

▼ **Pharisees, Tax Collectors, and Children**  
**Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday August 10, 2025**  
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▼ **Opening Material**

▼ **Welcome!**

- Praise the Lord!
- Welcome to another Life Church sermon!

▼ **Transition**

- Welcome to another Sunday at Life Church.
- The QR code (also available on our song sheets) links to our Visitor Landing Page.
- Use it to access our notes, share your contact information, and access our giving page.
- Questions? If you took the time to visit us, you deserve to get answers!
- Email: [Questions@LifeChurchBoston.ORG](mailto:Questions@LifeChurchBoston.ORG)
- We are starting Luke 18.
- We will have life group after the message.

▼ **Thoughts**

- ...

▼ **Overview**

▼ **In today's message we will do the following:**

- Moralistic Therapeutic Deism
- ▼ **Why are we here?**
  - Acts 2:36-39
  - Acts 17:29-31
- Review passage - Luke 1:1-4.
- Review passage - Luke 4:14-21.
- Review our passage - Luke 18:9-14
- Review our passage - Luke 18:15-17
- Explore what Jesus is asking of us.
- Transition to Life Group.

## ▼ Opening Material

### ▼ Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

#### ▼ Principal Elements

- 1) A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
- 2) God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- 3) The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- 4) God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
- 5) Good people go to heaven when they die.

#### ▼ Comments

- Introduced in the 2005 book “Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers” by the sociologist Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton.
- Result of the National Study of Youth and Religion.
- ▼ According to Kenda Creasy Dean, author of the 2010 book “Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church”:
  - “The problem does not seem to be that churches are teaching young people badly, but that we are doing an exceedingly good job of teaching youth what we really believe: namely, that Christianity is not a big deal, that God requires little, and the church is a helpful social institution filled with nice people . . .”

### ▼ Why are we here?

#### • Acts 2:36-39 - Spoken to Jews

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

#### • Acts 17:29-31 - Spoken to Gentiles

“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

## ▼ Welcome to Luke!

### ▼ Video

- [Bible Project: Luke 1-9](#) - YouTube (00:08:16)
- [Bible Project: Luke 10-24](#) - YouTube (00:07:48)
- Luke 1:1-4

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

## ▼ Embrace Jesus' Mission

### • Luke 4:14-21 (NIV) - The Lord's Spirit Is Upon Me

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

## ▼ Feed on the Life of Jesus

- Are you “worded up”?
- Eat his flesh; Drink his blood - John 6:53-59; 2 Samuel 23:13-17
- Does the Word of Christ dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16 - KJV)?

### ▼ What if you read a Gospel every month - a chapter a day?

- The Gospel of John in August (8/1 – 8/21)
- The Gospel of Matthew in September (9/1 - 9/28)

- The Gospel of Mark in October (10/1 – 10/16)
- The Gospel of Luke in November (11/1 – 11/24)
- The Gospel of John in December (12/1 – 12/21)

▼ **For August this means:**

- Read John 9 on August 9 (yesterday).
- Read John 10 on August 10 (today).
- Read John 11 on August 11 (tomorrow).
- etc.
- **As you read, write down any questions you have.**

▼ **Ask yourself the following questions:**

- What did this chapter teach me about how Jesus viewed himself, his mission, his relationship to God, and his relationship to others?
- What would I like to better understand about this chapter?
- What did I find challenging about this chapter?
- What did I learn as I tried to apply this chapter to my life?
- Would an outsider who read this chapter recognize that I was trying to apply it to my life?

▼ **Jesus explained his teaching to his disciples:**

With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything. – Mark 4:33-34 (NIV)

- Did you grow up in church without getting your questions answered?
- Did you grow up apart from church wondering what all the fuss was about?
- Either way, don't be afraid to start from scratch or start over from scratch with someone who can walk you through the Bible so that you can understand God's Kingdom.
- Read and listen to God's Word in community!

▼ **Luke 18:9-14**

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: **“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’**

**“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’**

**“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”**

- **Parallel / Related Passages**

- ▼ **The Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

- ▼ Narrative - Luke 18:9-14

- Jesus addresses people who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else.
- A pharisee and a tax collector go to the temple to pray.
- The pharisees prays by himself thanking God that he isn't guilty of several sins that others commit: robbery, evil-doing, adultery. tax collection. He fasts twice a week and tithes faithfully.
- The tax collector won't even look up to heaven, but asks God for mercy on him as a sinner.
- Jesus declares that the tax collector went home justified rather than the Pharisee.
- Jesus declares that those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

- ▼ Observations / Background

- In the previous passage (Luke 18:1-8), Jesus was encouraging his disciples to always pray and not give up. The first verse of our passage implies that Jesus is still addressing his disciples.
- The Pharisee is telling God about the list of sins he doesn't commit and the virtues he demonstrates. He is thanking God that he is not like to tax collector.
- The tax collector exhibits deep shame about his sins. He speaks to God, but is too ashamed to "look him in the eye".
- The tax collector only speaks to God about his own sin.
- Justified means declared in "right relationship". In this context it implies restored to covenant faithfulness - faithfulness to the covenant between God and his people.
- Jesus expects his disciples to exhibit humility.

- ▼ Video

- [Bible Project: The Covenants](#) - YouTube (00:05:36)
- [Bible Project: Justice](#) - YouTube (00:06:18)

- ▼ Lessons

- Genuine followers of Jesus need an attitude correction from time to time.
- Don't use your time in God's presence to brag about yourself.
- Don't use your time in God's presence to look down on others.
- Practice humility in God's presence.
- Practice humility everywhere else.

## ▼ **Luke 18:15-17**

People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, **“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”**

### • **Parallel / Related Passages**

## ▼ **The Little Children and Jesus**

### ▼ Narrative - Luke 18:15-17

- People want Jesus to place his hands on their children.
- The disciples block them from doing it.
- Jesus reverses the disciples’ policy.

### ▼ Observations / Background

- Laying on of hands was a way to transmit a blessing.
- ▼ The disciples are operating by natural worldly priorities:
  - Adults take priority.
  - Children should be seen and not heard.
  - Jesus is revealing that his Kingdom works differently.

### ▼ Lessons

- Bring your children to Jesus. Give him access to them.
- Structure ministry to make it easy for parents to guide their children spiritually.
- Adopt the values of the Kingdom of God. Receive the Kingdom like a little child.

## ▶ **What shall we do?**

## ▼ **Life Group**

### ▼ **Welcome (5 - 10 minutes)**

- [Icebreaker](#)

### • **Worship (optional for life group meetings during Sunday service)**

### ▼ **Word - Discussion Questions**

For each question, spend 1 – 2 minutes in silence before you begin to respond.

- **What did this passage mean to the people who first received it?**
- **What does this passage mean to you?**

- **How will you apply this passage this coming week?**

▼ **Witness**

How will we work together as a team to be "good news" to the people around us?

▼ **Explore the Harvest Skills in the Training Page “Big Blueprint” diagram.**

- ▼ What level are you at with these?
  - Are you a “wanderer”, “follower”, “achiever”, or a “leader”?
  - What’s your plan for developing these skills?
- **Pray for the unchurched people you’ve been identifying.**





# Pharisees, Tax Collectors, and Children

Sunday August 10, 2025



# Welcome!



## Visitor Page

Welcome to another Sunday at Life Church.

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Questions? If you took the time to visit us, you deserve to get answers!

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We are continuing through Luke 18.

We will have life group after the message.



# Thoughts



• . . .



# Overview

In today's message we will do the following:

- Moralistic Therapeutic Deism
- Why are we here?
- Review passage - Luke 1:1-4.
- Review passage - Luke 4:14-21.
- Review our passages - Luke 18:9-14; Luke 18:15-17
- Explore what Jesus is teaching us.
- Transition to Life Group.



# Moralistic Therapeutic Deism 1 of 2



## Principal Elements

1. A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.



# Moralistic Therapeutic Deism 2 of 2



## Comments

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- Result of the National Study of Youth and Religion.
- According to Kenda Creasy Dean, author of the 2010 book “Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church”:
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# Why are we here?

Acts 2:36-39 – Spoken to Jews

Acts 17:29-31 – Spoken to Gentiles



# Acts 2:36-39 – Spoken to Jews



“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”



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“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”



# Welcome to Luke!



- Video: Bible Project: Luke 1-9
- Video: Bible Project: Luke 10-24
- Luke 1:1-4 – Luke’s Introduction
- Luke 4:14-21 – Embrace Jesus’ Mission



# Bible Project: Luke – Part 1 of 2





# Bible Project: Luke – Part 2 of 2





# Luke 1:1-4 – Luke’s Introduction



Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.



# Embrace Jesus' Mission: Luke 4:14-21



Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

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Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”



# Feed on the Life of Jesus (1 of 4)



Are you “worded up”?

Eat his flesh; Drink his blood – John 6:53-59; 2 Samuel 23:13-17

Does the Word of Christ dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16 - KJV)?

What if you read a Gospel every month - a chapter a day?

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# Feed on the Life of Jesus (2 of 4)

For August this means:

- Read John 9 on August 9 (yesterday).
- Read John 10 on August 10 (today).
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- etc.



# Feed on the Life of Jesus (3 of 4)



As you read, write down any questions you have.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What did this chapter teach me about how Jesus viewed himself, his mission, his relationship to God, and his relationship to others?
- What would I like to better understand about this chapter?
- What did I find challenging about this chapter?
- What did I learn as I tried to apply this chapter to my life?
- Would an outsider who read this chapter recognize that I was trying to apply it to my life?



# Feed on the Life of Jesus (4 of 4)



Jesus explained his teaching to his disciples:

With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything. – Mark 4:33-34 (NIV)

- Did you grow up in church without getting your questions answered?
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## Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)



To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”



# Narrative – Luke 18:9-14



- Jesus addresses people who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else.
- A pharisee and a tax collector go to the temple to pray.
- The pharisees prays by himself thanking God that he isn't guilty of several sins that others commit: robbery, evildoing, adultery. tax collection. He fasts twice a week and tithes faithfully.
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- Jesus declares that the tax collector went home justified rather than the Pharisee.
- Jesus declares that those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted.



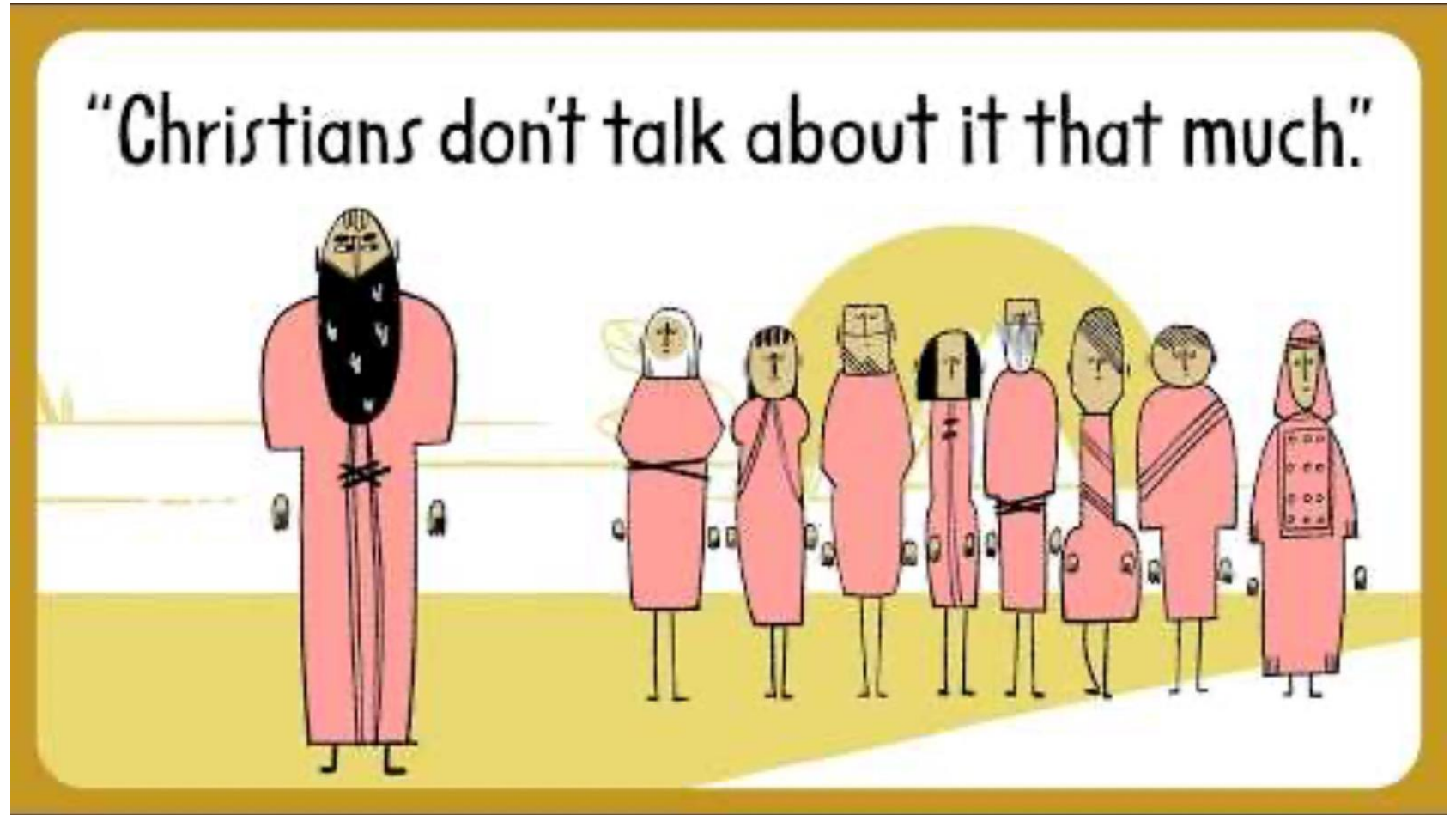
# Observations / Background



- In the previous passage (Luke 18:1-8), Jesus was encouraging his disciples to always pray and not give up. The first verse of our passage implies that Jesus is still addressing his disciples.
- The Pharisee is telling God about the list of sins he doesn't commit and the virtues he demonstrates. He is thanking God that he is not like to tax collector.
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- Justified means declared in "right relationship". In this context it implies restored to covenant faithfulness - faithfulness to the covenant between God and his people.
- Jesus expects his disciples to exhibit humility.
- [Bible Project: The Covenants](#) - YouTube (00:05:36)
- [Bible Project: Justice](#) - YouTube (00:06:18)



# Bible Project: The Covenants





# Bible Project: Justice





# Lessons

- Genuine followers of Jesus need an attitude correction from time to time.
- Don't use your time in God's presence to brag about yourself.
- Don't use your time in God's presence to look down on others.
- Practice humility in God's presence.
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## Luke 18:15-17 (NIV)



People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, **“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”**



# The Little Children and Jesus 1 of 2



Narrative - Luke 18:15-17

- People want Jesus to place his hands on their children.
- The disciples block them from doing it.
- Jesus reverses the disciples' policy.

Observations / Background

- Laying on of hands was a way to transmit a blessing.
- The disciples are operating by natural worldly priorities:
  - Adults take priority.
  - Children should be seen and not heard.
- Jesus is revealing that his Kingdom works differently.



# The Little Children and Jesus 2 of 2



## Lessons

- Bring your children to Jesus. Give him access to them.
- Structure ministry to make it easy for parents to guide their children spiritually.
- Adopt the values of the Kingdom of God. Receive the Kingdom like a little child.



# Lessons



## Lessons – Luke 18:9-14

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## Lessons – Luke 18:15-17

- Bring your children to Jesus. Give him access to them.
- Structure ministry to make it easy for parents to guide their children spiritually.
- Adopt the values of the Kingdom of God. Receive the Kingdom like a little child.



# Life Groups

**Word** - Spend 1 – 2 minutes in silence before you begin each question.

- What did this passage mean to the people who first received it?
- What does this passage mean to you?
- How will you apply this passage this coming week?

**Witness** (How we work as a team to be "good news" to others)

- Explore the Harvest Skills in the Training Page “Big Blueprint” diagram.
- What level are you at with these?
  - Are you a “wanderer”, “follower”, “achiever”, or a “leader”?
  - What’s your plan for developing these skills?
- Pray for the unchurched people you’ve been identifying.



# Announcements



Visitor Page

- Sunday Service August 10, 2025
- Following Jesus Class Fri (8/15) 5pm & 6pm - via Zoom
- Sunday Service August 17, 2025
- Following Jesus Class Fri (8/22) 5pm & 6pm - via Zoom
- Sunday Service August 24, 2025
- Following Jesus Class Fri (8/29) 5pm & 6pm - via Zoom
- Sunday Service August 31, 2025
- Men's Bible Study Wed (9/3) 7pm - 8:30pm - via Zoom



# Life Groups

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# Benediction, Life Groups



Announcements

Benediction

Life Groups

Leave Service From Life Groups