



Week 1 | April 8 Sermon

Community::

Start to get to know each other in the GROUP by doing basic introductions. People will come into the GROUP at various points of willingness to share. Consider using a fun question to help bring out more of who each person really IS, not just what they DO. Some examples include:

- What is something that is guaranteed to make you smile every time?
- Hugs or high fives?
- What are you celebrating right now? *coupled with* What's hard for you right now?
- You come home to your living room full, floor to ceiling, of avocados; what do you do?



This week's motivation to bless::

God's kingdom is one of blessing. As we learn to bless others with the words we speak His kingdom comes in powerful ways.

It opens up hearts and lives to experience the abundant life that He brings (John 10:10). Would you begin to form the habit of blessing others? Start with those people closest to you: your family, your closest friends, & those in your small group.

This week and over the next 12 weeks would you speak 3 intentional blessings (this could be verbal, through email, a direct message through social media) to someone close to you.

As you bless others would you write down or be mindful of how it impacted the person (we can't always tell in the moment) and you (how did it make you feel). And how did it change the spiritual atmosphere as you blessed that person?

AUDITORIUM:: Corinthians Wrap Up and BLESS Week 1

Tom Vander Well

Text:: 1 Cor 15; 16:14, 20

One Thing: Experiencing the power of Christ's love and resurrection transforms us from bitterness to blessing.

Paul wrote that he wanted to "know Christ and the power of His resurrection" (Phil 3:10). What do you think he meant by that?

Can you name a moment or a time when you experienced resurrection power? How? What was the result?

Can you think of a person who exemplifies "resurrection power"? What is it about her/him that marks them a person of resurrected life?

Have you thought about what your resurrected body would be like? Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-49. What are your imaginative mental images, hopes, desire, dreams for the eternal body? What do these descriptions teach us about our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes about our physical bodies?

Tom made the point that Jesus resurrected body carried the wounds of His crucifixion (John 20:24-29). How might this change the way we think of our own wounds and God's purposes to redeem them for His glory?

Galatians 5:13-26 How do the fruits of "flesh" describe the Corinthians as described by Paul? What's the contrast with the fruits of the "Spirit" and Paul's admonishment for what the Corinthians should be? How do you think this connects with our new series on our role of being a blessing to others?

SANCTUARY :: Mike Redman

This ministry year we have focused on Kingdom Community. The four words we have used to guide us are REAL, MERCY, HONOR, and TRANSFORMATION. We want to be REAL with each other, while extending MERCY & HONOR, believing it leads to TRANSFORMATION.

- Does it come easy for you to be REAL with other people? And why is that?
- Why is being REAL so hard for most of us?
- In this season of your life how do you see the Holy Spirit transforming your life?

During the teaching we talked about the power of our words and how they impact our thinking and our lives. Proverbs speaks often of the power of words. What thoughts do you have about the following texts:

- The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked. -Prov 10:20
- The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value. -Prov 10:20
- The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgement. -Prov 10:21
- Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. -Prov 12:18
- The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. -Prov 15:4
- A man finds joy in giving an apt reply and how good is a timely word. -Prov 15:23

Take a moment and think back through your life. Can you remember a time that you were given a 'blessing' through encouraging words or having something good called out in your life? What did that do for you?

Can you think of a time when you were 'cursed' by someone? You remember hearing and receiving words that were painful? Things like: "you're stupid", "you're not good at anything", "you're ugly", "you really screwed that up", "I wish you hadn't been born"... How has that shaped you and how you see yourself?

Family dynamics are always interesting and hard at times. No family or person is perfect. With that in mind, our families are the biggest influence in shaping our lives and how we think about ourselves. The words spoken or not spoken often form who we become. Take a moment and think back on your childhood. Would you say that you grew up in a family where love was expressed appropriately and verbally (Blessing)? Or was there an absence? Know that UNSPOKEN words of blessing are just as powerful as spoken curses.

- For the ways that love was expressed well in your family, would you be willing to bless your family members by thanking them over the next couple of weeks.
- For the ways there was an absence of verbal blessing would you be willing to forgive family members? Forgiveness positions are hearts for the Spirit of God to speak into us what has been left unspoken by grandparents, parents and siblings.

Our behavior is the prime indicator of whether or not we truly value something. Our words and the things we speak about people indicate where our hearts are. As you look back on your week and think about how you used your words, what was flowing from your heart and mouth? Blessing & encouragement? Or was it gossip, slander, ill-spoken words about others, complaining?

- With the group, celebrate and encourage each other by sharing ways that you bless & encourage others? (This helps others who aren't as strong in this area grow in how to do it)
- Take a moment to confess and repent of ways that you have cursed someone through gossip, slander, ill-spoken words or lies.
- Would you be courageous this week and ask for forgiveness from someone that you have cursed through your words.

Jesus had the ability to see things in individuals that they couldn't see in themselves or other people couldn't see in that individual. Jesus looked past their sin, their personalities, their circumstances, and the things people judged. Jesus called out in them who they really were.

- Why is it so hard for us to see people the way God sees them?

Read the following verses: **1 John 3:1a** | **1 Peter 2:9** | **Genesis 1:27** | **Ephesians 2:4-6a**. Then take a moment with the group and talk about how God sees you.