

# A Vision of Flourishing

*Faith & Flourishing in Politics - Sunday School Discussion*

Rev. Jonathan M. Romig - Fall 2021

# Our Garden Hedge:

1. **Listen Well** - We don't have all the answers so let's ask what others think, really try to hear each other out, and let others finish their thoughts.
2. **Speak with Brevity & Focus** - Let's leave space for others to participate and stay on track ("Keep to our hedge").
3. **Practice Gentle Courage** - Let's be bold and share our thoughts and ideas, point to what we believe the Scripture and wisdom says, and yet do so with a gentle and humble spirit.
4. **Keep Praying** - Let's pray in preparation, silently while we discuss, and to get the class started. We need the Holy Spirit!

# Genesis 1:26-28

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (ESV)





Photo by Jonathan Romig of the Westford Community Garden.



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# What is flourishing and why should we care about it?



Common grace is a doctrine that gives us a vision for seeing one vital part of Christian faithfulness. While it is vitally important to proclaim the gospel, introduce people to Jesus, and help them move toward faithful discipleship as they participate in church life, it is also tremendously important for Christians to see that it has always been our responsibility to care for the world, cultivating the flourishing of life through our activity in culture, politics, education, medicine, business, and every public area.

Vincent E. Bacote, *The Political Disciple: A Theology of Public Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012) 30, Kindle.

\*Common grace is God's general goodness to all life versus saving grace is God's special revelation through Jesus.

“When God charged humans to fill and subdue the earth, he granted humanity a profound authority. That authority includes the capacity to do politics. What did God intend politics for? ... politics is for flourishing, also described in Scripture as shalom.... In a flourishing community, the image of God is honored in each person, families and other institutions thrive, the vulnerable are protected, the stranger is welcomed, the oppressed are liberated, and everyone enjoys peace and security.”

*Political Discipleship: A Group Study for Christian Citizenship, Participant Guide, published by The Center for Public Justice (p. 6)*

# Genesis 3:16b, 17b-19

16 ... “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;  
in pain you shall bring forth children.  
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,  
but he shall rule over you.”

17 ... cursed is the ground because of you;  
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your face  
you shall eat bread,  
till you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
for you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.”





Image by klimkin from Pixabay: <https://pixabay.com/photos/flower-life-yellow-flower-crack-887443/>

# Why is flourishing so difficult to achieve through politics?



“How am I fighting for a more flourishing, just, community and not just for the things that help me or the things that are good for me? ... Like everything else in our life, our engagement in politics is not about us. It's about the common good, it's about the glory of God, it's about our witness, but we don't do that very well.”

Kaitlyn Schiess, *Holy Post Podcast*, Episode 473



“We discover flourishing through the living of it.” Flourishing can be “hazy” from afar, yet “becomes clear” as work towards it.

*Yale Center for Faith & Culture, Professor Katie Grimes Interview (paraphrase)*



# Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you  
and the woman,  
and between your  
offspring and her offspring;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel.”



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# How can the gospel help cultivate flourishing?



If we are centered on the gospel, then that means that our mission is to expose sin with the light of Christ. Sin is not neatly marked out in silos marked “personal” and “social.” The Bible shows us from the beginning that the scope of the curse is holistic in its destruction—personal, cosmic, social, vocational (Gen. 3–11), and the Bible shows us in the end that the gospel is holistic in its restoration—personal, cosmic, social, vocational (Rev. 21–22).

Russell D. Moore, *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015) chap. 5, Kindle.



We are working on earth with the knowledge that every true work of human flourishing, done in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a preview of the day that God's good creation is redeemed.

Kaitlyn Schiess, *The Liturgy of Politics: Spiritual Formation for the Sake of our Neighbor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020) 177, Kindle.





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# Let's pray for our town, state, nation, and world's flourishing.



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