



More than Words

Love Josh Morris

Focus The Bible is a love story that began in the Garden of Eden when humankind was in relationship and communion with God. Adam and Eve's sin caused separation from God, which led to exile. However, the garden was returned to us through Jesus' sacrifice. Although we are still dealing with the consequences of the Fall, our purpose is to help bring His kingdom down on earth. We are each called to a purpose. God in His great love, rescued us so that we could rescue others.

Fun If you had a garden, what is the first thing you would want to plant in it?

Review Key Scriptures: Genesis 3:23–24; Exodus 13:3; 1 Corinthians 5:7–8; Matthew 22:35–40

1. The Exile

The first exile was from the Garden of Eden because of sin. The consequences of this exile still affect us today. When we are separated from God, we cannot fulfill His purpose for our lives.

2. The Blood Sacrifice

In the Old Testament, a blood sacrifice was required for the forgiveness of sins. The Passover freed the Jews from a life of enslavement and released them to reach the land of promise. Jesus gave Himself to be our blood sacrifice. Through Him, we are rescued from the enslavement of sin to our calling.

3. The Mission

Christ saved us and called us to a purpose. We are to love the Lord with all of our heart and to love others (Matthew 22:37–39). The following points help us to fulfill that mission:

A. We can resist **sin** by the power of the Holy Spirit, who holds us to a standard of behavior that helps us be a good witness.

B. We are called to bring **justice** to the poor, the hungry, and the widows of the world and to seek righteousness.

C. We are not to walk in **judgment**, for Christ has already judged the world.

Group Dynamics Idea Blood bank supplies typically run low through the summer months. Consider Pastor Josh's idea to donate blood this summer. Mention you are from Gateway (carterbloodcare.org/gateway)!

Discuss

1. The word *exile* means to be banned from one's native country for punitive reasons. Explain how this relates to man's exile from the Garden of Eden.
2. Read Exodus 13:3 and 1 Corinthians 5:7. Pastor Josh drew a connection between the Passover and Jesus' crucifixion. How are these two events intertwined?
3. How is God's call meant to work in our lives? If you are comfortable doing so, share how God's call is specifically working in your life.
4. Read John 16:8–11. According to this verse, what will Christ do when He comes again?
5. Explain this statement, "Every kind act requires some form of sacrifice and those sacrifices leave marks that are very convincing to the unbeliever."
6. Take a quiet moment to ask God to fully reveal your specific mission or calling to you. If you believe that you already know your calling, ask God to help you fulfill it. End this session by having each person ask someone to agree with them in prayer.

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- God has always wanted a relationship with us.

- Sin separated us from God.
- God gave each one of us a calling.
- We are to love others and witness to the lost.
- God's kingdom comes to earth when we heed His call.

Prayer Lord, I realize that I have a calling on my life. Help me to fulfill that purpose. Equip me to be a faithful witness and to love others as You have loved me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Follow up on prayer requests with your group—they can be phenomenal faith builders!