

THE BURDEN OF THE MESSENGER



Week Two - 2:10-3:6

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

The two concerns God brings before Israel in this section are that they have not been faithful in marriage and they have brought forth injustice. The reality is, our sin is not private. It affects others. Though these aren't 'kid topics', pray our kids see the communal and big scope of their own sin, and the even bigger Good News of Jesus.

- **Big Idea:** Our rebellion against God affects others too

Starter

- **Dye In the Water:** *Have a clear container of water. Drop some food dye into it so the kids can see it change colors. The dye does not just stay in one part, but spreads. Now, pour that into a second clear container of water so they can see the dyed water spread throughout the pure water. This is an illustration how our actions and sin are not private, but affect the entire community around us.*
- **Video:** *You can also watch this video as an introduction to the book of Malachi:*
<https://youtu.be/LLVzHcZVmAA>

Sing Together

Love the Lord Your God - <https://youtu.be/vdMlxCdIY-c>

Story

Remember, Israel had been taken over by the Assyrians (*those were the people God wanted Jonah to go and preach to*). After the Assyrians, the Babylonians took over. Later, it was the Persians. They were the ones who finally allowed Israel to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple to worship God. But, that didn't make them the good guys. They still took advantage of Israel and they worshipped false gods.

Do you know what's crazy though? Even though Israel was treated poorly by all of those nations who worshipped false gods, Israel **joined** them in worshipping those false gods! They tried to worship God AND the gods of the other nations. But God wanted them to be faithful to Him, like a marriage. In a marriage, there is one husband and one wife who are supposed to be committed to only each other. But Israel wasn't good at marriage either. A lot of the men left their wives and married younger women from the other nations, worshipped their gods, and had children who learned to worship false gods too.

God said, "You have been unfaithful to Me!"

"How have we done that?", the people replied.

God said, "You have divorced your wives and haven't cared for them. Then you marry women who do not trust Me and you become like them, worshipping their gods. Don't you know that at the beginning I made one man and one woman to be committed to each other, so they could have children and there would be more humans in My image who I would be committed to? But you are producing a generation who does not love Me.

You have made me tired of our relationship."

"How have we made You tired?", they asked.

God said, "When you divorce your wives you do not care for them. They are left without a home and a family and are not able to provide for themselves. And that is not the only way you are unjust. You do not care for people at all. You do not pay people fairly for their work, you oppress widows and orphans, and you do not welcome the foreigners. Don't you remember that I made all these people in My image? When you do these things, you do them to Me!

I will come one day and I will make all things right. Like a fire that burns away all of the junk from gold so all that is left is pure gold. If you do not fear Me, you will be part of that junk that is burned away. Who will be able to stand when I come on that day?"

Thankfully, when Jesus came hundreds of years later, he took all of that junk upon himself and brought it to his death at the cross. He was killed because of our unfaithfulness - our sin. But he rose again in the power of God's Spirit. So, now what it means to fear God is to trust in Jesus. If we trust in Jesus, only the junk will be burned away, but we will stand with Jesus in life forever.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- Why do you think our actions affect so much around us, not just ourselves? *(Remember, God created humans to care for all the world. So we have been given the position to have great affect on the world around us, but when we do things against God it causes damage. When we do things for God, it brings blessing.)*
- Have you ever been affected by something someone else did? Have you ever affected someone else with your actions?
- The first man who sinned, Adam, affected the entire world by bringing sin into the world. Is there another man in history who has affected the whole world with his actions? *(The first man who was perfect, Jesus, has brought healing for the entire world.)*
- Our sin is big! But our Savior is bigger! How can you have your sin burned away but still have life forever with God?

Breakout Time

- **Prayer:**

God, we are sorry for the way our selfishness and sin affects the world around us. Thank You for loving this world, and thank You for loving us. Please take away our sin through Jesus' death, but keep us in life through Jesus' resurrection, by the power of Your Spirit. Amen.

- **Craft:**

- For older kids: use the diagram attached with the 3 circles and help them think through how sin affects us as individuals, as communities, and how it has a cosmic affect on the whole world.
- For younger kids: use the following coloring sheet attached.
- OR you can have the kids cut paper into strips and make them into a paper chain. Have the kids attach their paper chains to one another and talk about how we are all connected and what we do affects one another.

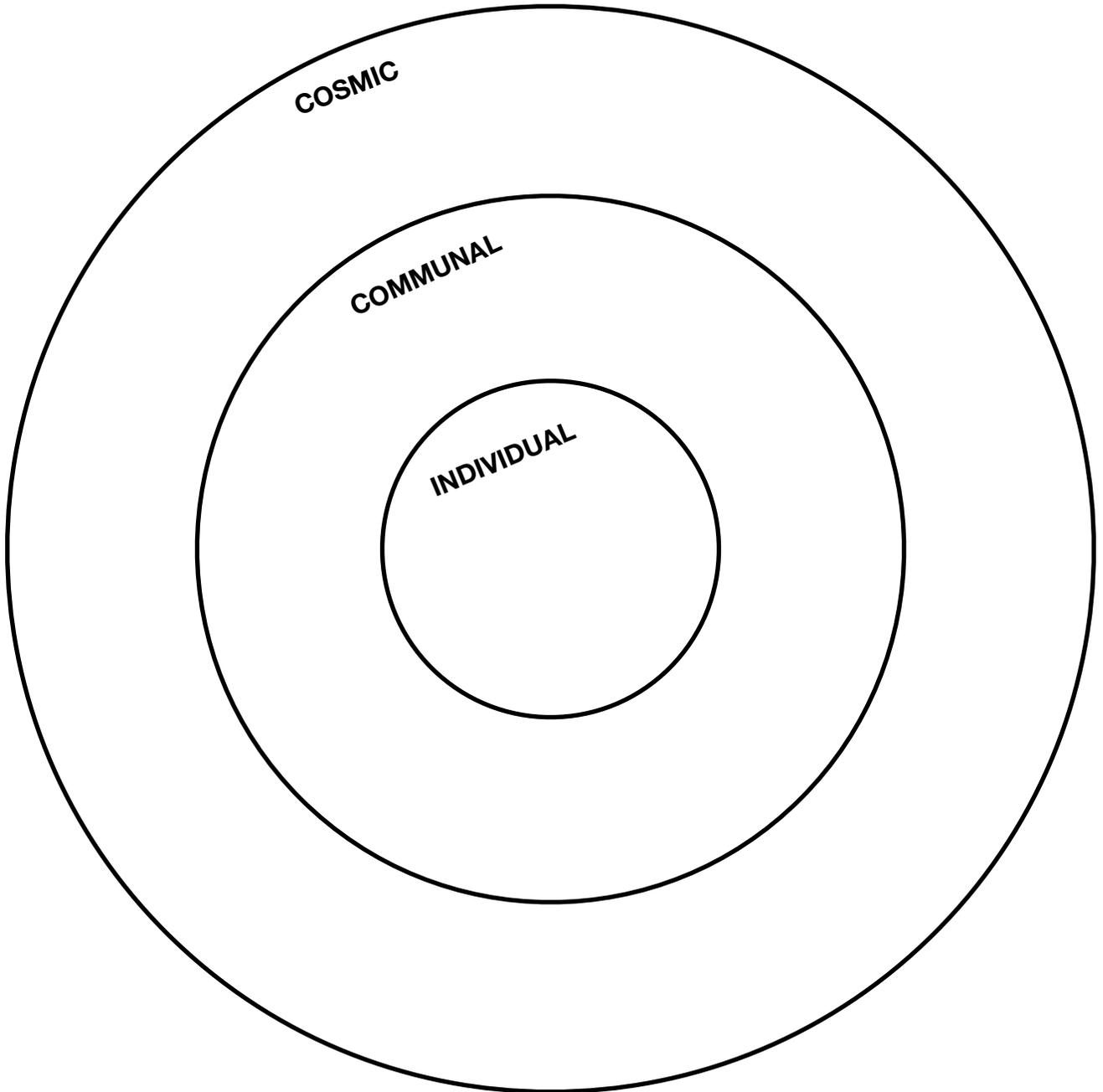
- **BLESS Activity:**

For kids to do during the week

Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask the Spirit to help us to *Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak, and Sabbath* (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

This week, focus on the **Bless** rhythm. If our actions affect the world around us, by God's grace we can affect it in a good way too. We have been blessed by God, so that we can be a blessing to others. Find a way to serve and care for someone else this week.

How does your own sin (*rebellion against God*) affect life? Fill the circles with ways it affects you as an individual, your community, and all of creation.





Love the
Lord your God
with all your
heart and
with all your
soul and
with all your
mind.

Matthew 22:37