

## **How to BLESS Your Neighbor: Blessed to Bless**

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### **Opening Discussion**

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

### **Scripture**

#### **Genesis 12:1-3**

*“The Lord said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”*

#### **Job 1:10**

*“Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.”*

#### **Galatians 3:7-9**

*“The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God. What’s more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, “All nations will be blessed through you.” So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.”*

#### **Ephesians 1:3**

*“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with*

*every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.”*

#### **Jeremiah 17:7-8**

*“But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.”*

#### **John 7:38**

*“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”*

#### **Matthew 22:36-40**

*“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”*

#### **Luke 19:1-10**

*“Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.” Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. “He has gone*

*to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled. Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."*

### **Thought #1: God Designed the Idea of Blessing**

Review Genesis 12:1-3. How does the concept of blessing as seen in this passage shape your understanding of God's design and intention for His people? Reflecting on the story of Job, how does his experience challenge conventional notions of blessing? How does it challenge your idea of "blessings"? How can you live out this concept of "blessed" in your everyday life?

In Galatians 3:7-9, Paul connects the blessing of Abraham to all who put their faith in Christ. How does this broaden your understanding of blessing beyond material or earthly prosperity? Explore the significance of the phrase "Bless your heart" in Southern culture. How does its usage vary based on context, and what does this reveal about cultural perceptions of blessing and empathy?

Read Ephesians 1:3 together. It mentions being blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For a word that is often mistranslated or even misused, how does this passage's use of "blessing" stand out to you?

How might recognizing and embracing the blessings in your life, as described in Jeremiah 17:7-8, impact your attitude and

response during challenging times? Considering the abundance of times "blessing" is mentioned throughout scripture. How can you actively cultivate an attitude of gratitude and awareness of God's blessings in your daily routine?

### **Thought #2: Blessings Are Not Meant to be Stored but Poured**

Reflecting on John 7:38, how does the imagery of "rivers of living water" challenge the tendency to view blessings as something to be gathered and stored? How does this concept reshape your own understanding of the purpose of blessings in your life?

In your own experience, how can self-centeredness hinder the flow of blessings in your life? What steps can you take to cultivate a mindset of generosity and outward-focused living? Consider ways you can actively seek opportunities to extend God's love and blessings to those around you. Share these with your group.

Together, think of ways churches can guard against becoming inward-focused and remain committed to outward ministry and service.

Reflecting on the question, "Who do you know that needs the blessing of a relationship with God?" how can you practically reach out to those individuals and share the blessings you have received? What role does personal evangelism play in fulfilling the call to let blessings flow through us?

### **Thought #3: God Helps Us to Slow Down and See Our Neighbor**

Reflecting on the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10, how does Jesus' interaction with him challenge your understanding of

