Upside Down Influence: Serving Our City

Preacher: Derek

Date: January 5, 2020

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Read **Jeremiah 29:4-6**.
3. What have you done to make your city your home? What might you do? What could your Life Group do?
4. What purpose has God had for bringing you to your city? Who have you impacted or what difference have you made in the people around you?
5. Read **Jeremiah 29:8-13**.
6. What values of your city contradict God’s values? In what ways have you been tempted to stay secluded from your city? Discuss how we can respectfully resist and yet not compromise with the values of our city? What safe guards can we put in place to make sure we don’t avoid our community? What safe guards can you put in place to make sure we don’t compromise? One of the values of our culture is to protect ourselves but Jesus taught us to live a life of sacrifice for others. How well are we doing to live that out?
7. Read **Jeremiah 29:7**. In the sermon we learned that the people were to have a positive impact on what city, Jerusalem or Babylon? Why is that so surprising? We are to impact our city so that it prospers in every good way. The key is to “pray” for peace in your city.

**Next Steps:** Discuss a way your group can serve your city. Check out what ServErie is up to (<https://serverie.com/>) and find more inspiration at <https://www.signupgenius.com/church/community-service-projects-small-groups.cfm>

**Prayer Thought:**

* **ADORATION:** Praise Jesus for directing you to your city for a purpose that will honor Him.
* **CONFESSION:**  Confess how easily you neglect your city for your own agenda.
* **THANKSGIVING:** Thank the Lord for the people of your city.
* **SUPPLICATION:** Ask God to bring peace, justice and salvation to your city.

**Suggested Memory Verse:** **Matthew 20:26-28** *But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

UPSIDE-DOWN INFLUENCE: Serving Our Church

January 12, 2020

Pastor Derek Sanford

**Big Idea:** If you do your part, we can do our part.

**Next Step:** What are the areas of greatest need at Grace right now?

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Read **1 Corinthians 12:1-31**. Consider also looking at the lists of gifts in **Romans 12:6-8** and **Ephesians 4:11-16**. [For a good reference on the different gifts, point group members to “Our Spiritual Gifts” at Cru.org.]
3. What are spiritual gifts? What does it mean that the Church is a *body*? What does it mean that gifts are meant for the *common good*? What are the big ideas you take away from Paul’s teaching on spiritual gifts?
4. Challenge group members to ask themselves:

What spiritual gift/gifts has God blessed me with?

Have I sought to develop those gifts to their greatest potential so I can more effectively carry on His work?

How have I used those gifts for God’s greater glory, and to meet the needs at my church right now?

**Next Steps:** Recognize that God can use the diversity of the gifts He has provided to us, no matter how insignificant they might seem, and that the Holy Spirit brings unity through the diversity of those gifts. As the need for additional Life Group Leaders continues to grow, consider how your gifts can assist in meeting the needs of kids, youth, and adults both locally, and worldwide.

**Prayer Thought:**

Follow the **ACTS** Model:

**Adoration:** Praise God for who He is, for how He has blessed you with spiritual gifts, and for the opportunity to share those gifts with others.

**Confession:** Confess any sins of fear and trepidation about sharing your gifts, knowing those gifts are to be used for God’s glory, not our own.

**Thanksgiving:** Thank our Heavenly Father that the Holy Spirit has provided each of us one, or more spiritual gifts. Express your thanks through developing, and deploying those gifts

**Supplication:** Pray that the Holy Spirit will nurture, and guide each one of us in the use of our spiritual gifts, and that we may have the opportunity to express those gfts in a manner that will best bless Kingdom work, both locally and worldwide.

UPSIDE DOWN INFLUENCE: Serving Our World

Pastor Brian Lusky

January 19, 2020

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Read **Romans 10: 13-17**
   1. While God’s glory is revealed through creation, it is the Word of God that brings salvation. Take a few moments to consider how you first encountered the Word of God. Who was it that first shared God’s truth with you? How did THEIR act(s) of obedience impact your faith journey? What steps of obedience have you taken to share the good news with others in your life?
3. Read **Matthew 28: 19**
   1. Jesus equipped and instructed his followers to make disciples of all nations. This means sharing the good news with people groups beyond our communities of origin. Why do you think this was important to him? Is it important to you?
4. **Big Idea**: It’s our responsibility and privilege to make God’s Word known to everyone in the world.
   1. Do you think about global missions as something that you have a personal responsibility to participate in? Do you consider that responsibility a privilege?
5. Many Christians excuse themselves from participating in global missions. Sunday’s sermon described several common lies that are used to justify lack of involvement. Can you think of others? How do these beliefs or viewpoints hold up to Jesus’ instructions to his followers?
   1. I’m not called to Global Missions. Wouldn’t it be better for me to give than to go? Aren’t there locals or other Christians in the world who can do this better than us? Aren’t there enough needs here in Erie? Shouldn’t we focus on those?
6. Has anyone here been involved in a cross cultural mission trip? What kind of impact did that have on your faith journey?

**Next Steps:** As a group, identify an unreached people group and plan activities to learn about them together. Individually, consider taking a course or reading a book related to cross cultural missions. Sign up and go on a short term mission trip!

**Prayer Thought:** Ask God to reveal any fears or lies that may be hindering you from engaging in His Great Commission.

**Suggested Memory Verse:** **Matthew 28: 19** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…*

UPSIDE-DOWN INFLUENCE: Stories Sunday

Site Pastors

January 26, 2020

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on the stories shared this week, what caught your attention?
2. Choose the story of someone from the Bible (see examples below or pick your own). Read their story out loud.
   1. How would you describe the person/people of this story?
   2. How do you see God’s grace in their story?
   3. What do we learn about God and about ourselves from this story?
   4. How has this story impacted God’s Story told through the Bible?
   5. STORIES:
      1. Ruth 1-4
      2. Jonah 1-4
      3. Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18; Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 1:12, 3:4-6)
      4. Philemon 1:1-25
3. Is someone in the group ready and willing to share their story? Consider asking them ahead of the meeting to give them time to prepare. Prompt them to share who they were before Jesus, how they accepted salvation, who they are now.

**Next Steps:**

How could sharing your story with someone who doesn’t know Jesus impact their lives? Consider that an invitation to Grace church could open the door for someone to be changed by God’s grace.

**Prayer Thought:**

Praise God for His magnificent story and for each of the stories He is writing in your lives.