



Cracks in the Pavement

Leaders print just one of the picture to show the group or show from phone/computer



Take turns reading the below excerpt out loud at your meeting.

Think back to your childhood. Whether you grew up in the suburbs, the city or a rural town, most of us had a green patch, backyard or local park where we loved to play. You may have spent countless hours throwing football, chasing friends in a game of tag or just laying in the grass and imagining how easy and wonderful being an adult would be.

Now imagine that place in your mind and try to take yourself back there for a few moments. Share with each other about that place and a story to give others a glimpse into your childhood.

This is the way it was meant to be.

Now, imagine as you grow into middle school that a large corporation bought that green space and made plans to build a massive factory in the field across from your childhood patch. Tragically, the plans also include a parking lot directly eliminating where you used to play. Just a few months pass before the green wonderland of your childhood is steamrolled and paved. Not a blade of your memories remain.

As you grow up, head to college and transition into that dream world of adulthood you decide to take a quick trip through memory lane. You walk along the sidewalk that was once a lush patch of grass and stand directly on the momentous spot where you made that catch or where your crush first told you they had feelings for you. The pavement radiates heat under your feet and it is difficult to even imagine what used to be underneath this parking lot.

Then you look down. It can't be. You can't believe what you see. A small crack in the pavement has been exposed and softly emerging from the crack are a few blades of grass and a dandelion. You begin walking around the lot and start to see more green as you look closer. The green was always there but it didn't register to you until you started looking for it.

Sure enough. Just a short 15 years after the pavement was laid, life started to break through. In fact, the corporation has already sent a paving company back out to redo one of the sections of sidewalk that the life beneath has endangered.

So the question must be asked - Has the life existed beneath the surface all along? Even though they paved over and concealed it, is the life beneath stronger than any man-made efforts to keep it down?

At this point your childhood memories start to flood back and you start losing your mind a bit. You see a discarded crowbar next to a nearby dumpster and jam it into one of the larger cracks in the pavement. You leverage all your weight into the bar and a decent-sized piece of the pavement loosens and lifts up. You heave the chunk out of the way as the sweat begins to pour down your face. Life has been revealed! The concealed has been revealed! Oh, glorious day! Grass! weeds! Flowers! Even some ants scatter around the newly discovered earth attempting to escape the sun's glare.

Your heart overcomes your mind and you search for the next crack to work on. "I can change this whole parking lot. I can bring it all back," you think to yourself.

Then suddenly you look up and the parking policeman's car is pulled up next to you with the engine idling. "Hello, son." the elderly gentleman offers as he looks strangely at the scene in front of him. "What are you up to?"

You: "Oh.....hello sir.....I just found this crowbar out here and.....I was going to.....I'm sorry. It's just.....there used to be so much beauty here. Today I realized it's still here. It has just been covered up."

TRANSITION - Keep reading together

What if?

What if this short story helped us understand the Kingdom of God? What if the 4 chapter Gospel was applied to this illustration and story?

Creation: Life in the field as a child. The way it was meant to be.

Fall: Creation seemingly bulldozed, destroyed and covered up by the pavement. (The kingdoms of this world?)

Redemption: The force that cracks the pavement. The first coming of Christ and his revelation of the coming Kingdom.

Restoration/Consummation: The in-breaking of the life and fulfillment of things as they were created to be. The eventual elimination of all that covers up beauty.

Discussion questions:

- 1. Does this give you a better understanding of the Kingdom? Why/why not? Do you agree with it? What stuck out? Would you change anything?*
- 2. How does this illustration change your perspective on our work as Christ followers in this life?*
- 3. What are some of the cracks and flowers you seen in this life? At Geneva and elsewhere?*
- 4. What are ways we can help pull back the pavement? What are you currently doing to reveal the concealed?*
- 5. How does this illustration change your view on why Jesus came to earth?*