

Baycities Lomita Winter/Spring 2020 Growth Groups

Series: “UNSTUCK” Part 1

Theme: “Bad Choices/Devastating Circumstances”- Week of Jan. 19, 2020

Follow-Up Bible Study and Discussion Questions

Summary- We're back! And back with a deep dive into what causes people (us) to get stuck in life, and stay stuck, when our goal is to not get stuck or to get Unstuck as soon as possible! Jesus uses the story of the Prodigal Son to lean into this subject of getting stuck in life, making bad choices, experiencing the devastating circumstances that often follow, and feeling stuck, and looking for how to get unstuck! This week it is clear-getting unstuck is all about responsibility & real repentance! Also, it means letting someone hit bottom, even if that someone is you or a loved one! It's not easy or natural to own what happened, then seek forgiveness and follow through by repenting & heading back to God to place yourself under His wisdom and leadership going forward! That is so different from enabling someone to keep making bad decisions and cushion them from experiencing the devastating consequences of their behavior for themselves. Feeling the pain of bad decisions is a huge reason people look to get unstuck! God has much to say to us through the story of the Prodigal. Let's review and apply what we learned from this Sunday's message.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU- Ice Breaker Time!

1. Would you rather...

- a. Would you rather live one life that lasts 1,000 years or live 10 lives that last 100 years each?
- b. Would you rather be Superman or Batman? Why?
- c. Would you rather be an Olympic gold medalist or a Nobel Peace Prize winner?

2. What are your top three places to eat (other than home)?

SERMON QUESTIONS

1. This week we launched our new series “UNSTUCK.” Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. This weekend we heard the great news that there's no mess too big for a miracle! Even knowing this, sometimes it can feel like God is missing and there is little hope of becoming “unstuck.” In the following verses, what hope can we count on in the midst of the mess? (Read and discuss them as a group)

Psalm 34:17-18

17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. 18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 46:1-2

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamothe. A song. 1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea. [NIV]

Psalm 37:1-2 Of David

1 Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; 2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. [NIV]

Psalm 9:18

18 But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish. [NIV]

- a. Looking back at what you wrote above, which of these verses catches your attention the most? Why?

3. The story of the prodigal son highlights the compassion and mercy of a loving father AND the wisdom of a dad who let his kid leave and experience major consequences. How do the following passages help us follow the Father's example and blend both of these responses in love?

Psalm 103:8-13

8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; [NIV]

Hebrews 12:5-7

5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? [NIV]

Galatians 6:7-10

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. [NIV]

- a. How would you define compassion based on these verses?
 - b. Would you say your natural and initial response to rebellion leans more toward compassion or consequences?
 - c. Can you think of any ways these passages help you balance your response? If so, explain.
4. Being able to help someone get out of their mess is part of being a follower of Jesus and what it means to support and encourage one another. Yet, as we heard this weekend, we have to be careful that our help doesn't cross the line and become enabling or rescuing.
- a. What lessons can you take from the story of the Prodigal Son that could be applied to a modern family raising kids in the south bay?
 - b. Dealing with homeless and hurting people challenges us all to know what to do that is effective without enabling them. What lessons from the Prodigal Son story could we apply to our dealings with homeless & hurting people?