

Thursday: Life in the Valley



Objective: Mountaintops and storms in our lives are powerful and formative experiences, but the rest of our lives are lived out in the valley. God wants to be a part of our life in the valley just as much.

Big Question(s): How do we acknowledge God's presence in the valley? How do you hear from God? (Scripture, prayer, wise counsel?) How can God use our stories to connect with others? How can we live vibrant lives in the valley?

Theme Verse: Colossians 3:17 No matter what you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the father through him.

Main Story/Text: Acts 8:26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian

Main Points:

1. God's Holy Spirit is with us, here in the valley.

God created us differently than the rest of creation, he formed us with his hands, like he was working with clay, he formed us from the very start to be in relationship with him. He sent his Son Jesus and after him, his Holy Spirit to live with and guide us. When we have a relationship with Jesus and put on our new selves we are renewed in knowledge in the image of God. God wants us to experience His peace and perspective as we are members of his family, the body of Christ. We learn through the mountaintops and valleys in life that help prepare us for the valley. He wants to teach us through the bible, time alone with Him, and through relationships with people that He is the way to an abundant life. God's Holy Spirit lives in us. We get to listen for Him.

- Colossians 3:12-17 (Theme) Acts 1:1-11 (Promise of Holy Spirit)
- Luke 11:13 (good gifts) Psalm 19: 1-2 (earth sings God's glory)

2. In relationship- where our journeys intersect.

God speaks to each one of us. It is God's desire and will that we experience His presence in our everyday life, and that we can help point one another to do the same. Look into our main story of the day and how God divinely orchestrated this meeting between Philip and the Ethiopian. Philip's obedience resulted in God opening the heart of the Ethiopian man to receiving His love. God uses our everyday life in the valley to connect us with the people he places in our path. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ we can share our stories as well as ask God for these "divine appointments" to make Him know to other people.

- Romans 1:1-20 (Specifically 19-20) 1 John 4:13 (He gives us his spirit)
- Ephesians 3:20-21 (Infinitely more)

3. Life IN Christ is the best life.

Commented [1]: Perhaps combine this into #1 and or 3, and include another distinct point about how life in the valley is where our stories and faith journeys intersect the stories and faith journeys of other people. It's a good place to focus on the main story for the day.

We all have different fears and burdens that keep us from living full lives, fearing the mundane, the repetition of life, what is next, what we are looking forward to, what we can or cannot do “as Christians” but guys... Jesus wants us to live full and abundant lives. We GET His Holy Spirit to live with and guide us on this exciting journey. As we ask for and listen to His promptings to follow Him each day, to radically love other people, we are fulfilling God’s kingdom purpose in our life, to bring Him glory and bring heaven to earth. Mountain tops, storms, and the valleys serve to point us to God. Our purpose is to glorify God, to treasure Christ, to enjoy him completely, forever.

- John 10:10

Ecclesiastes 3:9-14

Apply it:

1. God wants to be a part of our life and has given us His Holy Spirit.

We can experience Him in many ways: words, pictures, visions, dreams, impressions, feelings, smells, tastes... He is creative.

Let’s take a moment to be silent and listen for God.

Let’s pray for healing, let’s encourage one another with God’s truth. What is he saying to each of us right now? How is God working in your everyday story?

- John 14:16-17

Ephesians 3:20

2. We do live in a fallen and yet hopeful world, “the already and not yet”. We have experienced the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sin, and adoption into God’s family, and yet we are still living in the tension of now. We will face adversity and we have the power to react to the world WITH the hope of Jesus. After any battle what we will always have left is Jesus. What does this mean for the way we live life and react to the world around us? How does that change your life and re-write your story?

3. We have a lot to be thankful for; salvation, for hope for deeply rooted JOY in Christ Jesus.

How can a heart of gratitude change your perspective?

Philippians 4:10-14

Commented [2]: What is God calling us into?

4. God speaks to each one of us. It is God’s desire and will that we experience His presence in our everyday life. In each moment we can acknowledge who He is, and who we are as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. No part of human existence remains untouched by the loving and liberating rule of Jesus. Having a relationship with God is made possible by the Holy Spirit in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

Romans 1:1-20 (Specifically 19-20)

Luke 11:13 (good gifts)

Psalms 19: 1-2 (earth sings God’s glory)

1 John 4:13 (He gives us his spirit)