

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday October 10, 2021. "Terraform: Building a Better Life. The Possibilities."

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're pushing through 2021, and in spite of the current spiking of cases, we're still fully committed to gathering in person. A growing group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's, youth areas and coffee spot have been fully open also and we're seeing a good response. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

Three Sundays ago we began a new series that needs a little recap. It's based on a book by hip hop artist and activist Propaganda. The basic idea of this series is we have agency, control, over how we live our life. Yes, there are external circumstances that affect us we can't always control. But we get to choose how we respond to those events, situations, and what we'll do with them in our life. The concept behind the phrase "*terraform*" comes from the science fiction world of bringing new, sustainable life to a dead planet. We began by asking these three questions.

What do you want out of life? Why?

What are you currently doing to help you get there?

What do you need to change, do differently, to get there?

This series will serve two primary purposes.

1. Lead us through what it looks like to cast our own **personal vision** working a process of 4 specific stages to build what we want our lives to look like.
2. Guided by the Holy Spirit, build a place to gather and experience God. Doing NEW and INNOVATIVE things to be a place, church, where other people can meet God.

The first Sunday we talked about writing a better story of our past. The second Sunday we talked about everywhere we find ourselves is sacred. And last week we talked about practicing institutional neighborliness. Check those out online. Today we finish the series with a look into future possibilities.

III Sunday.

As you can see from the title this final Sunday of this series, it's channeling the past three conversations into beginning to build a better future. This requires us to ask some questions first.

What does a future of flourishing look like for you?

How do you balance realistic expectations for your future and imagining the best?

Are you currently doing anything specifically that's leading towards a desired future?

All we've talked about for the past three weeks is culminating here. Making peace with our past, growing the ability to see the sacredness in everything around us, and learning to be a true neighbor are all just random acts unless we're trying to work towards a greater, better world and future. And the scripture we used was a basic promise and understanding of how God wanted us to live into that future. So, read **Genesis 1:26-31** and we'll find some truths to encourage us and give us hope.

What jumped out to you from this passage?

What does it reveal, to you, about God's desire for us?

How do we often fall short of God's best for us?

The basic premise and understanding of this particular passage, and truthfully all of scripture, is that God wants the best **for us**. This is not some prosperity, material centered, cushy life. The best for us is to find deeper purpose, meaning, and for our lives to matter. Which is what we all truly want. And God has given us EVERYTHING we need to build this better world, and then blessed this work. The world tries to tell us that success and popularity will bring us purpose and meaning. And we can't deny that having 'enough', whatever that means, does make life easier and removes a lot of surviving worries and anxiety. But we find that people who do achieve society's definition of 'making it' are often as unfulfilled and empty as they were before. There's even a 60 Minutes interview with Tom Brady after he won his fourth or fifth Super Bowl, where he was asked what keeps him working so hard to win. And with tears in his eyes, he said that even those wins haven't yet scratched the itch of purpose and meaning he's longing for. And he's married to a supermodel!!

So, let's talk a bit about building a better world, and future, and then we'll wrap up.

What makes working towards a better world/future difficult?

What challenges have you faced?

Where have you found some success in working towards your future?

This all comes down to embracing the call to make our world a better place. We GET to do this. And when we can fully tap into, and put to work, all that God has so freely given us, then we can make this world the place God originally intended it to be. But we have to want to...want to.

IV Challenge.

Wrapping up this series, we need to embrace the truth that a better world/future won't just happen accidentally. It's going to take intentional and thoughtful effort. We must make peace with our past and begin the work of writing a better story. Grow the ability to 'see' everywhere we are as sacred...including others. And act on that. And embrace the truth that God has given us everything we need to build this better world. So in the words of Propaganda himself.

“Our dreams create worlds...TERRAFORM!”