

ICE BREAKER

When was someone generous to you, or you to someone else? What happened?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of the message was most encouraging to you? What part do you find challenging?
2. What did You notice about God in the passage? What did you notice about yourself and other people in it?

GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPTIVE WORK)

Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us and give us His peace (wholeness and completeness) in exchange.

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? “Lord Jesus, I give you my...”

What’s His gift? “Lord Jesus, I receive your...”

ACTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you’ve learned today? *(NOTE – You might consider stopping and prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence for an answer, then write it down.)*
2. During the coming week, who is someone with whom you can share what you learned today? *(NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.)*



Sermon Study - Conversation Guide

August 13, 2023

“Your Purpose is Powerful”

James 5:1-11

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 on the Lowell Patio

Coastal Community Church
mycoastal.org

NOTES: Your Purpose is Powerful (James 5:1-11) Pastor Andy Rock

In this passage, we might feel like James is slapping us about. I'm asking you to stay with me. I want to show you what James is saying and why. I hope at the end of this time, you walk away encouraged and reminded that your purpose on this earth is immensely powerful.

5:1 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.

James is writing to the church. Most of the people who read this letter had nothing. Their lives were ruined as they were forced out of their homes and farms, leaving businesses and jobs and inheritances behind.

Where did they go? They ended up living in foreign towns, worshipping with, living among, and working beside other Christians. It would be like all the people fleeing Bakersfield to settle here. All were in need. Some churches would be generous. Some would not. Some Christians would open their homes, some would not. Some Christians would hire workers by faith, some would not. So James calls out the rich Christians.

5:2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.

What eats us alive isn't our failures, but our missed potential. At the end of our lives, we won't be grateful for how much money we saved. We'll be grateful for how much money we spent saving the lives of people we love. Generosity is the practice of receiving God's blessing to meet our needs and then letting the overflow pass through us to the needy.

5:4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

Evidently Christian business owners hired all the people who fled Bakersfield, but then didn't pay them. That's cruel.

5:5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

Jesus is generous towards us with absolutely everything He has because Jesus loves you and you are worth it. Made in God's image, we are designed to be generous. So be generous with your love. Be

generous with your encouragement and forgiveness, your time and money. You'll never regret it. James then shifts gears to talk to everyone in the churches who are in need.

5:7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.

For those who are in need, the 'brothers and sisters' who've been destroyed by the free will of others and lost everything, James reminds us to be patient. Why? Because the harvest is coming. Your needs will be met. God is working to provide for you more than you can imagine.

5:8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

While you're waiting, don't find someone to blame. While you're waiting, don't grumble against each other, building up resentments and causing pain. Okay then, if we're going to speak, how do we avoid resentment, grumbling, and pointing fingers?

5:10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Speak the words a prophet speaks. What is that? THE TRUTH! James is saying to those who are rich, be generous. He's telling those who are poor, be patient and tell the truth about what you need. The only condition our enemy needs to destroy the church is isolation. A generous giver needs someone to bless. We are called to be courageous in our vulnerability to ask, and courageous in our faithfulness to give.

When we all do both, no one is isolated, no one is in need, and literally God's Kingdom has come. Jesus is full of compassion for those who are in need and won't talk. Jesus is also full of mercy for those who can give and won't. So don't give up asking for what you need, and don't give up taking the risk in practicing generosity. You never know what will happen!

SMALL GROUP GROUND RULES: Tips for great conversation

- Extroverts: Please allow space and time for introverts to speak.
- Introverts: Please speak up when you have something to contribute.
- Everyone: Show respect by listening to one another, knowing that we all can learn from those who have a different perspective.