

# THE GOSPEL



## Week 4: Blessing "Blessed to be a blessing"

1 Peter 2.9; Rev 1.5

### OPEN

Welcome to our series called **"The Gospel"** which means good news! Like a fine jewel, we have been cutting and polishing various facets of the gospel that reflect a different dimension of its message each week. So far we have looked at the individual and corporate facets followed by a deep dive into living out the Gospel in a culture that is increasingly hostile towards all things "Christian". We are in fact living in spiritual exile. Jeremiah the quintessential prophet of exile, encouraged us to not merely survive in exile, but to actually thrive in it as we seek and pray for the welfare of the city. This week we will learn how to do this specifically by blessing others around us

### SHARE & RECONNECT

- Share about the home you grew up in: was it an environment where words of blessing abounded or were they few and far between? Looking back, how do you feel about that stage of your life ?
- Share about a time when an individual, especially someone in authority over you, spoke or read words of blessing over you. What was the occasion? How did you feel?

### READING

- Read and compare Exodus 19. 5 with 1Peter 2.9. What strikes you?
- What does it mean, in terms of identity and practice for us to collectively to be a designated "a royal priesthood". What might change if we truly "saw " ourselves through the lens?

## REFLECT/WRITE

- If you heard the weekend message, what impacted you the most and why?
- What are the various obstacles that might get in the way of implementing the call to become priests for whom blessing people increasingly becomes a way of life?
- This weekend's message had only one application: write a blessing. Spend the rest of your group time doing this. Here are a few guidelines:
  - Think of an individual or group (staff, elders, worship team, family, another Connect Group, etc) who you could bless.
  - Brainstorm significant things you know about the person/group (strengths, challenges, potential you can call out, etc).
  - Armed with this knowledge, brainstorm the content of your blessing asking for the Spirit's guidance. (Think of the various sources of material for blessing that the message mentioned: God's word, God's work, images and metaphors. **See some examples at the end of the guide.**)
  - Have different individuals in the group write one sentence. Share with each other, write a composite and wordsmith it as a group.
  - Send it (hand delivery, mail, or email).

**ALL THIS MIGHT SEEM UNNATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL AT FIRST. THAT'S HOW IT FELT WHEN YOU LEARNED TO RIDE BIKE, SWIM, SKI ETC . SO DON'T STOP. IMAGINE THE JOY WHEN IT WILL BECOME SECOND NATURE. YOU WILL NEVER LOOK BACK.**

## PRAY

1. For the the Spirit's help with the various obstacles you identified above in the journey towards becoming a royal priesthood.
2. Pray for the individual /group whom you chose to bless so they will indeed be blessed by the Lord..Remember Numbers 6.22-27—who does the blessing and who is the agent.
3. Using your experience in the “blessing exercise”, pray for other Connect Groups and all those in the congregation who attempt to write their first blessing.

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## BLESSING EXAMPLES:

### **A blessing for high schoolers and university students based on Hebrews 11.23-27**

May you like Moses refuse to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. So may you choose to identify with the people of God because of how God sees them rather than the people of the world in your school because of their apparent beauty, coolness and superficial attractiveness. I bless you with eyes that see invisible reality. May you like Moses choose mistreatment with the people of God rather than the pleasures of sin. So may you never be ashamed to be known as a Christ follower and stick up for each other when one of you is mocked. I bless you with courage. May you like Moses regard disgrace for Christ's sake as more valuable than the treasures of Egypt. So may you never choose the easy fork in the road because of short term gain. I bless you with love of character over convenience or profit. May you like Moses not fear the king's anger as he left Egypt. So may you not fear loss of popularity or rejection. I bless you with influence that will lead others out of bondage and into real freedom. And may you make these four decisions that will determine your destiny because you will increasingly see Him who is invisible

### **A blessing for a couple based on what I learnt about them during premarital counselling (God's Work)**

Neil, I was struck by your eagerness to receive truth from God's Word and your enthusiastic participation in our interactions. Allyson, God has given you a good mind and you were willing to grapple with the full implications of ALL that God's Word has to say about marriage. I therefore bless you both with a mind and heart that continue to seek after the living God, the joy of being able to do this together, the continued eagerness to learn from each other through the very differences that first attracted you to the other and now will sharpen you, and finally, with a deep desire to let truth and grace flow through you to touch others in your circles of influence as it is already happening.

### **A blessing for a church's 20th anniversary based on Mathew 16.17-19**

With the continuing work of the Spirit in magnifying and exalting Jesus in your minds and heart through an insatiable hunger for His Word , with a reconversion experience –that you might be born again again so you will say I am no longer a consumer but a builder on mission, with an unshakeable conviction that the mission you are on will succeed and that you have been given authority to resist every strategy of our greatest enemy by pursuing unity through the lifelong pursuit of humility meekness and patience in all your dealings with one another

### **A blessing for Brooklyn, the neighbours kid at sick kids hospital based on Isaiah 9.6**

I bless you with wisdom from the Wonderful Counsellor for every perplexing decision you will have to make for Brooklyn's welfare, power from the mighty God so you will have strength in the middle of the night as you comfort Brooklyn in a strange bed, compassion from the Everlasting Father so you know that He too suffered and so knows what you are going through as your heart longs for health for Brooklyn and peace from the Prince of Peace so, regardless of external circumstance, you will experience an inexplicable inner rest that Brooklyn will sense and so be at peace herself

### **A blessing for all who teach Gods truth in any setting based on Ecclesiastes 12. 9-11**

With knowledge and depth of insight into the Scripture passages that you have been studying, with the wisdom to apply them to the lives of the people you teach so that they will immediately acknowledge the relevance of what you have taught, with diligence in studying and arranging your material so that it is logical and therefore illuminating to the listeners, with words that are beautiful through the appropriate use of metaphor, illustration and story that will imprint the principles indelibly on your listeners hearts, with words that are like goads and nails that provoke movement in the lives of your people without hurting them, with an economy of words so you will have the freedom to NOT share everything that is on your heart and with words that will refresh people who have come weary from their work.