



# FLOURISHING

**Week of September 10**

**Flourishing through the Good, True, and Beautiful<sup>1</sup>**

## **Overview:**

This sermon series has centered around the idea of *flourishing* in our relationships with God, with others, and ourselves. When we live in *shalom* with one another, we also bring wholeness, peace, and reconciliation to our city and our world. The word *shalom* in the Hebrew bible carries this idea of flourishing – not just living “at peace” with one another but calling out the best in others through ethical economics, education centered on truth, physical health, and creative beauty. We are called to live in such a way that others are drawn into the abundant life that Jesus provides.

## **Group Objectives:**

***Relationships and Life Transformation are the primary purpose of community groups.***

- Reflect on this past Sunday’s message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- To bring the kingdom into our communities through what is good, true, and beautiful.

## **DNA statement(s) tie-in:**

- *We are contributors, not consumers.* We do not attend church, we are the Church, and we exist in and for the world.
- *We are outrageously generous.* We are most like God when we are generous.

## **Conversation Starters:**

- What is the most beautiful place you’ve ever been? Why was it so impactful to you?
- What stood out to you from this week’s sermon?

## **Listening to God**

- Where did you experience God last week? How were you able to join God on mission?

## **Learning from God’s Word: Bible Study Discussion**

*Flourishing as individuals is a healthy goal; Jesus came to give us an abundant life. But individual flourishing is not the END goal. According to scripture we are “blessed to be a blessing” (Gen 12:1-3). When we seek what is good, true, and beautiful in our neighborhoods and cities, we see God’s kingdom break into the brokenness around us, bringing light and healing to the nations. We are to “seek the peace (shalom) and prosperity of the city” to which God has called us. Like the Israelites, we live in “exile” – in-between the fall in the garden (Genesis 3) and the full realization of the New Creation (Revelation 21). While this prophetic word is given to the Israelites facing exile, it has application to us today.*

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion guide was written by Dawn Gentry and edited by Rachel Vaughn.

- **Read Jeremiah 29:4-7**
  - Imagine you are among these exiles. You've been taken from your home to a new land, to live among a people group very different from you. What are you feeling? How do you think you might respond?
  - Jeremiah gives them specific examples as to how the people should "build their lives" in Babylon. Which of these could be applied today?
  - When you read the phrase "seek the welfare of the city," what comes to mind regarding your own city? What are some felt needs in the community where you live?<sup>2</sup>
  - Think about a time when you prospered because your community was prospering. How have you seen this cycle work both ways? (Your flourishing also leads to the community's)
- **Seeking the Good**
  - In Genesis 1:27-31, we see that God made humans in the image of God, and that everything God made was good.
  - When we choose to view each person around us as "made in the image of God," and "good," how might that change our interactions with them? Why does it matter?
  - *Suggested application:* Sign up to join others in service to the community through CityServe: <https://cccomaha.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/category/25941>
- **Seeking the True**
  - John's writings often emphasize "the truth." Read John 1:14, 8:32, 14:16-17, and 3 John 4.
  - How do you discern who to trust? In a world where many claim truth is relative, what have you found to be constant and true?
  - *Suggested application:* Take part in a local PTA chapter and/or offer to volunteer in a literacy program teaching others to read.
- **Seeking the Beautiful**
  - Whether you enjoy nature, created art, music, poetry, theater, architecture – all beauty results from God's creative hand, and our ability to create "in God's likeness."
  - Read Psalm 8. What part of God's creation do you think is the most beautiful?
  - *Suggested application:* Choose a friend or two this week to share an experience at an art museum or a local park. How can this experience lead to flourishing?

### **Leaning into Obedience:**

- How do you sense God calling you to respond to this lesson?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

- Invite members of the group to share requests.
- Allow time for silent reflection on the following questions:  
How can I bring more of what is "good, true, and beautiful" into my community this week?

### **For further study:**

- Amy L. Sherman, *Agents of Flourishing: Pursuing Shalom in Every Corner of Society* (IVP, 2022)
- John Mark Comer, *Garden City: Work, Rest, and the Art of Being Human* (Thomas Nelson, 2017)

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<sup>2</sup> "Felt needs are changes deemed necessary by people to correct the deficiencies they perceive in their community." See <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15575338909489998>