

Title: Place in Grace: Prophets // **Scripture:** Ephesians 4:1-11 / Luke 4:16-30

ARRIVAL / SOCIAL TIME *15-20 minutes*

Spend the first 15 minutes or so of your time together catching up and socializing with one another. Also find time to catch up together on how the assignments from last week turned out.

SERMON REVIEW *5-10 minutes*

Paul, in his masterful letter to the Ephesians, reminds us that we each have a place and a role in God's grace, particularly those gifted prophets who speak the truth of God that restore our understanding of God's vision for his people. In the Old Testament, the primary point of connection between God's grace and God's people was through a list of laws and rituals so rigorous that it proved impossible to fulfill. Then Jesus came to earth and perfectly fulfilled them all. Jesus is the best (and perfect) apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher.

Paul urges us to be worthy of the gift of living in God's grace by demonstrating kind humility, patience with people, and unity in diversity as our gifts come alive in our communities and connections. We need each other in order to shine the light of his kingdom into the broken, blind, and bound world in which we live.

The true prophets are those who are saturated in the Scripture and guided by the Spirit, not in a mystical or overpowering way, but in a way that conveys God's heart for his people by bringing about a new reality of the truth of the present situation around us and the hope of what that new reality can become.

THE MAIN THOUGHT *keep this in mind as you facilitate discussion*

Prophets, just like Jesus, reconnect us to God's grace by speaking the healing heart of God to the people of God.

SEE IT – Questions *10-15 minutes*

Picture: How has the role of the prophet shifted as a result of Jesus? What are the key foundations that set apart a "graced" prophet from just another empty artist, mystical maniac, or overpowering soothsayer? What are the important features of both the forthtelling and the foretelling roles of the prophet?

Mirror: What truth is God speaking about your present reality as a family or missional community? What hope is He speaking to you as He invites you to move forward into the truth of what could be? How are you resisting or receiving the truth and hope the God is speaking into your life through His Word and Spirit?

Window: What are the areas in your family, community, or workplace where hope and inspiration have been anesthetized by desperation? How can you to speak the truth of the heart of God to the people around you in a way that brings hope and inspiration?

BE IT – Practice

Change UP // Exercise *15 minutes*

Take some time in silence to hear from God. Take a few minutes to share together the Scriptures that resonate or the words the Spirit is speaking to your heart.

Change IN // Group Activity *5 minutes*

Divide a sheet of paper in half - on the left side, write out the truths about your present reality that you don't want to see or receive - on the right half, write out what you hope or imagine each of those realities could be. Ask God to show you this week how you can move from the way things are to the way they could be if God shows up there.

Change OUT // Life Application Assignment *5 minutes*

As a group, identify and write down the tough truths in your community or workplace that no one wants to talk about. Write down your dreams about what your neighborhood or workplace could be like if God's truth and Spirit were to show up. Ask God to show you how you can evoke a new and different reality there this week.

CLOSING PRAYER *5 minutes*

Take a few minutes to gather any prayer requests and pray for each other to SEE IT and BE IT this week.