Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God created a new community called the church. This community is at the core of God’s strategy for providing our world a tangible witness of his power, presence and love.

As such, the church is called to be a community of courage, compassion, generosity, and grace. We are to believe strongly and care deeply. We are to be present and available to meet needs in our city.

When it comes to being the church, we can quickly drift from our calling and miss making the impact God desires. This seldom happens intentionally, but without intentionality, drift always happens eventually.

So in the next eight weeks we are going to remember who we are and why we care. Our prayer is that God uses these weeks to remind us of the key values that motivate us and to help people experience Jesus.

Here are two things we know: Jesus is alive. And he has great things planned for us.

Every blessing,
Charlie, Brad, and Steve
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Because no one is born into this world with a theology, each generation must rediscover the truths of Scripture for itself.

Preaching the Bible is the primary tool God has given the church for this to take place.

Small groups are the place where the preaching at Faith is applied and where our church is encouraged to live out the Scriptures. Members of Faith’s small groups take time each week to discuss the previous Sunday’s sermon, share specific insights from the Bible, and care for one another so that as a church we grow up to maturity in Jesus.

This study guide has been put together to give you an overview of our current sermon series so that you know where we are going as a church and are prepared for great discussions in your small group.

Here is an overview of what you will find for each week in this study guide:

**Main Passage** – This is the passage the teaching pastor will preach from.

**Secondary Passages** – These passages help to unpack and explain the main passage.

**Passage for Memorization and Meditation** – This is one passage to memorize and meditate on throughout the week so that at all times you are giving Jesus an opportunity to work in your life.

**Overview** – This is an overview of what will be discussed in small group this week.

**Opening Question** – This is a general question meant to spark conversation.

**Discussion Questions** – These are questions related to the Bible passages.

**Application Section** – These are questions and ideas for applying the Bible to your life.

**Table Time With Kids** – These are questions and ideas for families with kids.

These materials are not meant to be a rigid formula for your small group, but rather a means for intentional study, discussion, and life application so that ultimately, as a church, we grow together to maturity in Jesus.

We hope you find this helpful.
What is a small group?
Small groups at Faith are small gatherings of people from Faith that meet regularly for friendship, prayer, and Bible study.

Each small group is unique because it is shaped by the people who attend. However, at the heart of each small group is a desire to see a tight-knit community form that is marked by a growing love for Jesus and for the other people in the small group.

Why should I join a small group?
We are made for friendship with God and others. When we are not known and loved by others, we suffer because we are not experiencing all that God created us to experience. Additionally, life is too difficult to journey through alone. Therefore, small groups are a place where we can connect in friendship with other people through the ups and downs of life.

How do I get connected to a small group?
The easiest way to get connected to a small group is to go to www.faithefc.org/small_group. You can also sign up on Sunday by filling out the Bluebook. Finally, if you would like to join a small group, you can call the church at 970-226-2095.
Date: September 11

Title: We Are Guided

Main Passage: Psalm 119:105 - 112

Secondary Passages: 2 Timothy 3:10 - 16, 2 Peter 1:16 - 21, Psalm 119

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119:105

Overview: Everyone needs a guide. Frodo needed Gandalf to get to Mount Doom. Luke needed Obi-Wan to defeat Darth Vader. And Tommy Boy needed Richard to teach him to sell brake pads so he could get the girl and save the family business.

Guides shape our lives in profound ways. They tell us what matters most. They help us see what needs to change. They remind us we have what it takes, and sometimes they say hard things to help us become better people.

In the Bible we see that God wants to guide us. He wants to give us a playbook for living that actually works. He wants to clear away the clutter so we have a compelling path forward. And so God invites us to trust him with all our heart.

So the question becomes What does being guided by God actually look like?

It is very simple. We read the Bible and we do what God calls us to.

Doing this is pretty easy when we agree with God. But God’s plan isn’t just to guide us in the areas of life where we already agree with him. His plan is to guide us in all areas. He wants his word to be a lamp that lights the way forward.

So the question is never Do I want to do this? or Do I agree with this?

The question is always Has God called me to this?

If the answer is yes, we let God guide the way.

It should be said: a lot of things God wants us to do won’t make sense. They seem counterproductive and counterintuitive. Consider just a few of God’s most basic commands: love your enemies, forgive as you’ve been forgiven, love your neighbor as yourself, and submit to those in authority.

All these things are easy to talk about but fairly hard to do. But we must do them. Why? This is what being guided is all about. You see, we haven’t learned to let God guide us until we do what he says despite our concern that his way won’t work.
Opening Question:
• Talk about a person who has guided you. What impact did he or she have in your life?

Discussion Questions:
• Read Psalm 119:105 - 112. What sticks out to you from this passage?
• What does the image of God’s word being a lamp to light our path teach us about the place the Bible is to have in guiding us through life?
• What are the characteristics of a heart that is inclined to be guided by God’s word?
• In verse 11 the psalmist says God’s word is a heritage. In what ways does allowing the Bible to guide you lead you to a lasting legacy?
• How would you describe the psalmist’s attitude toward the Bible?
• Read 2 Timothy 3:16 – 17. What does Paul say about the different ways God’s word guides us?
• It is one thing to learn that cheating is wrong (teaching). It is another thing to hear someone say, “You need to stop cheating” (rebuking). Why is it important to allow the Bible to teach us and rebuke us?
• Read Proverbs 3:11, 17:10, 27:5, 28:23. What is needed in your heart to receive rebukes from God’s word?

Application Section:
• D.L. Moody once wrote, “The scriptures were not given for our information but our transformation.” In what ways are you being changed by God’s word?
• What is your favorite passage in the Bible? Why is that passage so special to you?
• What could you do this week to cultivate a desire to allow God’s word to guide you?
• Part of allowing God to guide you is having a plan to daily read the Bible. Do you have a plan? If so, what is it and what has been the benefit of following it?
• If you don’t have a plan to read the Bible daily, grab a free Quiet Time Journal from the church. It will help you establish a daily time with Jesus.

Table Time With Kids:
• What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
• Read Psalm 119:105 – 112 and 2 Timothy 3:16 – 17. What sticks out to you from these verses?
• What is the Bible? It is God’s word given to guide us through life.
• Do we need a guide to help us through life? Yes. Life is filled with choices and we need a guide to help us live wisely.
• Why did God give us the Bible? Because he loves us and he wants to guide us to life.
• How should we approach the Bible? With a humble heart.
• Parents, this week pray that your children will have hearts that incline to follow God’s word.
Date: September 18

Title: We Are Saved By Grace

Main Passage: Luke 15:11 - 32

Secondary Passages: Ephesians 2:1 - 10, John 3:16 - 17

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:
For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.
Ephesians 2:8

Overview: Never forget: we are saved by grace. This is good news because we are inconsistent, at best.

The reality of our inconsistency leads to an important question: Why does God love us?

The answer is not that we try hard to impress him or that we are particularly impressive to him. The answer is that grace is part of God’s character.

To make sense of God’s grace, consider Jesus’ famous story about the prodigal son.

The prodigal son was a big failure. He took his dad’s money, left home, and dishonored the family. The prodigal son had no intention of changing his life, but then a crisis hit and he ran out of cash. So he swallowed his pride and started the long journey back to his dad.

As the son heads home, questions hang in the air. How will the dad respond? Will he make his son crawl home on his knees? Will he keep his boy at arm’s length until he proves he’s sorry? Will he add condemnation to shame?

The answer to these questions is an emphatic no. Instead, the father races out to meet his son. He embraces him. He blesses him. Then he throws a huge party in his son’s honor, like the boy is a war hero returned from a great battle. But he isn’t a war hero; he’s a prodigal.

This, by the way, is how God responds to us. He races out to meet us. He is eager to forgive and restore us. So much so that he sent Jesus to save us. In other words, while we were busy planning our “I’m not worthy” speech, God was busy planning our welcome home party.

So how do we respond? We come home to the Father and we receive grace upon grace. We let mercy define us. We release shame as God’s love washes over us. Then we confidently stand with our Father and we wait to compassionately welcome home his other sons and daughters.

Mary Oliver’s poem Wild Geese captures a grace shaped life:
Wild Geese
by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes, over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

May our lives and our church always be shaped by God's extravagant grace!

Opening Question:
• Who in your life has shown you grace?

Discussion Questions:
• Read Luke 15:11 - 32. What sticks out to you from this passage?
• Read Luke 15:1 – 2. This sets the context for why Jesus tells the parable of the prodigal son. What elements of the parable do you see in verses 1 – 2?
• Imagine yourself as the father. List some reasons for not welcoming and embracing the son.
• Imagine yourself as the prodigal son. List some reasons for not coming home.
• Imagine yourself as the elder brother. List some reasons for being upset about the father’s grace.
• What does this parable teach you about God’s heart for those who are far from him?

Application Section:
• What would it look like for a church to embody God’s grace?
• What keeps you from receiving God’s grace?
• What keeps you from extending God’s grace?
• How have you experienced God’s grace from people at Faith?
• How are you extending God’s grace?
• Tell about a time you realized you were welcomed and loved by God.
• In what ways is God inviting you to receive his grace?
• In what ways is God asking you to extend his grace?

**Table Time With Kids:**

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- Read Luke 15:11 - 32. What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Why does Jesus tell this story? *Because people are upset that he is eating with sinners.*
- What does the lost son do to his father? *He takes his dad’s money and he dishonors his family.*
- How does the dad respond to the son when he returns? *He runs to meet him and he blesses him.*
- What does the dad teach us about God? *God is full of grace. He wants us to say yes to his love.*
- What does God do when we say yes to his love? *He celebrates.*

*Parents, this week help your children see that God is full of grace. Our response to grace is to receive it and then extend it. Help your children identify an area in their life where they need to receive grace and a way they can give grace to others.*
**Date:** September 25

**Title:** We Are Heard

**Main Passage:** Psalm 115:1 – 18


**Passage for Memorization and Meditation:**

*Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

1 Peter 5:7

**Overview:** Perhaps the greatest fear we face is not being heard. After all, not being heard communicates that our concerns don’t matter and, subsequently, we don’t matter. It is no wonder so many wrestle with doubt and discouragement during seasons when God appears silent.

God’s seeming silence means most people will feel from time to time that God isn’t interested. He’s a distracted dad who is too busy to be bothered by our constant concerns.

But none of this is true. So in the Bible, God goes to great lengths to remind us that he listens to us. In Isaiah 58:9 we are told, *You shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’*

*Here I am.* Those words are profoundly helpful. They tell us God is present and available. We aren’t ignored. We do not bother him. Instead, God is at our side – attentive – ever present.

And what is he doing? He’s listening.

And why does he listen? Because he cares for us.

Jesus taught that God is a good Father in Heaven who invites us to approach him like a child approaches a good dad. In other words, we are invited to come to God freely, frequently, and fearlessly. We are welcome when our joy is full and when our tank is empty - when we are fully fearful and when we are feeling brave. There isn’t a season or situation when God isn’t listening.

One story that captures what happens when we understand that God loves to listen is about a priest named Edward Farrell who went on a summer vacation to Ireland to celebrate his uncle’s eightieth birthday.

Here is a bit of the story as told by Brennen Manning:

*Edward Farrell’s one living uncle was about to celebrate his eightieth birthday. On the great day, the priest and his uncle got up before dawn and dressed in silence. They took a walk along the shores of Lake Killarney and stopped to watch the sunrise, standing side by side with not a word exchanged and staring straight at the rising sun. Suddenly the uncle turned and went skipping down the road. He was radiant, beaming, smiling from ear to ear.*

*His nephew said, “Uncle Seamus, you really look happy.”*
"I am, lad."

"Want to tell me why?"

His eighty-year-old uncle replied, "Yes, you see, my Abba is very fond of me."

How would your life change if you honestly believed God is fond of you? You have a good Father in Heaven who loves to listen. You are his constant concern.

So what should we do? We should come to him freely, frequently, and fearlessly, knowing that when we call out to him, he says to us: Here I am.

Opening Question:
• Why do you think people struggle to be present and to listen to other people?

Discussion Questions:
• Read Psalm 115:1 – 18. What sticks out to you from this passage?
• Why is it so important to consistently remember that God is a living God?
• Read Isaiah 49:15 and Isaiah 58:9. What do these passages teach you about God's character?
• Read Luke 11:1 – 13, Philippians 4:6 – 7, and 1 Peter 5:7. From these passages, how does God want us to approach him in prayer?

Application Section:
• In what ways do you struggle to remember that God is living, active, present, and powerful?
• In what ways do you struggle to remember that God loves listening to you?
• What keeps you from casting all your cares on God?
• What prayers are you waiting on God to answer?
• What helps you to remember that God loves you and listens to you?
• What is one thing you can do to talk with God more consistently?

Table Time With Kids:
• What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
• Read Psalm 115:1 – 18. What sticks out to you from this passage?
• Is God alive? Yes. God is alive and active in our world.
• Does God love you? Yes.
• Does God listen when you talk to him? Yes.
• Does God enjoy listening to us? Yes. He loves to listen to his children.
• Why does God seem to not speak back to us when we speak to him? Often we don't know how God speaks to us. He speaks to us clearly in the Bible.
Date: October 2

Title: We Are A Family

Main Passages: John 13:34 - 35, 17:20 - 26


Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:15 - 16

Overview: God is doing a miraculous work in our world. He is creating a family known for its love. He is crafting a community of diverse people who serve generously and break bread together fearlessly. In short, God is building his church.

God’s work in our world is good news because everyone wants to find true intimacy in an enduring family. After all, isolation is lonely and sometimes the loneliness becomes as big as our country.

When this happens, a restlessness grows in the human heart because we were built for love and loyalty - for vulnerable moments – for exchanging truth about ourselves – for being known in a family.

Simply put, It is not good for us to be alone.

So God is working to create a family known by its love. This work is as miraculous as turning water into wine, giving recovery of sight to the blind, and bringing life into a tomb filled with death.

Why? Because we are constantly distracted by insecurity and held captive by shame. Insecurity and shame are enemies to intimacy. They cause us to go into hiding. And if not dealt with, they lead us to tell stories about ourselves that are not true.

So God comes to us and he says, You are loved as you are, not as you pretend to be, and you are welcomed into my family.

Our response to God’s invitation is to set aside shame and insecurity so we can walk bravely into Christian community. This is a struggle for all of us. So God walks with us as we find it, cultivate it, and grow as a family.

Opening Question:

• How would you describe the ideal family?
Discussion Questions:
• Read John 13:34 – 35 and John 17:20 - 26. What sticks out to you from these passages?
• Jesus said we are to love as he has loved us. How would you describe Jesus’ love for us?
• Jesus prayed we would be one as he and the Father are one. How would you describe the relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son?
• What kind of community does God want the church to be?
• Read John 13:1 – 15. In what way does this passage help us see how to build love and unity?

Application Section:
• What things keep us from finding and cultivating lasting relationships within the church?
• What things are needed for love and unity to grow in our church?
• What specific thing can you do to cultivate love and unity within your small group?

Table Time With Kids:
• What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
• Read John 13:34 – 35 and John 17:20 - 26. What sticks out to you from these passages?
• What is the church? The church is a family.
• What two words should define every church? Love and unity.
• Parents, this week help your children identify a few ways they can help cultivate love and unity at Faith. Perhaps you could put together a play date with some other kids from Faith or help your children write a thank you note to the people who serve them in the Faith Kids ministry.
Date: October 9

Title: We Are Gifted

Main Passage: Romans 12:1 - 13

Secondary Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:12 - 31

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:
Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.
Romans 12:6

Overview: God gifted you to make a difference in his world. He put you on this planet during this time in history to make a contribution. In other words, the reason you have air in your lungs is to partner with God in creating something beautiful.

What you create will be unique because God has uniquely gifted you.

So don’t spend time trying to mimic someone else’s contribution.

That will only make you insecure and ineffective. Like a grizzly bear trying to hunt like an alligator, you will feel all wrong.

Instead, look at the needs around you and the gifts God has given you. Then jump in and make the impact God created you to make. You see, the place where God calls you to be is where your God-given gifts meet the world’s deepest need.

Opening Question:
• Talk about a time you witnessed someone doing exactly what they were made to do.

Discussion Questions:
• Read Romans 12:1 - 13. What sticks out to you from this passage?
• Why is humility essential for using the gifts God has given to you?
• How does Romans 12:4 – 6 help cultivate humility?
• What does it look like to serve the Lord with a fervent spirit?

Application Section:
• What gifts has God given to you?
• What needs do you feel God has uniquely gifted you to meet?
• What holds you back from serving with the gifts God has given?
• In what ways are you making a difference in this world?
• What gifts do you see in the people in your small group?
• How can your small group encourage you to keep using the gifts God has given you?

Table Time With Kids:
• What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
• Read Romans 12:1 - 13. What sticks out to you from this passage?
• Does God give gifts and abilities to each person? Yes.
• What does God want you to do with your gifts? He wants you to use them to bless others.
• Parents, this week help your child identify one way God has gifted them, and help them to put together a plan for using that gift to bless someone in need.
Date: October 16

Title: We Are Generous

Main Passage: Psalm 112


Passage for Memorization and Meditation:
And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.
2 Corinthians 9:8

Overview: Have you ever walked into a room to grab something, only to forget what you came to get? It happens to most of us at one time or another and it can be a bit discouraging and disorientating. No one enjoys feeling like they are losing their mind.

Now, it is one thing to forget why you walked into a room; it's another thing to forget why you walk this earth. When this happens, an unsettledness begins to grow in our souls because, like Bilbo at the start of The Hobbit, we begin saying no to the adventures outside our front door and we step back from giving love to others. When this happens, we lose sight of the reality that we have been made for something more. And when we don’t give ourselves to something more, unsettledness lingers in our souls like a low grade fever.

God doesn’t want our souls to be unsettled. So at the start of the Bible, God tells us he made us to display his character in breathtaking ways.

A key part of God’s character is generosity. In other words, God gives freely and expansively. He spreads love, grace, and life abundantly.

Why is God generous? Because there is no scarcity in God. Within the Trinity there is a fullness of love, happiness, and life. And out of this fullness God lavishly gives to his creation.

And here is the amazing thing God reveals: He is able to make all grace abound to us, meaning God gives extravagantly so that we can give extravagantly – abounding in every good work – giving life and blessing to his creation – leaving others more happy and full.

There are many ways to be generous. Obviously, we can give money and time to bless others. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg. We can generously give vulnerability by sharing our fears and struggles. We can give hospitality by opening our homes and sharing our space. We can give truth by bravely saying what needs to be said. We can give grace by forgiving those who hurt us. We can give encouragement and hope by believing the best and remembering that nothing is impossible with God.

All of this is giving and all of this is possible, not because we have enough, but because there is no scarcity in God. And he is able to make grace abound so that we may abound in every good work.
So let’s remember: God made us to spread love everywhere so everyone leaves our presence more full of his joy; and God will give us everything we need to love all the people who move in and out of our lives.

**Opening Question:**
- Talk about someone in the past year who has been generous to you. How did their generosity bless you?

**Discussion Questions:**
- Read Psalm 112. What sticks out to you from this passage?
- The psalmist wrote that the righteous distributes freely. What does it look like to distribute freely?
- What things get in the way of being generous?
- Read 2 Corinthians 9:6 – 11. What sticks out to you from this passage?
- What does it look like to be generous in every way?
- What promise does Paul give us in verse 11?
- How does this promise help you to be generous?

**Application Section:**
- Below is a list of 7 ways to be generous. Which of these is hardest for you to give and why?
  * Vulnerability - Sharing our privacy, our hearts, our struggles and our doubts
  * Hospitality – Opening our homes and sharing our personal space
  * Time – Being present with other people
  * Treasure – Giving our money and possessions to bless others
  * Grace – Forgiving those who hurt us
  * Truth – Saying what needs to be said so people grow to maturity
  * Encouragement – Speaking in a way that is generous, believing the best
- In what specific ways has God been generous to you in the last year?
- How have other people been generous to you?
- What do you think this world would be like if God were not generous?
- What is one thing you can do this week to be extravagantly generous?

**Table Time With Kids:**
- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- Read Psalm 112. What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Does God give generously? Yes.
- Does God want us to be like him? Yes. We are made in his likeness to display his character.
- In what ways has God been generous to you?
- **Parents, this week spend some time talking with your children about the different ways God has given to them. Help them see that every good thing they have is a gift from a good God who loves them.**
Date: October 23

Title: We Are Available

Main Passages: Mark 10:13 - 16, John 5:1 - 17

Secondary Passage: Mark 1:29 - 39

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:
“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”
Mark 10:14

Overview: For years, I said, No. I can't be bothered. I don't have time. Sorry, I'm very busy. I'll fit you into my calendar in a few weeks . . . which became a few months, which became a few years.

During this time of stinginess, I found my world was getting smaller and smaller. Friends stopped calling because I was no longer available.

Then I came across these words: The world of the generous gets larger and larger, the world of the stingy gets small and smaller.¹

These words are more than a principle for financial giving. They are a principle for generous living. They help us see generous people generate things. Generous people are available and so their lives become more surprising, colorful, and fruitful.

One of the things I've noticed about Jesus is how he made himself available, not in a theoretical kind of way, but in a real way that welcomed interruptions, made room for surprises, and said yes to people who wanted things from him.

And for the record, there were a lot of people who wanted things from Jesus. Here's the short list: blind men – grieving sisters – greedy tax collectors – hurting women – sick children – questioning lawyers.

To all these and hundreds of others, Jesus made himself available. Sure, there were moments when he drew back to spend time with his Heavenly Father, but most of the time Jesus was out meeting tree climbers, washing feet, answering questions, and blessing children.

He didn't consider himself too busy to be bothered by a woman caught in adultery. He didn't get overwhelmed when a desperate dad needed help or kids wanted some time or when a crowd showed up without lunch.

Instead, Jesus was available. He wandered and he blessed. He noticed needs and stepped forward to meet them. He stopped to tell stories. He lived his whole life with an inner ear to the Spirit's whisper: Listen to her. Eat with them. Play with those kids. Draw in the sand. Walk to that tree. Rest at this well. Look at the birds. Notice the flowers. Give them something to eat.

¹ Proverbs 11:24, The Message
And as he made himself available, his life became bigger and bigger.

Jesus calls us to be like him. This is exhilarating but also a bit scary.

It’s exhilarating because being available means we are in on God’s movement in this world. We get to live awake to what he’s up to. We are storm chasers, watching where the Spirit is blowing. We are feet washers and storytellers. This is exhilarating work.

But it’s also exhausting and a bit scary because being available means we say yes to interruptions and surprises. We hold our days loosely because God may have another plan. He may have a mom who needs help or a stranger who needs to share their story.

And while I don’t particularly like interruptions, I’m also learning there isn’t another way to become available than to welcome them.

And so, slowly, I’m learning my life doesn’t consist of the plans I put together. Instead, life consists of the love I receive from God and the love I give away to others.

One implication of this truth is that my life’s work isn’t what I tend to think it is. Often, I think my life’s work is to write a book or preach a good sermon. And not that those things don’t matter, but my life’s work is bigger and better. My life’s work is to be available to the Spirit’s whisper: Listen to her. Speak an encouraging word to him. Swing with your daughter. Enjoy your son’s laughter. Make yourself available to others.

So I’m learning to make myself available, and in this I’m beginning to see my world expand again. It is becoming more varied, more surprising, and more full of color because the world of the available becomes larger and larger.

Opening Question:
• Why do you think people fear being available?

Discussion Questions:
• Read Mark 10:13 – 16 and John 5:1 – 17. What sticks out to you from these passages?
• In what ways do you see Jesus making himself available in these passages?
• What reasons do you think the disciples gave for trying to keep the children from Jesus?
• What reasons do you think people gave for passing by the multitude of invalids at the pool of Bethesda?
• What impact does Jesus have on other people by making himself available?
• In what ways does Jesus’ death on the cross signify his availability to all people?

Application Section:
• In what ways has Jesus made himself available to you?
• Jesus said we are to follow him. What does it look like for you to be available?
• What fears have kept you from being available?
• What steps can you take to make yourself available in this next season of your life?
Table Time With Kids:

• What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
• Read Mark 10:13 – 16 and John 5:1 – 17. What sticks out to you from these passage?
• Does Jesus want to work through you to bless other people? Yes.
• How do we know who Jesus wants us to bless? We listen to the Holy Spirit to speak to us.
• Parents, this week help your child identify one person they can bless.
Date: October 30

Title: We Are Brave

Main Passage: Joshua 1:1 - 9

Secondary Passages: Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:
And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28

Overview: Recently I’ve noticed that fear can have a big impact in our lives. It can push us away from where God wants us to be. It can keep us from living wholeheartedly. It kills vulnerability, crushes curiosity, and creates cautious, combative and controlling people.

Fear is never far from those who are following Jesus. After all, we are called into a relationship with a person who is set on saving the world. So sometimes our marching orders are inexplicable and unexplainable. They push us outside our comfort zone and only make sense in the context of following a living God.

Because of this, every time I’m afraid, I like to reflect on the passage in the Bible where Joshua is tasked with leading God’s people. At that time God’s people numbered over a million, and sometimes they were pleasant but at other times they were hard to manage. Additionally, Joshua wasn’t leading God’s people into a time of peace; he was leading them into a season of struggle. So the task in front of Joshua was nothing short of scary.

It was at this time that God gave Joshua his commission: Be strong and very courageous.

This commission invited Joshua to be brave. To say yes to God’s plans. To live his life aware of God’s presence and power. To lean in to the story unfolding before him.

God’s commission to us is the same. You see, God wants us to stand on the edge of what he is calling us to. He wants us to jump into the story unfolding before us. So he says, Be brave! Be very courageous! I am with you!

Opening Questions:
• Talk about someone you know who is very brave. How has their courage inspired you?

Discussion Questions:
• Read Joshua 1:1 - 9. What sticks out to you from this passage?
• In what ways could fear keep Joshua from embracing the task God had given to him?
• In verse 8 God tells Joshua to meditate on God’s word. How does meditating on God’s word help us to be brave?
• Read Jeremiah 29:11 and Romans 8:28. How do these verses help you to be brave?
Application Section:
- What things do you fear?
- In what ways have you been brave?
- What helps you to say yes to what God is calling you to do?
- Is there something God is calling you to do that you have said no to because you are afraid?
- Is there something God is calling you to do that you want to step into? How can this small group encourage you?

Table Time With Kids:
- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- Read Joshua 1:1 - 9. What sticks out to you from this passage?
- Is following God sometimes scary? Yes. We don’t always know where he will lead us.
- What helps us to be brave? Remembering God’s word to us.
- Parents, this week pray that your children will grow up to be brave men and women who listen to God and follow where he leads.