



GOING DEEPER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

APRIL 7, 2019

Discussion Guide

PEACEMAKING NOT PEACEKEEPING

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 YOUR MIND, IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PEACEMAKING AND PEACEKEEPING? 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 GUIDE, DISCUSS THE YEAR OF JUBILEE AND ITS INTENDED OUTCOMES.
- READ LUKE 4.14-21. PAUSE. READ THE TEXT ONCE MORE, SEEKING TO IMAGINE THE SCENE AND YOURSELF AS PRESENT.
- IN WHAT WAYS DOES JESUS PROCLAIM PEACE? WHAT IS

THE NATURE OF THIS PEACE?

- AS A MODEL FOR THE PROCLAMATION OF THE CHURCH, IN WHAT WAYS MIGHT THIS SERMON SHAPE THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH? IS THIS THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH?
- READ LUKE 2.22-30 ALOUD.
- WHEN JESUS' MESSAGE OF PEACE DIDN'T MATCH THE PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE (NOT AN ISSUE FOR WHICH WE CAN FAULT JESUS, MARK 6.1-6), THINGS FELL APART. IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DOES THIS SCENE REPLAY ITSELF TODAY?
- WHILE THE PEOPLE OF NAZARETH REJECTED THE EXPERIENCE OF PEACE, NOT ALL DID. REGARDLESS OF THE RESPONSE, JESUS DREW NEAR TO OFFER THE EXPERIENCE OF PEACE. WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO DRAW NEAR TODAY?
- WITH WHAT, IF ANYTHING, DO WE STRUGGLE AS WE CONSIDER DRAWING NEAR TO OFFER A PEACE WHICH MATCHES OUR MESSAGE OF PEACE?
- CONSIDER THE LIFE OF JESUS. IN WHAT WAYS, DID HE MODEL A RESPONSE TO THESE STRUGGLES? (IF YOU FIND YOURSELF STUCK, CONSIDER READING LUKE 5.12-16 AS A STARTING POINT.)
- WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE THIS ASPECT OF JESUS' LIFE TODAY?
- CONSIDER CLOSING IN PRAYER, ASKING FOR GRACE TO FOLLOW JESUS.

CONTEXT, BACKGROUND, AND COMMENTARY

YEAR OF JUBILEE

THROUGHOUT THE LAW OF MOSES, GOD DISPLAYS A KEEN AWARENESS OF AND COMPASSION FOR THE PLIGHT OF THE OPPRESSED AND DOWNTRODDEN, CHOOSING TO EXTEND CARE FOR THOSE IN THESE SITUATIONS THROUGH HIS PEOPLE. GOD CALLED THE ISRAELITES TO EXTEND SPECIAL CARE AND ATTENTION TO THE POOR, OPPRESSED, AND OUTCAST IN THEIR LAND (LEVITICUS 25.35; DEUTERONOMY 15.7-8). HOWEVER, SOMETIMES THE EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY AND OPPRESSION WAS SO GREAT ADDITIONAL MEASURES WERE NEEDED TO PREVENT THOSE IN THESE SITUATIONS FROM PERISHING. ONE OF THESE ADDITIONAL MEASURES OF EXTENDING CARE WAS THE YEAR OF JUBILEE.

THE JEWISH WORLD FOCUSED ON A CALENDAR WHICH WAS BASED ON THE NUMBER SEVEN. THE JEWISH WEEK CONSISTED OF SIX DAYS OF WORK AND ONE DAY OF REST. LIKewise, THE PASSING OF YEARS WAS TO BE COUNTED AND OBSERVED IN A SIMILAR MANNER. FOR SIX YEARS, THE PEOPLE OF GOD WERE TO SOW THEIR FIELDS, BUT DURING THE SEVENTH YEAR, THE FIELDS WERE TO REST (LEVITICUS 25.1-7). THESE YEARLY CYCLES OF SEVEN YEARS WERE THEN TO BE MARKED UNTIL ONE HAD MOVED THROUGH SEVEN SUCH CYCLES. AFTER THESE SEVEN CYCLES OR FORTY-NINE YEARS, GOD INSTRUCTED THE PEOPLE TO PROCLAIM THE 50TH YEAR AS THE YEAR OF JUBILEE (LEVITICUS 25.8-10). IN MANY WAYS, THIS JUBILEE YEAR WAS SIMILAR TO THE SABBATH YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIELDS WERE TO LIE FALLOW (LEVITICUS 25.11). HOWEVER, THIS JUBILEE YEAR WENT BEYOND THE SABBATH YEAR BY CALLING ON THE ISRAELITES TO RELEASE ALL JEWISH DEBT-SLAVES, RETURN ALL PROPERTY PURCHASED FROM A FELLOW JEW, AND FORGIVE ALL DEBTS (LEVITICUS 25.13-55; DEUTERONOMY 15.1). WITH THE YEAR OF JUBILEE, GOD EFFECTIVELY SOUGHT TO RESET JEWISH SOCIETY, RETURNING IT AND THE PEOPLE TO A STATE NOT UNLIKE THAT WHEN THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL FIRST ENTERED THE LAND. WITH THIS COMMANDMENT, GOD PLACED A HARD BACKSTOP EVERY GENERATION AGAINST THE SLIDE INTO POVERTY AND OPPRESSION. WITH THE YEAR OF JUBILEE, GOD WAS MAKING THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE AND THE LARGER JEWISH SOCIETY WHOLE. HE WAS MAKING PEACE.

WHILE MODERN SENSIBILITIES CONCERNING PERMANENT OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY AND THE CARRYING OF DEBT ARE SOMEWHAT OFFENDED WITH THIS ONCE-EVERY-GENERATION BACKSTOP, IN THE ANCIENT JEWISH WORLD, THIS PRACTICE MADE SENSE. BECAUSE GOD HAD REDEEMED THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL OUT OF SLAVERY AND GIVEN THEM THE LAND OF CANAAN, GOD UNDERSTOOD BOTH THE LAND AND PEOPLE TO BELONG TO HIM (LEVITICUS 25.23-24, 55). THEREFORE, GOD COULD DO WITH THE LAND AND PEOPLE AS HE WISHED. IF THE JEWS HAD FOLLOWED THIS COMMAND, THE EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY, OPPRESSION, AND THE LIKE WOULD BE TEMPORARY, PASSING EXPERIENCES. HOWEVER, NO EVIDENCE EXISTS THAT THE YEAR OF JUBILEE WAS EVER OBSERVED.

THE TEXT

LUKE 4.14-21: *PREACHING PEACE*

IN MATTHEW 7, JESUS TURNS TO ISSUES OF JUDGEMENT, THE PAUL STATES THAT THE CONTENT AND MESSAGE OF JESUS' PREACHING WAS PEACE (EPHESIANS 2.17), BUT IT IS LUKE WHO PROVIDES AN EXAMPLE OF ONE OF THESE MESSAGES. IN LUKE 4, LUKE SKETCHES OUT THE EARLIEST DAYS OF JESUS' MINISTRY. LED BY THE SPIRIT, JESUS WAS LED INTO THE DESERT FOR FORTY DAYS, AFTER WHICH HE EMERGED AND FORMALLY BEGAN HIS MINISTRY (LUKE 4.1-15). LUKE NOTES THAT THIS MINISTRY BEGAN NOT WITH MIRACLES BUT WITH JESUS PREACHING IN VARIOUS SYNAGOGUES THROUGHOUT GALILEE (LUKE 4.14-15). HE THEN PROVIDES AN EXAMPLE OF ONE SUCH SERMON WHICH JESUS PREACHED IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF HIS HOMETOWN, NAZARETH. THE PLACEMENT OF THIS SERMON AS THE FIRST PROCLAIMED WORDS OF JESUS IN THIS GOSPEL INDICATE LUKE INTENDS THIS SERMON TO STAND AS THE EXEMPLAR OF JESUS' PREACHING FOR THIS PERIOD OF HIS MINISTRY. FURTHER, AS JESUS STANDS AS THE MASTER WHOM HIS DISCIPLES ARE TO FOLLOW, THIS SERMON'S PRIORITY OF PLACEMENT IMPLIES IT STANDS AS AN EXEMPLAR FOR THE PREACHING OF THE CHURCH.

AS LUKE SETS THE SCENE, HE REMINDS US NAZARETH WAS JESUS' HOMETOWN AND WORSHIPPING IN THE SYNAGOGUE WAS A SPIRITUAL RHYTHM FOR JESUS. THERE IS AN AIR OF COMFORT AND FAMILIARITY IN THE TEXT. WE DO NOT KNOW A GREAT

DEAL ABOUT WORSHIP IN THE SYNAGOGUE DURING THE FIRST CENTURY. MOST OF OUR EVIDENCE COMES FROM THE PERIOD AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. HOWEVER, THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THE SERVICE LIKELY BEGAN WITH THE SHEMA (DEUTERONOMY 6.4-9) AND THEN MOVED TO A SERIES OF SET PRAYERS LIKE THE TEPHILLAH AND SHEMONONEH ESREH (EIGHTEEN BENEDICTIONS). NEXT WAS LIKELY A READING FROM THE TORAH FOLLOWED BY A READING FROM ONE OF THE PROPHETS. THE READER WOULD THEN INTERPRET THE TEXTS AND PROVIDE INSTRUCTION. AFTER THIS PERIOD OF INSTRUCTION, A BENEDICTION CLOSED THE SERVICE. THERE IS SOME DEBATE CONCERNING WHETHER TEXTS WERE CHOSEN PRIOR TO THE SERVICE—THINK MODERN LECTIONARY—OR WHETHER THEY WERE CHOSEN BY THE READER. THE EVIDENCE IS THIN, BUT LUKE SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT IN THIS PERIOD FOR THE READING FROM THE PROPHETS, THE READER CHOSE THE TEXT.

LUKE PORTRAYS JESUS AS SERVING AS THE READER FOR THIS SPECIFIC SYNAGOGUE SERVICE. THEREFORE, WE CAN ASSUME JESUS HAS ALREADY LED WITH A READING FROM THE TORAH. HOWEVER, IT IS THE READING AND INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHETS WHICH LUKE WANTS TO BRING TO OUR ATTENTION. WHEN JESUS STOOD UP TO READ, THE SCROLL OF ISAIAH WAS HANDED TO HIM. IT COULD BE JESUS ASKED FOR THIS SCROLL OR IT WAS SIMPLY HANDED TO HIM. REGARDLESS, HAVING GROWN UP IN NAZARETH, JESUS WAS FAMILIAR WITH THIS SPECIFIC SCROLL AND TURNED TO A PASSAGE OF HIS CHOOSING, ISAIAH 61. THERE IS SOME DEBATE CONCERNING WHETHER JESUS READS FROM BOTH ISAIAH 58 AND ISAIAH 61 BECAUSE ELEMENTS FROM BOTH TEXTS ARE PRESENT IN THE READING LUKE SUPPLIES. IT COULD BE THAT LUKE HAS CONFLATED THE TWO LONGER TEXTS INTO THE SHORTER READING, PROVIDING THE “CLIFF NOTES” VERSION RATHER THAN REPRODUCING THE ENTIRE SERMON AND READING. THIS IS NOT AN UNCOMMON LITERARY AND RHETORICAL TECHNIQUE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. TO QUOTE THE OPENING LINES OF A TEXT WAS MEANT TO LEAD THE READER TO “HEAR” THE ENTIRE TEXT WHILE SAVING SPACE IN A SPEECH OR PAPER FOR THE AUTHOR!

ISAIAH 61 IS A PASSAGE WHICH PROMISES A FUTURE RESTORATIVE MOVEMENT OF GOD ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. IN THIS PASSAGE, THIS RESTORATIVE MOVEMENT IS CONNECTED TO THE YEAR OF GOD’S FAVOR; THAT IS, THE PROPHET IS PROCLAIMING A FUTURE YEAR OF JUBILEE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE JUDGEMENT ON THOSE WHO HAD CREATED THE SITUATION IN NEED OF RESTORATION. INTERESTINGLY, LUKE LEAVES OUT THE PARALLEL STATEMENT OF JUDGEMENT WHILE KEEPING THE PROCLAMATION OF JUBILEE. IF MEANT TO BE AN EXEMPLAR FOR THE PROCLAMATION OF THE CHURCH, LUKE IS IMPLYING THAT THE MESSAGE OF PRONOUNCED JUDGEMENT IS NOT THE CHURCH’S MESSAGE.

THE PROPHET ENVISIONS A DAY IN WHICH THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN VICTIM TO SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION AND THE UNSCRUPULOUS DEALINGS OF OTHERS ARE CORRECTED. THE WORLD IS RESET, AND THIS WAS GOOD NEWS. THOSE WHO WERE IN PRISON BECAUSE OF DEBT WOULD BE SET FREE, THEIR DEBT FORGIVEN. THOSE WHO WERE BLIND (LIKELY SPIRITUALLY AND PHYSICALLY) WOULD BE HEALED. THE OPPRESSED WOULD BE FREED BECAUSE IT WAS JUBILEE. THERE WOULD BE PEACE.

THIS READING WAS ONE OF HOPE, BUT JESUS PROVIDES AN INTERPRETATION WHICH SHOCKED HIS AUDIENCE. THE WORLD WHICH ISAIAH SAW WAS NOT A FUTURE WORLD, BUT THE WORLD OF THE PRESENT, A WORLD BEING MADE POSSIBLE IN AND THROUGH JESUS. THERE WAS NOW PEACE.

REAL LIFE WITH BLAKE:

JESUS PREACHED A MESSAGE OF PEACE. HE PROCLAIMED THAT IN AND THROUGH HIM, LIVES COULD BE MADE WHOLE. OPPRESSIVE SYSTEMS COULD BE REPLACED. LIFE AS GOD INTENDED COULD BE FOUND. THAT WAS GOOD NEWS FOR THOSE WHO HEARD JESUS. IT IS EASY TO SEE WHY CROWDS FLOCKED TO JESUS AND PRAISED HIM. HIS MESSAGE OF PEACE GAVE HIS AUDIENCE A PRESENT HOPE TO A HURTING WORLD. IN THE SAME WAY, THE CHURCH, SHOULD IT CHOOSE TO PREACH LIKE JESUS, REALLY DOES HAVE GOOD NEWS. ANY MESSAGE THAT PEACE IS POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT (NOT JUST PEACEKEEPING!) IS ENOUGH TO GARNER THE ATTENTION OF THE MOST CALLOUS AMONG US. FOR THE MOST PART, I BELIEVE THE CHURCH HAS SOUGHT TO BE TRUE TO JESUS’ MESSAGE. WE DO PROCLAIM A MESSAGE OF PEACE. THE PROBLEM

IS, PEOPLE HAVE STOPPED LISTENING. **WHY?**

I HAVE BEEN PONDERING WHY A MESSAGE OF PEACE MIGHT FALL ON DEAF EARS. IN MANY WAYS, JESUS' OWN EXPERIENCE OF PREACHING PEACE IN NAZARETH IS NOT UNLIKE OUR OWN EXPERIENCE TODAY. PEOPLE TURN AWAY. I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THAT THE REASON FOR THIS EXPERIENCE IS RIGHT IN THE TEXT. JESUS PROCLAIMED PEACE, A PEACE POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT. HOWEVER, THE PEOPLE OF NAZARETH DIDN'T EXPERIENCE THAT PEACE IN THEIR PRESENT. FOR REASONS BEYOND MY FULL UNDERSTANDING, JESUS DID NOT BRING PEACE (HEALING, RESTORATION, WHOLENESS) WHILE IN NAZARETH (MARK 6.4-6; LUKE 4.23). WHEN THE PEOPLE HEAR A MESSAGE THAT DIDN'T MATCH THEIR EXPERIENCE. . . THINGS WENT SOUTH.

I WONDER IF MUCH OF THE ISSUE WITH EARS UNWILLING TO HEAR TODAY CENTERS ON THE GAP BETWEEN OUR MESSAGE OF PEACE AND PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE OF PEACE. IS THE CHURCH MAKING PEOPLE WHOLE? ARE WE BRINGING PEACE? WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BRING PEACE? JESUS FIRST STEP WAS ALWAYS TO APPROACH BROKENNESS. THIS IS TRUE IN BOTH LUKE'S AND MARK'S NAZARETH NARRATIVE. JESUS HAD COME TO THEM, IN ORDER TO DO MORE THAN JUST PREACH. HE LONGED TO HEAL AS WELL (MARK 6.1-6). A CENTRAL COMPONENT TO JESUS' MINISTRY WAS HIS DRAWING NEAR (LUKE 15.1-2). SOMEHOW, IN HIS DRAWING NEAR TO BROKENNESS, HE WAS NOT BROKEN BUT OTHERS BECAME WHOLE (LUKE 5.12-16). SO, IF JESUS DREW NEAR, ARE WE DRAWING NEAR?

WE KNOW THE ANSWER TO THIS ONE. THE CHURCH HAS GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO AVOID BROKENNESS AND BROKEN PEOPLE. BUT IF WE DO NOT DRAW NEAR TO THOSE WHO NEED PEACE, HOW CAN THEY EXPERIENCE IT? HOWEVER, A LITTLE VOICE IN MY HEAD SCREAMS, "YOU CAN'T DO THAT! YOU WILL BECOME SOILED." BUT JESUS NEVER BECAME SOILED. WHY NOT? IN HIS DIVINITY, HE CANNOT BE SOILED BY SIN. HIS HOLINESS CONSUMES EVERYTHING UNHOLY. HOWEVER, JESUS WAS HUMAN TOO. HOW WAS HIS HUMANITY UNTOUCHED? I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE HIS HUMANITY WAS UNTOUCHED BECAUSE DIVINITY WAS ALREADY PRESENT, NOT WITH JESUS, BUT WITH THE FATHER. EVERYWHERE JESUS WENT, THE FATHER WAS ALREADY THERE. HE WAS ALREADY AT WORK. JESUS WAS SIMPLY JOINING THE FATHER IN WHAT HE WAS ALREADY DOING. IN THE SAME WAY, WHEN WE DRAW NEAR TO BROKENNESS, WE FIND HOLINESS ALREADY PRESENT, A HOLINESS WHICH CANNOT BE SOILED. HE HAS ALREADY "SANITIZED" THE SITUATION, SO TO SPEAK. HE IS ALREADY AT WORK. WE ARE SIMPLY JOINING HIM IN THAT WORK. AS WE DRAW NEAR, WE ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO HAVING A MESSAGE WHICH MATCHES THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO HEAR IT.

REAL LIFE WITH YOU:

PEACEMAKERS PROCLAIM PEACE, BUT THEY MUST DO MORE THAN PROCLAIM. THEY MUST BRING PEACE. THEIR MESSAGE MUST MATCH THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO HEAR IT. FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, LIKE JESUS, WE MUST FIRST DRAW NEAR TO THOSE WHO NEED PEACE. IN OTHER WORDS, WE MUST GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH BROKENNESS, AND RARELY IS IT PRETTY OR PLEASANT. SO, WE DON'T DO IT. SOMETIMES WE HESITATE TO DRAW NEAR BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID. OFTEN, WE HESITATE BECAUSE WE ASSUME WE WILL BE BROKEN OR SOILED IN THE PROCESS AND EXPERIENCE OF DRAWING NEAR. HOWEVER, THIS NEVER SEEMED TO BE THE CASE FOR JESUS. WHEN HE DREW NEAR PEOPLE BECAME WHOLE. JESUS WAS NOT BROKEN. THIS WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE FATHER WAS ALREADY THERE, ALREADY AT WORK. JESUS WAS SIMPLY JOINING THE FATHER. THEREFORE, WHEN WE DRAW NEAR, WE ARE NOT JUST DRAWING NEAR TO BROKENNESS BUT TO THE ONE WHO IS LABORING AHEAD OF US TO BRING WHOLENESS (JOHN 4.38). WE ARE SIMPLY CO-LABORERS IN A WORK IN PROGRESS. THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR. BUT HOW COULD GOD ALREADY BE THERE? DOESN'T HE KNOW THE DEEP BROKENNESS HE IS TOUCHING? YES, BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BOTHER HIM. HE SEES BEYOND THE BROKENNESS, BEYOND THE LABELS AND STEREOTYPES WE USE TO ISOLATE AND MARGINALIZE BROKENNESS. HE SIMPLY SEES ONE OF HIS CHILDREN IN NEED OF PEACE (MATTHEW 5.43-45). THIS WEEK, WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE TO SEEK TO SEE PEOPLE IN THE SAME MANNER? WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE TO SEEK TO SEE PEOPLE AND NOT JUST THEIR NEED FOR PEACE? WHAT MIGHT IT BE LIKE TO LOOK DEEPER THAN BEHAVIOR AND SITUATION TO SEE THE PERSON CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD? AS YOU MOVE ABOUT THIS WEEK, ASK GOD FOR GRACE TO SEE OTHERS IN THIS MANNER. PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THIS DOES INSIDE YOU. TALK OPENLY AND HONESTLY TO GOD ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE.



SENIOR
PASTOR
BLAKE
SHIPP