

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. We hope you are well and discovering new ways to relate to God and His Word.

"COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS" | 2020 NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE | PASTOR BRIAN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What's been your favorite commercial, meme or joke about 2020?

"COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS" - (Psalm 103: 1-5)

David tells his soul to bless the Lord. What are ways people can bless God?

In Psalm 103:3 David says to "forget not all his benefits". Which of God's benefits are easy for people to remember? Which one(s) are easier to forget?

"Year End Review"

Pastor Brian shares evidence and many stories of God's blessings for Calvary Murrieta in 2020. Which one(s) stands out to you? Why?

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Psalm 103 is a great example of taking time in prayer to remember what God has done in your life, in your country, and in creation. How can you make this a regular part of your prayer times? What are blessings in 2020 that you remember and praise God for?

Count Your Blessings

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2,3 Larry: Men's Breakfast. Sun Night Prayer.
- B. Slide4 *Interview* Chris and Kelsey Lick for Belize. [Prayer for Chris and Kelsey]
- C. Slide5 **JM10** - coming up at our Sun Services, Jan.31st. *Let Justice Roll* (from Amos).
Dr. Sandie Morgan, *The White House's Advisory Council to End HT.*
- D. Slide6 Weds night - were going to *Jump into January with James.*
- E. Prayer: As our *With* books said, *may we leave church with a beautiful and enthralling vision of life with God.*

II. Slide7 Intro: Year End Review 2020. Count Your Blessings

- A. I would like to start with a video from [match.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTn8g406kvc) where they cleverly summed up Slide8 the year 2020. Let's watch. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTn8g406kvc>
- B. I obviously am coming from a *slightly different angle*. This is Calvary Murrieta's *End of the year Review*.
 1. Looking back on 2020 and *all that GOD has done*. (from a positive note)

III. Slide9 COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

- A. **Ps.126:3** *The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.*
- B. **Ps.65:11**nkjv *You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance.* [Let's just make sure we're on His path]
- C. Old Hymn: *Count your blessings, name them one by one. Count your blessings, see what God hath done. Count your blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*
- D. Don't count your **dollars** to see how rich you are. Count your **memories**. Count every beautiful **sunset**. Count your **friends**. Count the **hugs** you get from kids and friends who love you. Count *what really matters*.

E. I would like to quickly look at 3 Psalms, & slowly ponder them in our hearts.

F. **Ps.103** ch. outline is ... *Praise for **Personal Blessings**. Praise for **National Blessings**. Praise for **All Creation***. Let's look at just the 1st section.

G. **Slide10** Ps.103:1-5 *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me (not an after meal prayer), **ble**ss his holy name! 2 *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and **forget not** all his benefits, 3 **who** forgives all your iniquity, who **heals** all your diseases, 4 **who** redeems your life from the pit, who **crowns** you with steadfast love and mercy, 5 **who** satisfies you with **good** so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.**

1. **Slide11** Wait, I understand *Jesus blessing little children* but how do **we** bless **God**? David tells us in vs.2.

a) A person blesses God by *remembering* all that God has done and *thanking* him for it. If *God blesses people* with gifts, *people bless God* with gratitude.

2. *"Man was made to worship. He can't help but worship. All that remains is to see **who** or **what** he gives his worship to!"*

H. *What God has done **for us** far exceeds anything we have done **for** or **against** Him.*

I. **Slide12** (3-5) In vs.3-5 is a parade of the benefits of Gods salvation.

1. 6-pack of verbs: *forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, satisfies, & renews.*

J. **Slide13** (5) *Who satisfies you w/**good** so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's* - Like an **eagle** that remains strong throughout its long life, the psalmist was *spiritually vigorous* under God's hand.

1. *The eagle molts, loses its old feathers, gets a new coat & **soars again!***
(Warren Wiersbe) I believe 2021 is a time to **soar again!**

a) Isaiah said it this way, *Even the **youths** shall faint and be weary, And the **young men** shall utterly fall, **But those who wait on the LORD** Shall renew their strength; **They shall mount up** with wings like eagles... (40:30,31)*

K. I asked our staff to send me updates from this year. I pray this will give you a different perspective about 2020. I pray this will bless you. I pray you will leave church today with *a beautiful and enthralling vision of life with God.*

IV. Slide 14 FROM LARRY [Global Missions: CM Missions & Pioneer Missions.]

A. **CM Missions:** This year started off with **50 people** from church attending our preparing to go classes (*the Pathlight Course*) which resulted in raising awareness in CM Missions.

B. We have had *monthly prayer* for our missionaries.

C. **The Laster family** was able to get back into *Bulgaria* where they are serving.

D. The Lord sustained our *CM missionaries* in all areas of the world from Peru, Europe and Asia.

E. **Pioneer Missions:**

F. Our Missions *Vision Statement* reads: *We see a vision so awe-inspiring where we witness God's fingerprints and not just our own efforts. We see the Hani and the Rohingya people groups being disciplined, and in turn, disciplining their neighbors. We see all of Calvary Murrieta being changed by anticipating these nations standing before the throne of God. We see this vision being passed along to our children's children if we are not able to fulfill it in our lifetime. We see our sons and daughters being sent to express both the Love and the Words of Christ. We see these unreached people groups reached.* [1st seen with Chris & Kelsey, BAM]

1. **Ryan and Julie** have completed their pre-field training and are now prepared to go to *an undisclosed place in Asia*. [be seeing them soon]

2. Through **partnerships** we have help to **feed** families in **Myanmar and Bangladesh**. With the help of a friend in Cox's Bazar a few **Rohingya** have come to know Jesus.

3. We established a partnership with a National pastor in **Vietnam**, to go into the **Hani** areas in that country.

4. We have enjoyed the time w/**David, Becky, & their kids** being here, & **Mike and Lorie** being here. *Both families serving CM*, even though both families so desire to get back to their work out on the field.

5. **Even with Covid** we have seen **such generosity** from our church **to give to missions**: We have invested in the lives of many **Rohingya** by providing, housing for **15 new families** in Nepal. More widows are being trained to **weave carpet**. We added 1 more **poultry farm**. Added **2 Quail Farms**. **1 Goat Farm** (*& a partridge in a pear tree*). **Education materials** for children (no school during Covid). **And** we were especially excited about raising the **funds for Bibles** (audio & paper) to each of the Rohingya families.
6. There are **many other connections** that have been made as we are looking to the future to reach **both the Hani and the Rohingya**. A foundation was laid in place this year to keep **consistent communication** among these ministries focused on reaching these UPG's.

G.2 personal highlights for Lar:

1. Meeting **2 new believers** in Cox's Bazar, **and** realizing the bravery and commitment to *turn from Islam to Jesus*.
2. **Being asked for a Bible** in Bangladesh from a Muslim man that many had been sharing with for years, **and** have the privilege to have many discussions about Jesus with him.

V. Slide15 **FROM ME** (& Alex Escorcia, Roger Taff, Steven Cole, Greg Fischer)

A. **Water4aBillion**: *1 billion people that don't have access to drinking water*.

We just added 3 wells, in 3 diff unreached Tribes in VN, *which* opens the doors for local pastors to meet & gain access to these tribes, *to bring the good news of Jesus*. **52 wells in 10 countries!** (*12* in 2020)

VI. Slide16 **FROM KELLY**

A. **Local Food Pantry**: It was a blessing to see the body respond to the need for food at our Murrieta pantry. Not only did the church donate **16,468 lbs. of food & \$8,900**; they followed it up with lots of *diaper donations* during Thanksgiving. **To me, 3 things stand out:**

1. **The body's response:** People who I personally know that are *struggling themselves* still came out to donate whatever they could.
 2. **Volunteers weekly:** we had close to 30 people volunteer as regular *or as needed regulars* at the pantry weekly. *Many have fallen in love with the ministry.*
 3. **The Director** (Maria) calls the workers from CM *angels*, *and* constantly thanks me for the way they responded during the crisis (they had to send all their 65+ volunteers home, because they felt they were vulnerable) *yet* she watched God provide even the needs for *helpers* during the pandemic. *She is so very thankful.*
- B. **Women's Ministry:** Although it was difficult, many ladies persevered and participated in the *ZOOM* studies we offered. *Although challenging, they did it, they studied, they grew, they tried their best to bond. Many of the ladies felt they really grew in their faith during the challenges this year, and the Word of God is what sustained them.* To me, that showed *the fruit of being in the Word* and really blessed me.
- C. **Justice:** Although it was challenging to help HT organizations since everything was *shut down* we were still able to help many orgs **financially**, which is what they needed most (*Operation Safehouse, Rebirth Homes, GenerateHope, & various other orgs*). We were able to provide **gift cards** to *Big Bro/Big Sis, ICA, and Safe Families*. We gave many **Christmas gifts** to *CA Family Life Center, Rebirth Homes, and trafficked youth from the Safe House*. They are all blessed by the church's continued support and generosity during this difficult time.
1. Personally, I tried to spend the time getting more educated on Anti-HT *by reading more books, watching webinars, talking to leaders in the field.*
 2. A big thank you to everyone who *helped, prayed, donated, and showed up*. You ROCK.

- A. **Community Groups:** In 2020 we trained 27 adults to be leaders of community groups. Not all eventually hosted, with all the regulations and other unexpected challenges, **but** that's impressive when most of it was over **Zoom**.
1. We had **over 30 people** sign up to participate in community groups despite all the challenges, and many reported enjoying learning and growing together. [next round coming soon]
 2. One participant wrote that the best part of being in a Community Groups was, *"being with like-minded Christians in a fellowship of sharing, caring, learning about each other, and how might I change for the better."*
- B. **Slide17b Krystyn:** I'm part of Community Groups with AP. We led a community group in our backyard and got to know 3 couples (new couples to us). We had such sweet fellowship and conversation, and were able to all look to the Lord consistently with gratefulness for what He was showing us within our group, when we were willing to be **very transparent** with each other. **With all the uncertainty this year has brought, those 8 weeks brought a very solid certainty about *the faithfulness of God*, it cultivated *hope within us*, and each person was so open to connection with each other. It was very special.**

VIII. Slide18 FROM DAN

- A. **Celebrate Recovery & Divorce Care:** continued to meet almost w/o interruption as it was deemed **a critical core service**. They provided the very much needed light of Christ by *encouragement, community, and spiritual direction* to those facing some of the greatest difficulties they had ever been through.
- B. **Counseling:** This year through **counseling** we were able to continue ministry through **25 Biblical Church Counselors** with about **2500 hours** of counseling men, women, and married couples.
- C. **My favorite story** of the year sounded like so many others: **This one came to me via email**. *"I just wanted to give a shout out to our Biblical Church Counseling Team! Thanks for investing in us, to truly reach further in and navigate towards healing. I had a revelation today. It's my firstborn's birthday. It's also her *going home**

anniversary. She would have been 45. I can hardly say that without feeling ancient, but that's another story! I had just turned 18 when she was born. So the day often brings a feeling of heavy emotion that I work hard at keeping at bay. This morning I asked myself...*why am I still struggling after all these years?* And I put myself in the counseling chair. The question arose, "*Why do you feel sadness is a struggle?*". And it hit me! Sadness doesn't have to be a struggle. Sadness, the physical aching of my heart is a **sign**, a **symptom**, not an ailment. It's for my **good**, **not my detriment**. It's part of the **journey**, not a roadblock. It's a reminder that I'm still here. I'm still fully human. And that's a good thing. I've suffered a loss, a huge loss. And that would make anyone sad. **So as I navigated that thought process, a wave of peace washed over me.** It is well with my soul. I am not struggling. I can embrace the reality of pain, and continue breathing. I'm not left alone to be broken." Added by conversation, "*Through Jesus I'm beautifully healed and remade, like my baby. Sadness can be a part of a healthy life. It just doesn't overwhelm. And life is good. All this to say, thank you for teaching us that **sadness, anger, disappointment, are all part of a healthy emotion system.** It's a sign that we're fully alive. Lord bless you. And thank you for letting me pour this out. It's quite helpful!*"

IX. Slide 19 FROM DES

- A. **GriefShare:** our groups were able to meet indoors, so we could minister to our members in-person (*critical core services*). Being able to bring Christ's love to these hurting individuals who lost loved ones was a great honor for all of our leadership team. We got to *anoint individual's with oil* for their *physical, mental and spiritual healing process* that individuals need when they have lost a loved one.
- B. I personally got to meet with different members and had the privilege to **lead some of them into the sinners prayer.**
- C. By breaking up into **small groups** after the videos each week, asking questions and sharing our hearts, we saw great healing in many of our members. **Many of the widows and leaders would go out to dinner** each Sunday night after the meeting. All of the group leaders and members went out to dinner after our last meeting.

We became *close like family* to each other, through this ministry.

X. Slide20 FROM ANDREW L

- A. **Classes:** We had **58 people** complete our *Foundations and Unfolding Gospel classes*. Students said the classes helped them see much more of God in the Bible **and** helped clarify their understanding of doctrine, work through their own Bible questions, and strategize for sharing their faith.
- B. **Benevolence:** We were able to come alongside individuals and families in financial crisis **and** saw several get more connected into church community.
- C. **Memorials:** We were able to host a memorial for a family who couldn't find any available place. Along with others ... even for our MPD family.

XI. Slide21 FROM JASON

- A. This year was a complete learning year for me, but what I've learned most is that *God has a plan and an agenda that he will accomplish in his own timing and sometimes we just need to get out of the way and let Him do **His** thing.*
- B. My wife Jess and I spent a huge part of our **YAMS** ministry **online** this year, **but** the kids continued to join us for *worship, teaching and games*.
- C. **Jess** was the best co host helping me not only with *teaching and discussion topics* but also as my side kick for **trivia** that we did once a week to encourage community. This year God has raised up great **leadership team** naturally for us in YAMS and they have all been taking on different responsibilities from *worship to teaching to small groups*.
- D. **I** have been blessed to **meet weekly with some young adults** and develop deeper relationships through prayer and conversation. One being **Gabe Cipres** who was student of mine, **but** is now part of our YAMS family. **We've brainstormed ideas, hosted multiple game shows on Instagram, and grown in our relationship.** Gabe in turn would invite his friends to meet up with us as we discussed God, goals, life and just had fun.

E. I've also been blessed to be part of the **pastoral care team** and have had the opportunity to provide **benevolence and prayer** with those hurting during this time which is something that brings me the most joy in ministry. **Lastly**, I've also had the honor of meeting with the men on staff once a week to brainstorm how to grow in our ministries. I wouldn't trade the experience I've had this year for anything, **and** I'm excited to see what 2021 has in store.

XII.Slide22 CAMERON

- A. **High School Ministry:** Seeing the faithfulness and steadfast work of love our Rise High youth leaders who have *shone out & shown up* throughout all the twists & turn of this year. *Discipling, loving, talking, caring, hanging* till late hours in the *cold courtyard*. Have to thank Jesus for their incredible service to Him & our students.
- B. **New High School Students come:** We have consistently seen new students show up weekly. Even during the months of *online church*. Young people are bringing friends to our quirky events **and** cold outdoor services **and** they are coming back, hearing Gods word taught, worshiping together and finding fellowship!
- C. **Elijah Collins the Miracle Man.** (I've self proclaimed that title for him) [16 yr old w/heart that stopped] I've never had to experience a student being in such a state that Elijah was back in Sept of this year. Being at that hospital left me *scared, fearful, hurt* for Meghan & Jamie, and praying desperately without even knowing what to pray. **But God** worked in a way I could not have ever expected in Elijah's story and recovery. **We all have witnessed the Lords miraculous and powerful hand in His life today.**
- D. **Lastly**, in a year where I have personally experienced **my Son** in the hospital with a seizure in June (fully recovered and crazy as ever) and **the passing of my Father** in Sept. **I never could have imagine being somehow so continually comforted and sustained by Christ** **and** also surrounded by such amazing prayer & support in our body. **Me and Melissa** are beyond grateful for Gods faithfulness through the community we have here at Calvary Murrieta.
1. God gave me these verses at the beginning of April that I believe was monumental for the ministry as we moved forward: **"Let us hold fast the**

confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Heb.10:23-25

E. **Communion:**

F. **Keywords:** Year End Review, count your blessings, thankful, missions, ministry, all that God has done.