

beautiful

LIVES THAT SHOW THE GOSPEL

Message Topic: Oscar Romero and the Beauty of Solidarity

Message Date: October 18, 2020

Focus: The beauty of solidarity with the poor and needy

Primary biblical texts: Isaiah 1:11–17, Psalm 37, James 2:1–13

Introduction

Our goal is to engage in conversations about the beautiful life that Jesus has called us to live. Each week, we will be unpacking an element of this life. Each topic is paired with a historical figure who will show us one way to embody each week's topic.

Purpose of Community Groups

To engage with the ideas and scripture presented in the messages, to build connections with each other, and apply what we have learned to our lives.

Gathering

(To help people get to know each other.)

Mixer Questions: (choose one)

1. If you could spend an hour in a large book store, what section would you gravitate towards and why?
2. What is the most beautiful sunrise/sunset you have ever seen? Where were you, who were you with, what was it like?

Message Content

Review Message: Christian shared this week about Oscar Romero and the beauty of solidarity. Romero was the Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador in the late 70s and early 80s who was murdered by the government of El Salvador for speaking out against the corruption and abuse of the poor in the country. Oscar Romero identified with the poor and marginalized as a true expression of faith in God. This is the definition of solidarity—when a person in power chooses to set aside his or her privilege to be with those who are in distress. Christian encouraged us to hear Isaiah's imperatives: cease, learn, and seek. In doing so, we will find that God uses us to change the little plot of ground we find ourselves living in. Even though we will face opposition, we are called to be faithful to God's commands, not our fears. God will also help us have solidarity with others.

Discussion Questions:

1. Many of us have seen the church not live up to its calling. What are some things that you have seen that are unjust, twisted, or just plain bent away from what God wants for the church?
2. What makes solidarity hard to practice?

beautiful

LIVES THAT SHOW THE GOSPEL

Scripture Study (*choose one*)

Read James 2:1–13

1. What is James' main contention with his readers?
2. What seems to be the real danger is showing preference for the rich over the poor?
3. What is the “good news” that James wants his readers to understand? How can Renaissance Church embody this “good news”?

Read Psalm 37: 34–40

1. Make a list: What are the negative examples in this passage? What are the positive examples?
2. What does this passage of scripture challenge the hearer to do?
3. Where am I using my power to help myself, and harm others?

Personal Reflection

1. Are there forms of solidarity that can be practiced other than between rich/poor? What are they?
2. What holds you back from practicing solidarity with those in distress? Why?

Challenge

Christian gave us three calls to action from Isaiah— cease, learn, and seek.

1. Cease— Reflect for a moment. Think about a sacrifice that you should be making. Find a piece of paper and write it down, and then ask God to show you what he wants you to do instead. Then, go do it.
2. Learn— To admit we need to learn, is to make ourselves vulnerable and open. Reach outside of your bubble this week. Learn another's story. Research the history of an organization. Seek understanding of why people are in poverty around you. Give yourself to the work of learning to do good.
3. Seek— We should be on the lookout for those who are in need. Solidarity is not an accident, it's an intention. Where is one place this week you can practice solidarity? Go out each day with eyes to see where God wants you to stand alongside other people. Stand there. It will hurt at times, but God will help you.

Prayer

As a group, pick three things to pray for from the message. Ask God to give you the strength to do good this week.