

## Promises for All People – Outstretched Hands, Acts 4:30, 10/27/2019

*SermonTalk is an optional resource for Connect Group Leaders who desire to help their group underscore and apply key concepts from the sermon the previous week. The format and questions are just a menu from which you can choose or use as a foundation for further questions more specific to your group members.*

- Halloween. Group costume? Individual costume? No costume? Is the world series on?
- In what ways is uniformity different than united?

As a body of believers, we are called to be united under the Lordship of Jesus. However, we are not called to be uniform. The unique strengths of each person in the body of Christ come together to make the church stronger. Togetherness is key for strength.

This year has been an awesome celebration of the work of the Lord in and through UBC in the last 90 years. A key push for our church has been the 90/90 campaign. The goal is for 90K to help toward internal projects at the church (primarily the roof debt). The second 90K is to be given to bless the community around us.

Yet this push is so much bigger than a financial goal. The goal is that this would be a demonstration of togetherness, with each church member leaning in the same direction, working for the same goal. Together we rise as workers, his children, his church. We stand as ambassadors for the name of Christ.

UBC identified three groups to gift. Each of these group focus on child advocacy. And success in giving and involvement center around every person working together for success. The three organizations our church plans to gift are

- Seminary Hills Park Elementary School
- Gladney Center for Adoption
- Traffick 911

Last week we heard from Gladney Center for Adoption president Mark Nelson. The focus of the Edna Gladney center is “Every child deserves a loving/caring family.” The numbers he shared were staggering. 41K children in Texas are looking for a family 7,500 children are legally available and ready for adoption. One recurring theme was the importance that a stable and permanent environment makes in the life of a child.

- What stood out for you as you listened to Mark speak?
- Based on what you know, how can churches support families in this community?
- What have you heard of or seen someone do that made a difference for families that were struggling?

Mark Nelson indicated that there are definite ways we can pray for the Gladney Center for adoption. **First**, pray for the safety of the children who are a part of the foster care system. **Second** pray that children who need help would have somewhere to go (minimize overcrowding challenge). And **finally**, pray for advocates for children and families to step up to make a difference.

Let’s stop and pray for the work of the Gladney Center for Adoption right now.

As we pray for this ministry and grow in our understanding of the issue before families in the community, God will guide us to appropriate areas of involvement. Practical steps included to be an

advocate. That may include financial support, personal friendship development, provide respite for families who are fostering or adopting, and it may even include adopting or fostering. Each time you help, you may have a tremendous impact. For those involved a groundwork for success is set.

- As you considered the requests from last week to lean in, what are some ways to provide respite or help to families who are fostering/adopting?
- Who are some people that your class can intentionally pray for who are ministering in this way?
- For the Gladney Center for teenage girls near Harris Southwest Hospital, what are some things that the group or different individuals could do or give that might be a blessing for teenage girls throughout the year?

The current sermon series focuses on Promises For All God's People. The focus is on Acts 4. Peter and John are seized for preaching and put into jail. Peter begins to preach to the rulers and elders sharing that through Jesus "Salvation is found in no one else... (4:12a). They were told not to preach or teach in Jesus' name and then let go. All the believers begin to pray. Jeremiah's sermon centered on the final part of that prayer, Acts 4:29-30

*<sup>29</sup> Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. <sup>30</sup> Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*

The believers responded to hardship with worship and prayer. Instead of stretching out a personal hand of challenge, the prayer is for God to stretch out his powerful hand.

- Often when we respond in the moment, we are reactionary or only provide momentary help. What helps you temper your response to difficulties?
- God's hand is obviously more powerful than our own. In considering the challenge of families who are struggling, God provides healing. What are some of the different ways and agencies that God uses to heal and help families?
- Can anyone share a time when God worked within you to stretch out your hand to welcome someone in a healing way?

### **Application:**

The power of God makes all the difference. Outstretched hands can heal. We are loved, received, and forgiven. God provides love and He provides home.

- What work is God doing in your life that you would like us to lift in prayer?
- What next step do you want to take this week to stretch out your hands to share God with others?