

BLESSED, BROKEN, GIVEN.

Week Two

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for the gift of friendship. Help us to keep growing in meaningful connections with one another as we look to what you have for us. Amen.

Talk It Over

During this series, we will be looking at the ways God moves in the common and the ordinary. This idea of God doing extraordinary things with what is ordinary is highlighted in the ways Jesus blessed, broken, and gave bread. In fact, Jesus' ability to bring life out of ordinary bread is a simple metaphor for what God wants to do in our lives. As we move through this series we will be looking at the words blessed, broken, and given in greater depths and seeing what these words mean for us today. Last week we looked at what it means to be blessed, and today we will specifically look at the ways brokenness can be a source of life.

- This week we started the talk by addressing some of the more common places we don't like going — the DMV, the courthouse, and the hospital. Are there any places you would add to this list? Explain your answers.

Read Romans 8:28

The Bible teaches us that God can use brokenness of all sorts to make us better. This isn't to say that God desires the brokenness, rather that God can use it for his good and our good. Today we are going to be looking in greater depths at the ways we are broken and the ways God can use our brokenness. Let's start by looking at three ways we are broken:

One — We are broken by our own fragility. Think of the ways in which we are simply limited as humans. Examples of this include medical issues, death, our own human limits, and so forth.

Two — We are broken by our own failures. Think about the ways our choices, actions, words, attitudes, and so forth fall short.

Three — We are broken by a fallen world. Here is where we would list things that happened to us that aren't our fault. These things are not our responsibility.

- Does this list feel comprehensive to you? Is there any form of hurt you would add to this list?
- Consider your deepest wounds, what category do they fall under for you? Feel free to share about what happened or not.

Read Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV) and Romans 8;1 (NIV)

When it comes to brokenness, it's important to understand there is a difference between conviction and condemnation. Conviction will bring us some level of sorrow, but we will sense the ways in which that sorrow is trying to lead us in the right direction. Condemnation, on the other hand, leads us to believe we are simply broken people and growth feels unattainable. So while conviction invites us to heal and grow, condemnation tells us we are bad people.

- Tell us about a time you felt convicted.
- Tell us about a time you felt condemnation.
- In your own words, describe the difference between conviction and condemnation.

Read Isaiah 61:3 (NLT)

While looking at brokenness this week, we also looked at what can come by giving our brokenness to God.

- What imagery in that verse resonates with you most? Why?

One — Read Psalm 17:17 (ESV)

Brokenness can open us up to others.

- Tell us about a time you experienced meaningful connection in the midst of pain.
- How has your brokenness connected you to others in a more general sense?
- When we are most broken we must be mindful of who we connect to. People can pull us into greater places of brokenness. Have you ever connected to the wrong person during a time of brokenness? What did you learn from this experience?

Two — Read Psalm 51:4 (CEB)

Brokenness can open us up to God's grace

- How have you seen brokenness open people up to grace?
- When we are broken we need healing. That healing may not look the way we expect or even the way we want at first. How have you seen God's grace heal you or someone you love before?
- When we own our brokenness we are open to saying 'yes' to God's grace. Have you rejected your own brokenness and in turn rejected God's grace in your life? Tell us about that experience.
- Is there anything going on in your life or heart now that you resist calling broken but that really might need to be called broken? If not, have you ever wrestled through something like this? Tell us about your journey.

Three — Read Psalm 51:18 (CEB) and 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV)

Brokenness can open us up to repentance and confession. Since repentance is a loaded word that is too often misused, abused, and treated in aggressive ways, let's take a second to clarify what it is: Repentance is owning there is a better way we can be and being open to repairing whatever damage we may have caused. From a Christian perspective, we would add it's a healthy sorrow that turns our hearts to God's.

- Who is a safe person in your life you can confess to this season? What about them makes them the right kind of person to confess to?
- Tell us about a time you struggled to repent.
- Repentance is often not a one-time thing. In many ways, it's a way of life that centers on taking ownership, being committed to growing, and repeatedly giving yourself back to God. What are some of the more regular things you find yourself repenting for?

If we haven't covered it yet, please let us know if there is an area of brokenness in your life you are waiting for God to move in. Are there any parts of today's conversation that are challenging you to think differently, be more open, or approach things in new ways?

Closing Prayer [Add in any specific answers from the above question to today's prayer.]

God, thank you for this group, these friends, and the chance to explore this topic. Help us to become more open to the healing and grace we can find in the midst of brokenness. Help us to see the ways you can move in brokenness. Use our brokenness to point people to your goodness God. Amen.

Group Logistics [A Reminder for New Groups]

As your group heads to a close for the holidays, be sure everyone is on the same page regarding expectations. Is this a break? Are you going to restart with next group launch? Consider ending your season with some sort of fun celebration. You may all also plan on attending the Encounter Jesus Weekend on November 23/24 together as a form of connection. Baptisms will also be happening this weekend in case anyone from your group is looking to take this step.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressured to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.