

# **Growth Group Questions**

*6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany ~ February 16, 2025*

## **Introduction**

Psalm 127 famously says, “unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” But we see the unbelieving wicked prosper all the time, while believers suffer regularly. Discuss how it can be true that righteousness will always succeed and wickedness will always (ultimately) fail.

## **Into the Word** – Jeremiah 17:5-8

1. Whom does the Lord curse in these verses? Why is that one cursed?
2. Whom does the Lord bless in these verses? Why is that one blessed?
3. With our modern technology and temperate climate we take water for granted. That wasn't the case in Israel, in Old or New Testament times. Share some other examples when Scripture uses water to describe God's blessing.

## **Into the Word** – 1 Corinthians 12:7-10

4. What possibilities did you hear from the sermon on what Paul's “thorn in the flesh” might have been? How is it maybe better that we don't know for sure?
5. What do we learn about faith from Paul's repeating of prayer to take the thorn away? What do we learn about grace from God's three-time answer?

6. Why didn't Jesus take away Paul's thorn? How does Paul show here that he understands the “blessing” behind this “curse”?
7. Can you think of a weakness in your life that God really uses as a blessing?
8. A pastor once said that God isn't impressed with sins you didn't commit because you didn't have the opportunity. Name some ways that average prosperity, average looks, and average fame are God's blessings to keep us from temptation.

## **Into the Word** – Luke 6:17-26

9. This is a different sermon than Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount. (Note the “level place” instead of a mount). It seems even Jesus recycled sermons though (😊), repeating a lot of what we read in Matthew 5-7. What do we call these statements of blessing at the beginning?
10. How did Jesus display his power to the people there?
11. Note how often Jesus describes believers as blessed not for what they have now but what they will have in the future. As a group, come up with a hypothetical friend in time of need and use these thoughts to practice giving Christian comfort.
12. We tend to identify ourselves with the poor, but by every historic and global measure we are all wealthy, well fed, and blessed. What warnings do you see for yourself in vv. 24-26?

**Closing Prayer:** Jesus, open my eyes to see the world as you see it. And open them to see your grace in its fullest as well. Amen.