

Discover More: Together Small Group Study

Together in Community

Check in with one another.

- + If there is a new person, welcome them and introduce group members.
- + (High) Share something good or eventful that you give thanks and praise for?
- + (Low) What has been a challenge or a prayer concern for you?

Discover More about the Message

Message Introduction: In Genesis, Adam and Eve are discontent with all God has blessed them with in the garden of Eden and take a bite out of the apple which belongs only to God. In Philippians, the Apostle Paul urges us to put our trust in Jesus Christ, to discover a contentment that lies outside of us, one centered in God's grace in Christ.

Reflect on the message you heard in person or on-line.

- + What is something you heard that was interesting or engaging?
- + Is there anything that raised a question or needed more explanation?

Discover Scripture and Life

+ Read the scripture.

Genesis 3:3-7

God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Philippians 4:4-7, 11b-13

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

¹¹For I have learned to be content with whatever I have. ¹²I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in

need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Questions

The story in Genesis is observant of the psychology of need and want. Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden, but the gist of the story is that Eden was not enough, they wanted more. They bought into a myth of scarcity, that was the temptation, and once they bought in to the myth, the result was a sense of shame, of a psychological nakedness, so that they could no longer rejoice.

- + As a kid growing up, did you ever want something so bad that you lost your sense of perspective? That it was hard to enjoy what you already had?
- + In what ways do you draw on God and faith to fill your cup? How does that happen? Are there certain verses, promises? Or is it a certain practice of prayer?
- + Paul is saying, "It is not about the stuff you hold in your hand, but about the God who holds you in God's hand." What is your reaction to that thought? How does faith provide a perspective that helps you deal with the successes as well as the losses in life? How does prayer and faith turn attention away from material circumstances?

- + Walter Brueggemann said that the response of the church to the myth of scarcity is a liturgy of abundance. The church notes that often the human psyche focuses on what it does not have, rather than on what God has provided. The antidote is not to argue about what is or is not, but to act from the heart out of thanks, praise, and rejoicing. Giving is part of a liturgy of rejoicing in the Lord always. Who is someone you know who seemed to get this, to live with an attitude of rejoicing and giving from what they had, rather than focusing on what they did not have?

Together for the Coming Week

- + What did you take away from the message? What will stay with you this week?
- + As you look to the coming week, what is one word that summarizes how you are feeling.
- + Do you have any prayer concern that you would like to share? What is it?
- + Close in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Five Minutes with God

Introduction. Adam and Eve had an abundance of everything they needed, yet they listened to and acted on a belief that they and their lives weren't good enough. They believed that they had to have more (a forbidden fruit) so they could be more (like God). We too can be tempted by messages that tell us that we aren't enough and that wanting and getting more is the cure for this deficiency. Paul reminds us that we can be content with what we have and who we are, trusting that we can ask God for what we need.

Spiritual Practice. Pick something that you would like but aren't sure if it's a need or a "not enough" want. Sit quietly and imagine what it would be like having this. What need in your life is meet? Then imagine what it would be like to do without it. What need goes unmet? This takes honesty because often we want something that is only a temporary fix for a deep need. Digging down for the true need keeps us from settling for unsatisfying wants, and we can "with thanksgiving let [our] requests be made know to God" for our true needs.



First Lutheran
discover more : together

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