

June 10th, 2017

Hello Brothers and Sisters! I hope this devotion finds you well and rested. There's a lot of exciting things that God is doing amongst us so take some time to share how you've seen God working this past week and then pray as a squad asking the Spirit to lead us as we go through today's topic.

Slight tangent but recently, I've been so fascinated by the fact that God has given to us the gift of the Bible. And this gift is perfect from to cover to cover. God's instructions have been preserved over the years and still stays relevant today. And get this -- it is God-breathed. I can't think of any gift more intimate and pure. So let's start with Psalm 67:1-2:

¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
² that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.

Maybe you've heard this from Pastor Tung's benedictions, but regardless of where you've heard this, right from verse 1 we get *Truth #1: God desires to bless us...* This is based on who He is **[What characteristics of God come to mind when you hear this? Would you consider yourself blessed? How has God blessed you? What has He given you?]**

If we keep looking, verse 2 tells us the 'why'. Why does God bless us? If you re-read verse 2, we realize that *Truth #1* is incomplete. From verse 1 to verse 2 it's a comma, not a period – the thought is incomplete. So, the reality is *Truth #1: God desires to bless us...so that we might make His glory known through all the nations*

We see this throughout the Bible, from Old Testament to New Testament. This truth is present from creation to the end of time, from Genesis to Revelation.

[Exercise #1]

We can even argue that this truth is the underlying message in every Bible story. When we think of Abraham, Joshua, Esther, Job, Peter, Paul and the life of Jesus, we see the miraculous ways God has blessed and intervened on behalf of each of these characters. The way in which He acts is so profound that ultimately it points to no one but Him alone. If we take the story of Joshua and the wall of Jericho, who but God can take credit for the fall of the wall by using only trumpets and yelling? Man would come up with an war plan, a plan of military action, but God would use instruments and the most unconventional ways to humble us to recognize who He is and for others to see more of His glory.

We see that God's intentions of blessing us is for the furtherance of His Kingdom. Have we been disconnecting the blessings of God from His intended purpose? Where do we see some of God's blessings going? For ourselves? For others? **[Take time to answer in squads. Feel free to refer to some of the listed blessings asked above – if they answer yes/no, be sure to ask why they answered in that way ☺]**

God loves you. The gravity and significance of His love for you do not change. He loves you AND He has blessed you so that His grace and His way can be made known to the nations. That is His intent, and the very literals of Psalm 67:1-2, and several passages and stories throughout the Bible. *Truth #2 God has a global purpose for you.*

The Holy Spirit wants a world for Christ. Do you have the Spirit? Do you want the world for Christ? This global purpose is not a specific calling for just missionaries. It is a calling and purpose for all Christians. When you come before God in heaven will He see that you've strived to be like Him? To be knit with the Spirit, to want what He wants? Will he see that the blessings He's given to you are well invested in His kingdom? I hope this screams eternal perspective because these two perspectives are divinely woven together. If you were to die and come before Jesus are you singing praises and experiencing the eternal joy He has promised? Or are you vouching for yourself with your resume, your portfolio, your salary? And then if we were to look forward hundreds of years later, I hope you are still in the same place, and experiencing that same joy still. **[No questions, just ask for thoughts of the squad, or share them yourself]**

So this wouldn't be fair without some way to reevaluate and apply this so let's get ready for some application. And I'll preface this application with *Truth #3 God is bringing nations to you; the nations are among us.* The Migration Policy Institute (2017) looked at the US census Bureau data and found that in 1970 the immigration population was around 9.6 million. Then in 2010, the immigration population was around 40 million, and in 2015 that number increased to 43.3. Furthermore, depending on your source, you'll find that Montgomery County is nationally recognized as one of the top most diverse counties in the United States. You can even go more specific to that and find familiar cities that rank on a national level such as Gaithersburg, Silver Spring, or Germantown (NBC, 2016). All these statistics, what do they entail? Your global perspective isn't to wait till you've earned enough money to travel to another country for a short-term mission's trip; your global perspective starts in your backyard. It starts with the blessings God has given you today and where God has placed you today. This may mean talking to international students – do so humbly – or learning another language – do so diligently – or volunteering with community programs – do so compassionately. **[In what other practical ways can you use the global perspective to purpose your actions or commitments? Are there spaces that you feel God may be calling you to reach out?]**

[Exercise #2]

I hope that as you engage in these spaces, and seek out the world for God's glory you are in awe of how great our God is. The challenge is to step out of your comfort zone. You'll find the many cultures of God's people only reflect God's creative nature. There is so much joy in learning and partaking in worshipping God in so many ways with your brothers and sisters spread throughout the world.