLE OR EVEN AS AN OBJECT TO BE SACRIFICED. THE POINT OF SANCTIFICATION WAS TO MOVE THAT WHICH WAS BEING SANCTIFIED INTO THE REALM OF POSSESSION AND USE OF THE GOD.

IN THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT, SANCTIFICATION CARRIES WITH IT THIS ANCIENT IDEA OF SETTING ASIDE, THE MOVING OF THAT WHICH IS SANCTIFIED INTO THE REALM OF POSSESSION AND USE OF GOD. HOWEVER, WITH RESPECT TO PERSONS (AND OBJECTS!), THIS SETTING ASIDE ENCOMPASSES A FORM OF TRANSFORMATION. WITH PERSONS, THIS TRANSFORMATION IS THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH THE PERSON BECOMES LIKE GOD (NOT GOD),

PARTICULARLY ON THE MORAL PLANE.

THE BIBLICAL GUIDELINES FOR SANCTIFYING OBJECTS AND ANIMALS FOR GOD ARE FOUND IN LEVITICUS 17-26. WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, ONE FINDS A CLEAR OUTLINE OF WHAT IT MEANS FOR A PERSON TO BE SANCTIFIED TO GOD. IT IS TO BE SET APART FOR GOD IN ORDER TO BECOME LIKE GOD (LEVITICUS 19.2; 20.26; SEE ALSO 1 PETER 1.15-16). THE IMPLICATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT IS THAT THE SCOPE OF THIS SANCTIFYING PROCESS IS COMPLETE WHEN A PERSON KEEPS THE LAW; THAT IS, HOLINESS INVOLVES MORAL UPRIGHTNESS AS DEFINED BY THE TORAH. LITTLE THOUGHT OR EXPLANATION IS GIVEN AS TO HOW ONE IS TO GO ABOUT KEEPING THE LAW. RATHER, HOLINESS OR ONE'S SANCTIFIED STATUS IS SEEN IN STARK TERMS OF CONTRAST. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT THAT PEOPLE ARE NOT CAPABLE, AT LEAST ON THEIR OWN, OF SETTING THEMSELVES ASIDE FOR GOD TO BECOME LIKE HIM.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE OLD TESTAMENT CALL TO SET ONESELF ASIDE FOR GOD FOR THE PURPOSE OF BECOMING LIKE HIM, PARTICULARLY IN THE MORAL PLANE, IS ECHOED (1 PETER 1.15-16; 2 CORINTHIANS 7.1). HOWEVER, IT IS GOD, NOT PEOPLE, WHO ACCOMPLISHES THE SANCTIFYING WORK OF PEOPLE (1 CORINTHIANS 6.11). IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, THIS GOD-INFUSED WORK OF SANCTIFICATION IS A PROCESS WHICH INVOLVES EVERY MEMBER OF THE TRINITY (PHILIPPIANS 1.6; 1 CORINTHIANS 6.11; ROMANS 15.16; EPHESIANS 4.30; 1 THESSALONIANS 4.7-8). WHILE, IT MIGHT BE EASY TO LIMIT THE SANCTIFYING WORK OF GOD TO PEOPLE, AS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, OBJECTS MIGHT ALSO BE SANCTIFIED. THEREFORE, IT SHOULD NOT SURPRISE US TO DISCOVER THAT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE SANCTIFYING WORK OF THE TRIUNE GOD ENCOMPASSES THE ENTIRETY OF CREATION (1 TIMOTHY 4.4-5). IN THIS SANCTIFYING PROCESS, GOD DOES THE REAL WORK OF SETTING ASIDE AND THE TRANSFORMING OF ONE'S CHARACTER. HOWEVER, PEOPLE DO HAVE A ROLE, ONE WHICH INVOLVES OPENING ONESELF TO THE WORK OF GOD TO BE EXPERIENCED IN THE EVERYDAY HAPPENINGS OF LIFE (HEBREWS 12.14; PHILIPPIANS 2.12-16).

THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF GOD'S REDEMPTIVE WORK, CONNECTED WITH HIS WORK OF JUSTIFICATION AND GLORIFICATION (ROMANS 8.30; 1 CORINTHIANS 6.11). HOWEVER, ONE SHOULD NOT SEE THE THREE AS SEPARATE WORKS OF GOD BUT AS MOVEMENTS OF ONE LARGER WORK. SOME THEOLOGIAN, PARTICULARLY THOSE INFLUENCED BY THE WORKS OF LUTHER AND CALVIN, SPEAK OF SANCTIFICATION AND GLORIFICATION AS THE TRAJECTORY OF JUSTIFICATION OR THE ASPECTS OF JUSTIFICATION WHICH DEAL WITH MORAL FAILURE. THESE THEOLOGIAN RIGHTLY SEEK TO UNIFY THE REDEMPTIVE

WORK OF GOD AS A SINGLE MOVEMENT WHICH HAPPENS OVER TIME, BUT ONE NEED NOT SUM THIS REDEMPTIVE WORK UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF JUSTIFICATION. DOING SO HAS MORE TO DO WITH THE JURIDICAL LENS THROUGH WHICH LUTHER AND CALVIN READ SCRIPTURE RATHER THAN WHAT SCRIPTURE ACTUALLY SAYS. IT IS BEST TO SPEAK OF A SINGLE REDEMPTIVE/RESTORATIVE WORK OF GOD WHICH BEGINS WITH JUSTIFICATION, THE BRINGING OF ONE INTO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BY DEALING WITH SIN AND DEATH. ONE MIGHT VIEW THIS AS THE INITIAL SETTING ASIDE OF A PERSON FOR GOD. ONCE SET ASIDE, GOD BEGINS THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING THE PERSON IN KEEPING WITH HIS UPRIGHT MORAL CHARACTER. DURING THIS SEASON, A PERSON IS NOT FREE FROM SIN BUT MOVING TO MORAL COMPLETENESS (1 JOHN 1.7-22; MATTHEW 5.48). THIS WORK IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL A PERSON STANDS FULLY IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST AND IS TRANSFORMED FULLY INTO HIS LIKENESS, BEARING HIS GLORY (1 JOHN 3.2-3). THIS FINISHING OF GOD'S REDEMPTIVE WORK IS ONE'S GLORIFICATION.

THE TEXT

PHILIPPIANS 2.1-16: *HOW NOW SHALL WE LIVE?*

LEARNING TO NAVIGATE THE WORLD AS PEOPLE OF FAITH HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CHALLENGE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE. WHILE THE CALLING UPON OUR LIVES IS SIMPLE, TO CONDUCT OURSELVES IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL (PHILIPPIANS 1.27), THE REALITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE INVOLVE PRESSURES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH WHICH THREATEN TO DERAIL THIS LIFE (PHILIPPIANS 1.27-30; 4.2). THESE PRESSURES LEAD THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO STRUGGLE AND AT TIMES SUFFER FOR CHRIST AS THEY LIVE FOR HIM. IT IS THIS EXPERIENCE OF SUFFERING ITSELF WHICH PROVES TO BE THE CATALYST WHICH DERAILS A LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL. IT IS NATURAL FOR PEOPLE TO SEEK THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE, WHICH IS OFTEN THE PATH CULTURE HAS SET FORTH. IN THESE SITUATIONS, IT IS HELPFUL FOR THE PEOPLE TO POSSESS GUIDELINES OR AN ETHIC WHICH HELPS THEM TO NAVIGATE A WORTHY LIFE RATHER THAN PURSUING THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE, FOR POSSESSING THIS ETHIC POINTS TO AN ALTERNATIVE WAY. AS A WISE PASTOR, PAUL KNEW THIS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE. THEREFORE, HE PROVIDED THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH WITH A GOSPEL-ORIENTED ETHIC TO HELP THEM NAVIGATE THEIR WORLD IN A GOSPEL-ORIENTED MANNER EVEN AS THEY FACED BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES TO LIVE OTHERWISE.

THIS ETHIC IS NOT PAUL'S CREATION, BUT AN ELABORATION ON F JESUS' COMMAND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS ONESELF. THIS COMMAND OF JESUS WAS ALWAYS FUNCTIONING IN PAUL'S MIND AS THE PRIMARY FRAMEWORK FOR HOW BELIEVERS WERE TO NAVIGATE RELATIONSHIPS ON THE HORIZONTAL PLANE (GALATIANS 5.14-

15). ACCORDING TO PAUL, TO LOVE ONE'S FELLOW PERSON AS ONESELF REQUIRED A NON-EGOCENTRIC ORIENTATION; THAT IS, THE "YOU" RATHER THAN THE "I" HAD TO BECOME THE CENTRAL FOCUS OF ALL RELATIONSHIPS. THIS MEANT NOT PURSUING SELFISH AMBITION OR CONCEIT WHICH IS NOT A PROHIBITION OF ACHIEVEMENT BUT OF DOMINATION. RATHER, LOVING THE OTHER INVOLVED VALUING THE OTHER AND SEEKING HIS WELL-BEING EVEN AT PERSONAL COST.

WHILE THIS ETHIC OF OTHER-CENTERED LOVE DOES PROVE HELPFUL FOR ONE SEEKING TO NAVIGATE THE WORLD IN A GOSPEL-ORIENTED WAY, IT CAN ALSO BE ABUSED AND USED ABUSIVELY APART FROM A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE. IT IS NOT HARD TO IMAGINE HOW THIS FRAMEWORK COULD BE TURNED ON OTHERS TO DEMAND SUBMISSION AND ON ONESELF TO DENY ONE'S OWN WORTH AND VALUE. THEREFORE, PAUL PROVIDES A GUIDING EXAMPLE IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST. IT IS INSTRUCTIVE THAT PAUL CHOOSES CHRIST AND NOT ANOTHER AS THE EXAMPLE OF HOW TO LIVE THIS ETHIC OF LOVE BECAUSE IT EMPHASIZES PAUL'S DEEPLY HELD BELIEF THAT IN JESUS WE SEE WHAT IT IS TO BE HUMAN (COLOSSIANS 1.15).

IN JESUS, WE SEE WHAT IT IS TO LIVE IN A HEALTHY, OTHER-CENTERED MANNER. THEREFORE, IT IS THE LIFE AND MINDSET OF JESUS WHICH THE PHILIPPIANS WERE TO PURSUE. TO LIVE IN AN OTHER-CENTERED MANNER DID NOT DENY THE POSSESSION OF POWER. RATHER IT INVOLVED THE USE OF POWER FOR THE ADVANTAGE OF OTHERS. IN JESUS' EXPERIENCE, THIS INVOLVED NOT USING HIS DIVINE POWER TO ELEVATE HIMSELF BUT TO LOWER HIMSELF, NOT AS A SERVANT LEADER BUT AS A SERVANT. AS CAN BE SEEN IN JESUS, POWER CAN BE USED TO RESTRAIN THE USE OF POWER. FURTHER, JESUS USED THIS POWER TO SEEK THE WILL OF THE FATHER RATHER THAN HIS OWN WILL, WHICH INVOLVED THE GIVING OF HIS LIFE FOR THE LIFE OF OTHERS.

THIS KIND OF LIVING LED TO JESUS' EXALTATION. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE LANGUAGE USED IS CORONATION LANGUAGE WHICH POINTS TO JESUS' ROLE AS KING. THEREFORE, GOD'S EXALTATION OF JESUS INDICATES HIS PLEASURE WITH JESUS' OTHER-CENTERED LIFE AS KING, THE USE OF POWER TO BRING ABOUT THE FLOURISHING OF OTHERS.

PAUL POSITS THAT THIS LIFE SEEN IN CHRIST IS THE LIFE WHICH IS GOSPEL WORTHY, BUT LIVING SUCH A LIFE REQUIRES THE COMPLETION OF THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF GOD IN THE LIVES OF THE PHILIPPIN BELIEVERS (PHILIPPIANS 1.6). PAUL NOTES THAT THE BELIEVERS DO HAVE A ROLE IN THIS WORK, BUT THEY SHOULD BE AWARE THAT GOD IS DOING THE HEAVY LIFTING LEADING THEM TO THIS LIFE. THE REFERENCE TO FEAR AND TREMBLING IS AN OLD TESTAMENT ECHO OF THE PROPER RESPONSE TO THE RECOGNITION OF GOD'S HOLY PRESENCE (EXODUS 15.16;

DEUTERONOMY 2.25; 11.25; ISAIAH 19.16). THE ROLE OF THE BELIEVERS INVOLVES NOT IN THE DOING OF THE DEEP WORK OF TRANSFORMING THE LIVES THEY ARE LIVING INTO A LIFE WHICH IS LIKE THAT OF CHRIST, BUT A WILLINGNESS TO OPEN THEMSELVES IN THE EVERYDAY HAPPENINGS OF LIFE WITHOUT RESISTING WHAT GOD LONGS TO DO IN THEM. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE REFERENCE TO GRUMBLING AND ARGUING IS MOST LIKELY A WARNING NOT TO BE LIKE ISRAEL ON THE EXODUS JOURNEY FROM EGYPT, BUT TO ALLOW THE SEEMINGLY MONOTONY OF THE EVERYDAY (THINK MANNA FOR 40 YEARS!) TO BE USED BY GOD TO TRANSFORM THEM (NUMBERS 14.2; 17.5-25; EXODUS 16.1-17.7). WHEN THE BELIEVERS WERE WILLING TO ALLOW GOD TO WORK IN AND THROUGH THEIR EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES, THEY WOULD BECOME FULLY CHILDREN OF GOD.

REAL LIFE WITH BLAKE:

HOW DO I NAVIGATE THIS WORLD AS A PERSON OF FAITH? WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE AS A PRIEST AND KING WHO PURSUES THE FLOURISHING OF OTHERS? THE ANSWER IS SURPRISINGLY SIMPLE. IT LOOKS LIKE LOVING OTHERS AS I LOVE MYSELF. IT LOOKS LIKE SEEKING TO POINT PEOPLE TO GOD, SEEKING TO SHEPHERD AND CARE FOR THEIR LIVES IN A WAY WHICH VALUES THEM AND SEEKS THEIR GOOD. SIMPLE RIGHT? IT IS, AND YET IT IS SO HARD FOR ME TO LIVE OUT. YOU SEE, WHEN YOU DIG INTO WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO LIVE OUT THIS LIFE OF LOVE IN PRACTICAL TERMS, IT INVOLVES TWO VERY DIFFICULT STEPS. FIRST, IT INVOLVES ME JETTISONING MY "ME-FIRST" ATTITUDE. SECOND, IT REQUIRES ME TO GIVE SACRIFICIALLY AS I PUT "YOU FIRST" SO YOU MIGHT FLOURISH. I CAN WRAP MY BRAIN (AND SOMETIMES MY LIFE) AROUND THE IDEA THAT I AM NOT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE. IT IS DIFFICULT, BUT GOD IS DOING THIS WORK IN ME. WHAT IS MOST DIFFICULT IS THE GIVING MYSELF FOR OTHERS BIT. THE PROBLEM ISN'T I DON'T LIKE IT. THE PROBLEM IS I DESTROY MYSELF IN THE PROCESS. SOMETIMES THIS INVOLVES PHYSICALLY PUSHING BEYOND MY LIMITS FOR OTHERS TO THE POINT OF BURNOUT. . .BECAUSE JESUS WANTS IT, OR SO I REASON. OTHER TIMES IT LOOKS LIKE REJECTING MY OWN WORTH AND VALUE. . .BECAUSE I DON'T MATTER. . .TO YOU, ME OR JESUS. OTHER TIMES IT LOOKS LIKE ALLOWING PEOPLE TO ABUSE ME AND ABUSE ME AND ABUSE ME WITHOUT ME EVER STEPPING OUT OF THE WAY OF THE ABUSE. I DON'T LEARN VERY FAST, AND JESUS WANTS ME TO PUT YOU FIRST WHICH MEANS YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ABUSE ME. OR, SO I THINK.

MAYBE YOU DON'T WRESTLE WITH ANY OF THESE THINGS. I DO, AND THIS PART OF THE GUIDE IS ABOUT MY REAL LIFE. I CAN STAND BACK AND SEE HOW MUCH OF THIS COMES FROM DEEP WOUNDING IN MY FAMILY OF ORIGIN AND IN YEARS OF MINISTRY. HOWEVER, SEEING IT

IS LIKE WATCHING THE TRAIN COME AT YOU IN SLOW MOTION EVEN AS IT STILL MOWS YOU DOWN. THE PROBLEM FOR ME IS I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO LIVE AN OTHER-CENTERED LIFE IN A HEALTHY WAY. I THINK PAUL KNEW THIS WAS TRUE FOR MOST OF US. IT IS ONE THING TO KNOW THAT NAVIGATING THIS WORLD REQUIRES A LOVE-CENTERED ETHIC IF WE ARE TO BE GOSPEL/ GOOD NEWS PEOPLE. HOWEVER, IMPLEMENTING SUCH AN ETHIC IN A HEALTHY WAY PROVES DIFFICULT FOR MANY OF US. OFTEN, WE END UP USING THIS ETHIC AS A MEANS TO A SELF-CENTERED WAY OF LIFE. WE NEED AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN REAL LIFE IF WE ARE GOING TO LIVE IT. ENTER JESUS. JESUS IS THE IMAGE OF WHAT IT IS TO BE FULLY HUMAN. PAUL KNEW THIS. SO, WHEN WE NEED AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO LIVE IN ANY WAY, HE ALWAYS POINTS TO JESUS. JESUS PERFECTLY LIVED OUT THIS LOVE-CENTERED ETHIC IN SUCH A WAY THAT HIS FATHER BASICALLY SAID, "THAT IS WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO BE A GOOD KING! LET'S RECOGNIZE JESUS FOR WHO HE IS, THE GOOD KING OF KINGS." SO, JESUS IS MY EXAMPLE. GREAT! SOUNDS SO SIMPLE, AND IT IS. I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO IT. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE JESUS?

HERE IS WHERE THE BEST NEWS COMES. FOR YEARS, I THOUGHT I HAD TO BE LIKE JESUS. I HAD TO SEE HOW HE LIVED AND THEN DO IT. IT DOESN'T WORK. TRUST ME. IT ISN'T SUPPOSED TO WORK. THE GOOD NEWS IS GOD DOES IT THROUGH US. GOD LEADS US TO THE LIFE OF JESUS. HE DOES THE HEAVY WORK, BUT THIS DOESN'T MEAN WE DON'T HAVE A PART. OUR PART IS TO ALLOW HIM TO DO THE HEAVY WORK BY OPENING UP OUR EVERYDAY LIVES BECAUSE GOD WANTS TO USE EVERYDAY LIFE TO MAKE US MORE LIKE JESUS. I KNOW. IT DOESN'T SOUND COMPLICATED ENOUGH. YOU MEAN, GOD CAN AND DESIRES TO USE THINGS LIKE MY MORNING COMMUTE TO MAKE ME MORE LIKE JESUS? CAN'T WE GET MORE COMPLICATED? MORE SPIRITUAL? HOW ABOUT SOME SPIRITUAL STANDING ON OUR HEAD OR SOMETHING? YET, THIS IS HOW GOD DESIRE TO WORK IN AND THROUGH US. THE MORE I REALIZE THIS, THE MORE I RELAX, AND THE MORE I AM STARTING TO LOOK LIKE JESUS. I AM LEARNING WHAT IT MEANS TO OPEN MYSELF TO GOD IN MY EVERY DAY, AND AM SURPRISED AT THE MANY WAYS GOD IS PRESENT AND WORKING. I STILL GET DISCOURAGED AND FRUSTRATED. THERE ARE MANY DAYS I DON'T LOOK OR ACT LIKE JESUS, BUT ONE DAY I WILL. ONE DAY, GOD WILL FINISH HIS WORK IN ME. AND THAT, IS ENOUGH.

REAL LIFE WITH YOU:

HOW DO WE NAVIGATE THE WORLD AS PEOPLE OF FAITH? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO NAVIGATE LIFE AS PRIESTS AND KINGS? SOMETIMES WE TRY TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS WITH A SET OF RULES. THE PROBLEM WITH THIS APPROACH IS WE QUICKLY DEVELOP AN UNWIELDY LIST OF PROSCRIBED ACTIVITIES FOR VARIOUS SITUATIONS. WHERE A RULES APPROACH FAILS, A PRINCIPLE-BASED

APPROACH CAN SUCCEED. IF WE KNOW THE BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO LIVE AS PEOPLE OF FAITH, WE CAN NAVIGATE ANY SITUATION IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES, EVEN IF IT IS NEW. SO, WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE? THE PRINCIPLE IS SIMPLE. WE ARE TO LOVE PEOPLE AS WE LOVE OURSELVES. IN REAL WORLD TERMS THIS REQUIRES RECOGNIZING WE ARE NOT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE AND SEEKING TO PURSUE THE FLOURISHING OF OTHERS EVEN IF IT COSTS US. THE EXAMPLE OF THIS IN REAL LIFE IS JESUS. HERE COMES THE RUB. NONE OF US CAN LIVE LIKE JESUS, BUT WE MUST IF WE ARE TO NAVIGATE THIS WORLD AS PEOPLE OF FAITH BECAUSE HE SHOWS US WHAT IT IS TO BE FULLY HUMAN. SO, HOW DO WE BECOME LIKE JESUS? MANY OF US THINK WE MUST SIMPLY DO OUR BEST. THE TRUTH IS OUR BEST ISN'T EVEN CLOSE TO ENOUGH, BUT IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE. GOD WANTS TO DO THE HEAVY LIFTING IN THIS. HE WANTS TO LEAD US TO THE LIFE OF CHRIST, THE LIFE OF BEING HIS CHILD IN THIS DARK WORLD. SIMPLY PUT, GOD WANTS TO WORK IN AND THROUGH US SO WE LIVE LIKE CHRIST. HOWEVER, THIS DOESN'T MEAN WE SIMPLY SIT AROUND AND WAIT FOR GOD TO DO THIS WORK IN US. WE HAVE A PART. OUR PART IS MAKING SPACE FOR GOD TO DO THIS WORK. SO, HOW DO WE DO THIS? WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE? WHAT IS THE EXERCISE? WHAT IS THE BIBLE PASSAGE WE MUST READ? THESE ARE ALL FINE AND GOOD, BUT WHAT GOD WANTS IS PERMISSION TO USE OUR LIVES. GOD WANTS TO USE OUR CHILDREN, OUR PARENTS, OUR JOBS, OUR COMMUTES, OUR NEIGHBORS, OUR VICTORIES, OUR DEFEATS, OUR ILLNESSES, AND MORE TO MAKE US LIKE CHRIST. HE WANTS TO TRANSFORM US IN AND THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF THE EVERYDAY. HOWEVER, HE WON'T DO IT IF WE DON'T GIVE HIM PERMISSION, IF WE DON'T MAKE SPACE FOR HIM TO DO THIS. SO, WILL WE GIVE HIM THIS PERMISSION? THIS WEEK, WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE TO GIVE GOD THIS PERMISSION? WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE TO SIMPLY SAY, "YES?" PERHAPS WE UNDERSTAND HOW GOD MIGHT USE ANY SITUATION. PERHAPS WE HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST IDEA. WHETHER WE UNDERSTAND OR NOT, WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE TO SAY, "YES?" COULD IT LOOK LIKE PAUSING THROUGHOUT THE DAY TO SAY, "YOU HAVE SPACE IN MY LIFE TO WORK?" WHAT ABOUT STARTING AND ENDING THE DAY IN THIS WAY, OR EVEN INTENTIONALLY ASKING THAT GOD USE PART OF YOUR LIFE YOU THINK MIGHT BE SUPERFLUOUS TO THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY? CONSIDER TALKING ABOUT WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE WITH YOUR GROUP OR A SOUL FRIEND.



SENIOR
PASTOR
BLAKE
SHIPP

 twitter.com/blake_shipp

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