

The Sermon - In 10 Sentences Or Less

Surprise the World (Week 3) - From Abraham to the Whole World:



- 1) One way to tell the whole story of the Bible is through covenants, the binding, unconditional promises that God has made to us.
- 2) The first major covenant is made to Abraham (Gen. 12.1-3), which says that all the families of the world will be blessed through him.
- 3) We learn in the New Testament that this comes to pass through Chris and all who follow Him (Gal. 3.7, 14).
- 4) So, as Dave Ferguson puts it, "From the very beginning, God's way of reaching and restoring the world has always been through what I would call a blessing strategy."
- 5) Dave Ferguson teaches an acronym for the word "bless" to help us live it out: the first letter B is for "BEGIN by praying to be a blessing" (see Matt. 9.35-38).
- 6) The L is for "Listen more, talk less, and pay attention wherever you go."
- 7) As we listen well, then we're able to do the first S of "bless": let them tell you how to SERVE them best.
- 8) Help with more basic needs, like helping people rest or de-stress, or intermediate needs, like belonging or interpersonal safety, before trying to help with higher needs (i.e., spiritual).
- 9) Churches often make the mistake of assuming they know how to best serve or care for their communities instead of taking the time to ask first.
- 10) As we listen and serve wisely, we'll get the chance to do the second S in "bless": tell our STORY as a part of God's bigger story.

Quotes to Remember

"Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity." (Simone Weil, 20th-century French philosopher)

"The Christian message is universally good news for Christians and non-Christians alike...It brings blessing to adherents and non-adherents alike. In a pluralistic world, a religion is valued based on the benefit it brings to its non-members...If Jesus sends people into the world to love and serve their neighbors, their neighbors benefit, and so do the people sent by Jesus, since it is better to give than receive." (Brian McLaren, in *A Generous Orthodoxy*)

A Prayer for the Week

From "Liturgies from Below":

God, may we receive Your blessing and share it with others, friends and strangers alike. May we accept Your gifts and share them with others, rich and poor alike. And may we invite Your healing into our own lives so that we can share it with others, for all have wounds that only Your grace can mend, amen.