



## SESSION 1

The Blessed Life

### HOW DID IT GO?

Last Sunday Pastor Curtis concluded the ten-week series on Esther, *For Such a Time as This*. What are some of your takeaways from studying Esther?

In his sermon on Esther 9:17-28, Pastor Curtis quoted Richard Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline*, a book that explains twelve different spiritual disciplines (ex. - prayer, fasting, service). In Foster's chapter thirteen on celebration as a discipline, he writes, "Celebration brings joy into life, and joy makes us strong." How do you feel about celebration as a discipline? How does it make us strong? What is good to celebrate? Frivolous to celebrate?

Discuss what you celebrate and what it reveals about your values.

### **Introduction to new Sermon Series: The Songs Jesus Sang**

Historically, the Psalms have been a sourcebook for the worship of both Israel and the Christian church, inspiring songs, prayers, and ultimately, a life of trust in God. In this five week series, we will explore a few of the 150 psalms, approaching them as songs that Jesus sang - and that we still sing today.

Over five weeks we will think together about the blessed life, who humanity is in relationship to the cosmos, how to receive forgiveness when we fall short of God's intentions, what to do with our fear, and the importance of being in worship together.

### READ ALOUD | PSALM 1

Head | 15–20 Minutes

Observe the text and the author's main points

- Who is blessed? What do they avoid? What do they do?
- To what is the blessed person compared? To what is the wicked person compared?

- What are the consequences of being blessed or righteous? Of being wicked?

## Heart | 15–20 Minutes

Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors

- Who are the primary influences in your life? Who or what have been positive role models for you? Negative role models? Where do you spend time?
- Consider and discuss the company you keep. With whom or what should you spend more time? Less time?

## Hands | 10 Minutes

Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others.

### Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Share ways to delight in God.
- Discuss different ways to meditate on scripture. One way to meditate on scripture is to read it silently or out loud in different translations. For example, read Psalm 1 slowly out loud in the New Living Translation, English Standard Version, and the Message. Do this with the other Psalms we will study in this series: Psalms 32, 8, 27, and 84.
- Psalm 1 says that whatever the blessed person does “prosper”. How does God want us to prosper? Pray for God to prosper us in the ways that He wants.

### Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- **Charles Alford Summer Celebration** | Aug 4 | 5:30–7:30 PM | Fellowship Hall  
Come learn and celebrate highlights from Middle School (San Antonio) and High School (Miami) Mission and Adventure (Colorado, California) trips. Dinner provided. All FPC community and friends are welcome!
- **Local Mission Priority Partner** | Aug 8 | 12–2 PM | Open Door Mission  
Join Open Door Mission for a lunch hosted by their President and CEO, Tommy Thompson, catered by their Mission Kitchen with entertainment provided by the Open Door Mission Ensemble. Come find out about Open Door Mission, take a tour, and learn how you can give back to an organization that transforms men’s lives. Register at <https://www.opendoorhouston.org/events> or contact Madi Weir, Missions Coordinator, at [mweir@fpchouston.org](mailto:mweir@fpchouston.org).
- **Movie Night** | Aug 10 | 3 PM | LC 080  
Pray for and invite friends to come to the August 10 Movie Night. Also, pray for the success of monthly post-Alpha nights to deepen relationships and interest in Jesus Christ. For more information contact Pastor of Evangelism, Emmanuel Paulpeter at [epaulpeter@fpchouston.org](mailto:epaulpeter@fpchouston.org).

## Reaching Beyond

- **August 16–26** | FPC staff and covenant partners will travel to Gaba, Uganda to speak at and attend a conference, visit a sister village in Namutamba, and connect with friends from Africa Renewal Ministries (ARM). Would you pray the following as they prepare for this trip:
  - For the team members' visa applications because the online application process has been frustrating.
  - For team preparation and for cross-cultural information and training to be completed. Hurricane Beryl interrupted the sequence of meetings.
  - For each team member as they prepare for the trip, ie. visa application process, travel medicine appointments, packing preparation, and for hearts to be softened through prayer and reflection.
  - For our partner, ARM, while they prepare for the Renewal Summit that the FPC team will attend and help lead.
- **August Back-to-School** | Many of our Mission Partners have initiatives to support children returning to school. For how to participate in community service projects or charitable activities, go to [fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/upcoming-opportunities](https://fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/upcoming-opportunities) or contact Madi Weir, Missions Coordinator, at [mweir@fpchouston.org](mailto:mweir@fpchouston.org).