



Group Life Leader's Discussion Guide

Date: 5/18/2025

Sermon Title: Blessed to be a Blessing

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Gathering:

As you gather with one another be sure to greet each other and check-in. Ask and inquire from group members how their week has gone? Share that we will close with prayer requests at the end of group today.

OPENING PRAYER (Group leader or someone prays this prayer to open or create a similar prayer.)

Gracious and comforting God, Thank You for gathering us here in community. As we reflect on Your Word, open our hearts to the comfort You give and the calling You place on our lives. Remind us that in every season, even in our summer rhythms and rest, we are sent to bless others. Help us to hear You clearly and respond with lives shaped by grace, service, and compassion. In the name of Jesus Christ, our comfort and hope, we pray. Amen.

Opening Question:

1. Where did you experience or see a blessing this week? If you haven't, what may have prevented you from seeing or experiencing the blessing?

Looking at 2 Corinthians 1:3-7: Read this text in multiple translations; suggestion The Message and CEB along with the NRSV.

1. What stands out to you in this passage? What do you notice from each translation you read?
2. How does it speak to both suffering and comfort?
3. What does it mean that God "consoles us... so that we may be able to console others"? Can you think of a time when you were comforted in a way that later helped you comfort someone else?
4. Paul talks about "abundant consolation" through Christ. How have you experienced God's comfort in times of difficulty? How can your story be a source of strength to others?
5. How does sharing in both suffering and consolation reflect life in the body of Christ? What role does community play in bearing one another's burdens and sharing in each other's joy?

Sermon Questions:

6. We are reminded from the sermon that God is with us and has provided the church for a source of comfort. 2 Corinthians 1:4a from the message says that God comes along side us in hard time. When has God come along side you?
7. Pastor Clayton talks about the invention of the aqueduct during the Roman period. In what ways can the church serve as an 'aqueduct' of God's comfort and healing in today's world?

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8. Pastor Clayton quotes Dr. Marjorie Suchocki, "God does not erase suffering but participates in it with us, drawing us toward a future where our healing can serve the healing of others." How have you been a comfort to others?
9. Pastor Clayton says, "Shared suffering becomes shared strength". How does the concept of being 'partners in suffering and partners in comfort' challenge or inspire your view of Christian community?
10. In the sermon an illustration was shared about God's speed. What does it mean to you that God's speed is 'about three miles an hour,' and how might this impact the way we approach ministry and service?
11. How might the concept of 'God with skin on' change the way we approach our relationships and interactions with others who are suffering?
12. The sermon ends with this quote from Henri Nouwen, "Nobody escapes being wounded. We are all wounded people...The great challenge is how to make our wounds into a source of healing." How have you been healed from your own wounds and suffering?

Applying it:

13. Reflect on a time and share when you were able to comfort someone else because of your own past experiences. How did this impact both you and the other person?
14. In what ways do you feel "blessed to be a blessing"? How might that play out in practical ways this summer—in your neighborhood, at work, or during vacation?
15. How can our small group live out the truth that we are blessed to bless others—especially in a season when many people are scattered for travel or summer activities? Are there practical steps we can take as a group or individuals?

CLOSING PRAYER (Be sure to share any prayer requests or praises and have someone close in prayer.)

God of all mercy and consolation, Thank You for the ways You bless us—with comfort in our struggles, with joy in our lives, and with hope in Christ. As we go from this group into summer days filled with change, activity, or rest, may we not forget our calling to bless others as You have blessed us. Make us aware of those who need comfort, strength, or love. Let us be Your hands and feet, sharing freely from the grace we have received. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND (or challenges for you this week)

1. Identify someone in your life who is going through a hard time. Make a specific plan to reach out and offer comfort or support to them this week.
2. Spend time praying for each other's current struggles, asking God for both comfort and the ability to comfort others.
3. Reflect on how you can be an "aqueduct" in your daily life, allowing God's comfort to flow through you to others. Share your ideas with the group.