

Sermon Notes and Study Questions

A Distinctive Community

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:1-5

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

² “I will make you into a great nation,

and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,

and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you,

and whoever curses you I will curse;

and all peoples on earth

will be blessed through you.”

Genesis 12:1-3

Notes:

Introduction: Why we do what we do

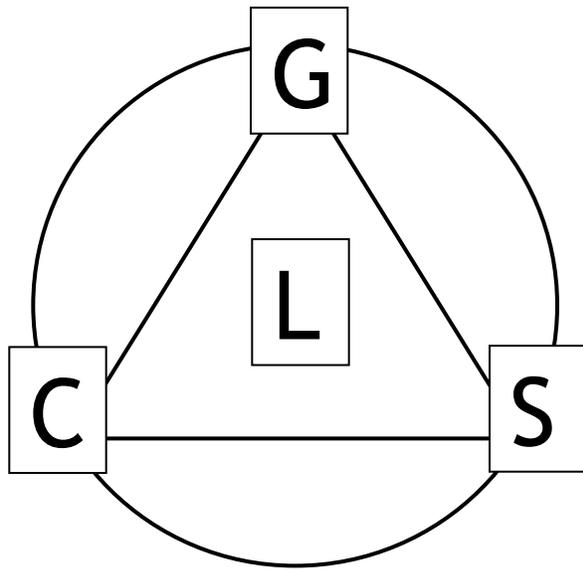
Action 1: Owning our Story

- Knowing our Story
- Living our Story

Action 2: Work the Angles

God/Christ/Spirit - Love

Grow/Community/Serve -



Action 3: Bless because we are Blessed

- Develop a habit of Blessing
 - Intentionally bless three people a week. At least one person who is part of our church family and at least one person who isn't part of our church family.

Conclusion

Connecting Questions

1. Share about the top five things that motivate you to get up out of bed in the morning.
2. Why do you read the Bible? Why do you sing praise songs? Why do you go to worship on Sunday? Why do you give back to God through service and financial support?

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think are distinctive aspects of the Christian story that make it stand out from all other belief systems available in the marketplace of ideas?
2. What do you think are clear signs that someone is living into the Christian story of the world?
3. Why do you think it is important to emphasize that Christians are not just waiting to die to go to heaven? How does the Christian story support the fact they aren't just supposed to wait to die to go to heaven?
4. The Christian community is supposed to be a place where humanity flourishes. How do you think the idea of "working the angles" helps nurture human flourishing?
5. As you consider Growing deeper in relationship with Jesus, going deeper into Christian community, and serving in Jesus' name, the three angles in which we work out our salvation, where do you think God is calling you to focus your attention right now?
6. Of these three, which do you think is strongest and which do you think is weakest in your life? Why?
7. What are the greatest ways God has blessed you?
8. What is the most recent blessing where you felt God touching your life and knew it was Him showering you with his love?
9. What is your reaction to building a habit of intentionally blessing people in your life? What do you think is the biggest challenge of forming this habit?
10. How did God speak to you through the Scripture and message?

Going Deeper into Scripture

Read Genesis 12:1-3

11. How old was Abram when he left Ur? How old was he when he left Haran? What if anything does this teaching about how God chooses people for service? Were they (Abram and Sarai) good candidates to start a new nation?
12. How many times does the word “bless” occur in the promise God gives to Abram? In chapters 1-11, the word “bless” occurs 5 times, all in key moments (1:22, 28; 2:3; 5:2, and 9:1). Read those passages. What significance if any can we draw from the promise to bless within the other promises of blessings given in Genesis 1-11?
13. What is a good working definition of the biblical idea of blessings?
14. Read Genesis 3:15. How is the story of Abram crucial for this promise to be fulfilled?
15. Why would God choose one person to be the means by which he will save the whole world?
16. How does Abram’s story anticipate Christ’s story?