



send

JIM ESSIAN

SERMON SERIES KIT

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Romans 10:14–15

This sermon series kit is designed to help my fellow preachers mobilize their local church in sending out their people and putting into practice the Great Commission, whether praying, giving, or going.

Preaching is our great joy and calling, and as many have said, “the pulpit is the prow.” We steer the ship of our people through our preaching.

I want *Send* to serve your people but more than that, I want the word of God to change the people of God for the mission of God—that the glory of God would be made known.

What follows are some preaching pointers I’ve learned along the way—specific to mobilizing your church to live sent. Then, I’ll lay out three different series templates, depending on how many weeks you have available. You can use these as a guide, morphing and molding as you see fit.

May the Spirit use your voice to revive and refresh your people in service—to their joy and to his glory.

5 PREACHING POINTERS FOR LEADING YOUR CHURCH ON MISSION

After we planted our fourth daughter church right down the street from us, I started to get phone calls and emails about how we were doing it. “How have you planted four churches in 10 years?” My answer was always the same: we said we would and then we prayed.

It wasn't false humility but just the truth. So, pray! And what follows is a little of what else I said. I hope and pray these pointers serve you and your congregation as you call them to God's mission.

1. VISION > NEED

Don't preach to need; preach to vision.

Preaching to need is fickle, temporary, seasonal. It's like shopping hungry or buying fast food because you're starving—it might hit the spot for a moment, but you'll still lack the nutrients for strength and vitality.

Preaching to vision is different. It fuels the long game. A marathon runner can't sustain the last few miles on chips and donuts; they need nutrient-dense fuel to keep going.

Give your people a vision of the kingdom of God and show them God's vision for their lives.

Sending missionaries, planting churches, and conducting difficult mercy ministries will not be sustained by congregants filling the church's needs but by Spirit-filled Christians who are captivated by a vision of the glory and love of Jesus.

2. GLORY OF GOD > GLORY OF [INSERT YOUR CHURCH NAME]

Preach the glory of God more than the glory of your church.

It can be easy to slip into motivating your congregation with the successes of your church. “Let's multiply the First Awesome Church all over the county!” But it's not your church that God promises will cover the earth like the waters cover the seas; it's his glory.

Your people were created in God's image, not the image of your church. Deep within them is an echoing call to make much of Jesus with their life. When you preach the glory of God, it's like activating the mitochondria of their soul—it animates and energizes them.

Preach a big God who is doing big things, and they will dream big for his glory.

3. GOSPEL > GUILT

Preach the gospel to motivate your people; guilt won't do.

If the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coronation of Jesus aren't motivating enough for you and your people, you have a bigger problem.

Guilt motivates a person to give up their Saturday; the gospel motivates them to give up their life.

Jesus didn't say, *Hey sinners, do you see all this work that needs to get done? Quit sitting around and sinning and do something!* He said, *As the Father sent me to serve and rescue you, so am I sending you* (John 20:21, author's paraphrase).

Preach the gospel and the power and love of God will capture your people. They will lay their lives down for the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for them.

4. WORD > STORY

Authority and power are in God's word, not your inspiring stories.

Don't get me wrong—stories are helpful, even necessary. Jesus used stories and illustrations all the time. But if people are inspired only by stories and not submitted to the authority of God's word, they'll start writing their own, instead of finding themselves in his.

It's God's word that goes out and does not return void; it's his word that accomplishes the purposes of the one who spoke it. God's word created God's world—*Let there be light!* Preach it, and let it light up your people and produce his purpose in them.

5. SPIRIT > STRATEGY

Preaching the work of the Spirit is better than preaching your great missional strategy.

There is no doubt that we should have a great strategy. But it's the Spirit who sends. The Spirit empowers with gifts, anoints with power, and directs as he wills. Our strategies are a distant second to the work of the Spirit in our people's lives.

In the moment of preaching, the Spirit will bring conviction and calling, so make room.

The application of your sermon may very well be to sign up for this ministry or to go to this class. But create space in the sermon (typically at the end) to let the Spirit speak to your hearers. Foster a moment first before forcing a call to action.

SERIES TEMPLATES

Eight Week Series

WEEK ONE: GOD'S VISION FOR THE WORLD

Sermon Text:

- Habakkuk 2:14

Big Idea:

Contrast the current brokenness of the world with God's promised vision of future glory covering the earth, calling believers to embrace this vision with faith and join his mission through the church.

Main Points:

- The world is broken and ravaged by sin, injustice, and brokenness, leading to a sense of despair and hopelessness (like Habakkuk experienced).
- However, God promises that the knowledge of his glory will one day cover the earth like the waters cover the seas (Habakkuk 2:14).
- This vision of God's glory filling the earth is an "oasis" amidst the current desert, where the seeds of God's glory are waiting to bloom.
- The means by which God's glory spreads is through his church, made up of ordinary people empowered by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:20-21).
- In the midst of troubled times, believers are called to live by faith in God's promises, not by circumstances (Habakkuk 2:4).
- This vision of future glory should spur believers to actively join God's mission of spreading his glory to the ends of the earth.

Story/Illustration:

- The Atacama Desert illustration—it's the driest place on earth but contains the seeds of 200 flower varieties lying dormant under the surface, ready to erupt in a vivid "superbloom" when the rains come.
- The image of the church being like mobile "food trucks" sent into neighborhoods to spiritually nourish the hungry.
- The exhortation to read Revelation 21:1-4 and envision the glorious culmination of the church as the holy bride of Christ.

Key Quotes:

- "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever." (Ephesians 3:20-21)

- “The righteous shall live by his faith.” (Habakkuk 2:4)
- “We see a desert; God sees a superbloom ready to happen.”
- “A Christian living by faith with a vision of God’s glory should never be bored.”

WEEK TWO: GOD’S VISION FOR US

Sermon Text:

- 1 Peter 1:1

Big Idea:

- Christians are called to be “elect exiles”—chosen by God yet strangers and foreigners in this world, with a purpose of spreading the gospel globally.

Main Points:

- We are “elect exiles”—chosen by God but strangers in this world.
- Our identity comes from our relationship with God, not with the world.
- Being exiles has a purpose: to spread the gospel and knowledge of God.
- Sustaining our calling requires both the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.
- The result is the multiplication of the church as it fulfills its mission.

Story/Illustration:

- A time when you felt out of place
- The Iranian judge sentencing Christians to prison for their faith.

Key Quotes:

- “To the world we are foreigners; but to God we are elect. Culture may reject you; but God has chosen you.”
- “Our exile has a purpose: it is the mission of God to cover this world with knowledge of him and faith in him.”
- “Fear of God + Comfort of God = Multiplication”
- “Cultural Christianity lives settled; exiled Christians live sent.”

WEEK THREE: CHURCH PLANTING

Sermon Text:

- Matthew 28:19-20

Big Idea:

- The biblical strategy of church planting is a means of fulfilling the Great Commission and spreading the gospel globally.

Main Points:

- Church planting is the primary biblical strategy for expanding the gospel to new areas and making disciples of all nations.
- There is an urgent need to plant more new churches to keep up with church closures, population growth, and cultural shifts.
- The whole church should be involved in fostering a “sending culture” and generously supporting church plants with people, money, and resources.
- Clear communication, trust, and healthy relationships are crucial anchors for effective church planting.
- Church planting allows Christians to be part of the legacy of advancing God’s kingdom on earth.

Story/Illustration:

- Tracing the history of how the gospel spread from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth through church planting.

Key Quotes:

- “The gospel has been handed down to us as a legacy—a lineage of grace. And now, it’s our turn.”
- “The primary biblical strategy for expanding the gospel is church planting.”
- “Default to being extraordinarily generous, and trust Jesus to provide.”
- “Church planting puts you on the front lines to see Jesus flex—to see his power on display in the lives of his people.”

WEEK FOUR: THE GLOBAL GOD

Sermon Text:

- Revelation 5:9

Big Idea:

- There is a biblical mandate and vision for global missions to all unreached peoples, fueled by Christ's supreme worthiness, and requiring the sending culture of churches.

Main Points:

- God's vision is for his glory to be known among all tribes, tongues, peoples and nations (Revelation 5:9, 7:9-10).
- This requires global missions to reach the unreached people groups (over 6,000 of them) who have no access to the gospel.
- Bold missionary efforts, even amid persecution, are fueled by a conviction that Jesus is supremely worthy.
- The church should cultivate a "sending culture" to pray for, care for, and fund global missionaries.
- Some are called to be "goers"—sent out cross-culturally after being equipped by the church.

Story/Illustration:

- The Romanian pastor Josef Tson's response when threatened with death for preaching—stating that his martyrdom would amplify his message.
- The underground Iranian church, including a Muslim man who had visions of Jesus dictating the Gospel of John to him.
- The American pastor's Iranian wife insisting they move back to persecuted Iran because the American church was under a "satanic lullaby."

Key Quotes:

- "You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." (Revelation 5:9)
- "This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14)
- "How can someone hear about Jesus unless someone preaches? And who can preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:14-15)
- "God's eschatological reality is ultimately about reconciliation among peoples...This corporate reconciliation takes place when people from every tribe and tongue and nation center their lives on God and the Lamb." (Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness: Following the Lamb into the New Creation* [Cascade Books, 2011] p 218.)

WEEK FIVE: A REDEPTIVE PRESENCE

Sermon Text:

- Jeremiah 29:7

Big Idea:

- Christians are called to be a redemptive presence in the cities and communities where God has sent them as “elect exiles.”

Main Points:

- Divine appointment: wherever Christians find themselves, it is by God’s design, part of his sovereign plan.
- Redemptive presence: Christians are called not just to inhabit but to transform their environments by seeking the peace and flourishing of their communities.
- Integration of word and deed: effective ministry combines proclaiming the gospel with demonstrating its truth through acts of mercy and justice.
- Practical engagement: this includes intercessory prayer, integrating faith with everyday work, and actively pursuing justice for the marginalized and oppressed.

Story/Illustration:

- Non-profit Initiatives: Stories like Melissa starting a non-profit to support women in the sex industry illustrate grassroots efforts within communities to address specific social needs with compassion and practical solutions.
- Rodney Stark’s Analysis: The chapter references Rodney Stark’s observation that Christianity historically brought charity, hope, and social cohesion to cities filled with diverse needs, highlighting the transformative impact of a redemptive presence.
- Jeremiah 29: The exiled Israelites in Babylon are instructed to build houses, plant gardens, and seek the welfare of the city where they are sent, illustrating God’s call to engage with and bless their community even in a foreign land.

Key Quotes:

- “The church is to be a redemptive presence: a counterculture in the midst of another one, an upside-down kingdom embedded in the kingdom of the world.”
- “To say we are redemptive is to say that we bring about change at a cost to ourselves.”
- “Don’t wait for a perfect plan, don’t think you need more preparation—start with being intentionally present, remembering your sent-ness, right here, right now.”
- “Your redemptive presence brings salt and light. That’s what your city or town or village needs. And you’ll find you need it too.”

WEEK SIX: FINDING YOUR PLACE

Sermon Text:

- Acts 13:1-3

Big Idea:

- How to discern and find your place in God's mission through understanding providence, spiritual gifts, and calling.

Main Points:

- God's providence: where you are is not by chance but by God's sovereign plan and purpose.
- Spiritual gifts: every Christian has a spiritual gift or gifts that equip them for service and ministry.
- Calling: sensing God's specific leading and direction for your role in his mission.

Story/Illustration:

- Examples of people being called into different ministry roles.
- The story of Joseph seeing God's providence work through his suffering.
- The example of Martin Luther's wife Katherine, encouraging him with the gift of exhortation.

Key Quotes:

- "The mission of God disrupts our lives. He wants us to be on the front lines so we see what Jesus can do."
- "Spiritual gifts are the concrete, tangible manifestations of divine energy in and through followers of Jesus."
- "He is always calling the church into mission beyond our resources so that we have to depend on him."
- "The important thing is to know that you have been sent by God for the mission of God and the glory of his name."

WEEK SEVEN: GOSPEL GOODBYES

Sermon Text:

- Acts 20:37-38

Big Idea:

- “Gospel goodbyes” are a necessary and meaningful part of Christian ministry and mission work. These partings, while emotionally difficult, are ultimately good because they advance the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church.

Main Points:

- Shared History and Relationships:
 - Gospel goodbyes stem from deep, meaningful relationships formed through shared ministry, joys, and struggles. Paul’s emotional farewell to the Ephesian elders highlights the close bonds forged over years of shared ministry and personal connection.
- The Greater Mission:
 - The essence of a gospel goodbye is the acknowledgment that the call to share the gospel takes precedence over personal comfort and proximity. Sending and being sent are intrinsic parts of living out the gospel, even when it involves significant personal sacrifice.
- Emotional Impact:
 - These farewells are often accompanied by intense emotions. Grief and sorrow are natural responses to the loss of daily proximity and shared life experiences. However, this grief is balanced by the joy and hope that come from knowing that the separation serves a higher purpose.
- Preparation and Support:
 - Preparing for gospel goodbyes involves acknowledging and addressing the grief that accompanies them. Open conversations about fears, changes, and what will be missed help in processing the loss. Support for those leaving is crucial, including intentional efforts to maintain relationships and offer encouragement.
- Seasons and Transitions:
 - Embracing the different seasons of life and ministry helps in navigating gospel goodbyes. Trusting in God’s sovereignty and being open to new opportunities and relationships prevent living in the past and encourage growth.
- Eternal Perspective:
 - Gospel goodbyes are temporary in light of the eternal community believers will share. The hope of reunion in the future provides comfort and perspective, underscoring the transient nature of current separations.

Story/Illustration:

- Paul’s farewell to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-38).
- Jesus’ farewell to his disciples (John 16:5-7).
- College seniors graduating.

Key Quotes:

On mission and sacrifice:

- “The gospel sends us because people meeting Jesus is more important than our comforts.”

On emotional impact:

- “It’s a gospel goodbye; there’s a joy to it, but also a sorrow. We’re glad, because we know that God is sending people out for his glory; but we grieve also.”

On living life together:

- “Gospel goodbyes don’t really happen if you don’t live life with people. If you’re too emotionally guarded with people and don’t take risks, you won’t really be known, so when you leave, it won’t be a *gospel* goodbye—just a goodbye.”

On the eternal perspective:

- “Gospel goodbyes are sad, but there’s a glory to them. We know the goodbye is good: the mission advances, the knowledge of God’s glory grows, Christ’s name is exalted. Our joyful sorrow is part of our witness.”

WEEK EIGHT: DREAM BIG

Sermon Text:

- Ephesians 3:20-21

Big Idea:

- It’s important to have bold, faith-filled dreams for God’s kingdom, trusting in his abundant power to accomplish more than we can ask or imagine, and being spiritually prepared and faithful in our pursuits.

Main Points:

Faithfulness in preaching and revival:

- Martyn Lloyd-Jones demonstrated the importance of consistent, faithful preaching and prayer for revival, even when immediate results are not visible. His dedication to expositionally preaching through the Bible year after year attracted many and left a lasting impact, emphasizing the power of steadfastness in ministry.

True revival is sovereign and spiritual:

- Revival is not something that can be manufactured through events or famous preachers. It is a sovereign move of the Holy Spirit that restores believers to normal spiritual life, as described by Richard Lovelace. This underscores the need for churches and individuals to be prepared for and responsive to God’s sovereign work.

Spiritual preparation and dreaming big:

- A.W. Tozer's sermon on Hosea 10:12 emphasizes the need for believers to plow deep into their relationship with Jesus and dream big dreams for God's kingdom. Spiritual preparation and seeking God fervently are crucial for experiencing his power and righteousness in both life and ministry.

God's abundant power and generational impact:

- Ephesians 3:20-21 reminds believers that God is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. This encourages Christians to adopt an mindset of abundance, to dream big, and to pursue goals that impact future generations. Dreams should be prayerful, fearless, and aimed at leaving a lasting legacy that extends beyond one's own lifetime.

Story/Illustration:

Martyn Lloyd-Jones and revival:

- Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a pastor in urban London in the mid-1900s, preached unapologetically and expositionally through books of the Bible for 45 minutes Sunday after Sunday, year after year. His dedication drew people to his church like hungry sheep looking for a shepherd. Despite the church in London being slowly in decline and the early emergence of a post-Christian culture, his faithfulness to preaching and his prayers for revival influenced many. Although he never saw a large-scale revival, his prayers and sermons had a lasting impact.

Richard Lovelace's definition of revival:

- Richard Lovelace described revival as "an outpouring of the Holy Spirit which restores the people of God to normal spiritual life." (Dynamics of Spiritual Life [InterVarsity Press, 2020], p 40). This definition emphasizes that revival cannot be manufactured but is a sovereign move of the Spirit that awakens Christians who are already in the church. This story underscores the need for believers to be prepared for when God brings revival to their town.

Dreams during the pandemic:

- The story of how dreams and sleep patterns changed during the pandemic serves as an illustration of how anxiety and fear can reveal a deeper desire for something more significant. This period highlighted the human longing for a movement of God or to be used by God in a mighty way, reflecting an innate desire to be part of something bigger than oneself.

A.W. Tozer's sermon on Hosea 10:12:

- A.W. Tozer preached on Hosea 10:12, emphasizing that "Miracles follow the plow... The power of God comes only where it is called out by the plow." This story illustrates the need to plow deep into one's relationship with Jesus and begin to dream big dreams for how God might use them. It highlights the importance of breaking up fallow ground and seeking the Lord for his righteousness to rain upon them.

The mini-revival at The Paradox Church in 2023:

- In early 2023, a church experienced a mini-revival where the Spirit moved powerfully among the congregation for three months. This period was marked by testimonies of

healing, repentance, salvation, and prophecy. However, the pastor realized that despite this outpouring, his heart still needed growth, his understanding of God's love was weak, and his character needed more work. This story serves as a caution that even when dreaming big and experiencing God's move, there is always more personal growth and surrender needed.

Key Quotes:

On revival and God's sovereignty:

- "A revival is when the Spirit sovereignly shows up to awaken Christians already in the church... It's the Spirit of God poured out on the people of God in a way that rouses them for the glory of God."

On prophetic imagination:

- "We need prophetic imagination. We need kingdom visionaries. We need missional dreamers. Don't forget, we are children of the King who fear nothing and no man, for the glory of God and the good of all people."

On God's abundant power:

- "The Father's giving exceeds our capacity for asking or even dreaming... We dream big because we have an abundance mindset. We have a God who is able to do abundantly more than all that we can pray or dream."

On the necessity of dreaming big:

- "Few of us are tempted today to dream too big—but what if you had strength to know the height, length, depth, and breadth of the love of God?"

Six Week Series

WEEK 1: GOD'S VISION FOR US

Sermon Text:

- 1 Peter 1:1

Big Idea:

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Main Points:

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- The result is the multiplication of the church as it fulfills its mission.

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- The Iranian judge sentencing Christians to prison for their faith.

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WEEK 4: A REDEPTIVE PRESENCE

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Story/Illustration:

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Key Quotes:

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WEEK 5: FINDING YOUR PLACE

Sermon Text:

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Big Idea:

- How to discern and find your place in God's mission through understanding providence, spiritual gifts, and calling.

Main Points:

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- Calling: sensing God's specific leading and direction for your role in his mission.

Story/Illustration:

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 - “The important thing is to know that you have been sent by God for the mission of God and the glory of his name.”

WEEK 6: DREAM BIG

Sermon Text:

- Ephesians 3:20-21

Big Idea:

- It’s important to have bold, faith-filled dreams for God’s kingdom, trusting in his abundant power to accomplish more than we can ask or imagine, and being spiritually prepared and faithful in our pursuits.

Main Points:

Faithfulness in preaching and revival:

- Martyn Lloyd-Jones demonstrated the importance of consistent, faithful preaching and prayer for revival, even when immediate results are not visible. His dedication to expositionally preaching through the Bible year after year attracted many and left a lasting impact, emphasizing the power of steadfastness in ministry.

True revival is sovereign and spiritual:

- Revival is not something that can be manufactured through events or famous preachers. It is a sovereign move of the Holy Spirit that restores believers to normal spiritual life, as described by Richard Lovelace. This underscores the need for churches and individuals to be prepared for and responsive to God’s sovereign work.

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God’s abundant power and generational impact:

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- Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a pastor in urban London in the mid-1900s, preached unapologetically and expositionally through books of the Bible for 45 minutes, Sunday after Sunday, year after year. His dedication drew people to his church like hungry sheep looking for a shepherd. Despite the church in London being slowly in decline and the early emergence of a post-Christian culture, his faithfulness to preaching and his prayers for revival influenced many. Although he never saw a large-scale revival, his prayers and sermons had a lasting impact.

Richard Lovelace's definition of revival:

- Richard Lovelace described revival as “an outpouring of the Holy Spirit which restores the people of God to normal spiritual life.” (Dynamics of Spiritual Life [InterVarsity Press, 2020], p 40). This definition emphasizes that revival cannot be manufactured but is a sovereign move of the Spirit that awakens Christians already in the church. This story underscores the need for believers to be prepared for when God brings revival to their town.

Dreams during the pandemic:

- The story of how dreams and sleep patterns changed during the pandemic serves as an illustration of how anxiety and fear can reveal a deeper desire for something more significant. This period highlighted the human longing for a movement of God or to be used by God in a mighty way, reflecting an innate desire to be part of something bigger than oneself.

A.W. Tozer's sermon on Hosea 10:12:

- A.W. Tozer preached on Hosea 10:12, emphasizing that “Miracles follow the plow... The power of God comes only where it is called out by the plow.” This story illustrates the need to plow deep into one's relationship with Jesus and begin to dream big dreams for how God might use them. It highlights the importance of breaking up fallow ground and seeking the Lord for His righteousness to rain upon them.

The mini-revival at The Paradox Church in 2023:

- In early 2023, a church experienced a mini-revival where the Spirit moved powerfully among the congregation for three months. This period was marked by testimonies of healing, repentance, salvation, and prophecy. However, the pastor realized that despite this outpouring, his heart still needed growth, his understanding of God's love was weak, and his character needed more work. This story serves as a caution that even when dreaming big and experiencing God's move, there is always more personal growth and surrender needed.

Key Quotes:

On revival and God's sovereignty:

- “A revival is when the Spirit sovereignly shows up to awaken Christians already in the church... It's the Spirit of God poured out on the people of God in a way that rouses them for the glory of God.”

On prophetic imagination:

- “We need prophetic imagination. We need kingdom visionaries. We need missional dreamers. Don’t forget, we are children of the King who fear nothing and no man, for the glory of God and the good of all people.”

On God’s abundant power:

- “The Father’s giving exceeds our capacity for asking or even dreaming... We dream big because we have an abundance mindset. We have a God who is able to do abundantly more than all that we can pray or dream.”

On the necessity of dreaming big:

- “Few of us are tempted today to dream too big—but what if you had strength to know the height, length, depth, and breadth of the love of God?”

Three Week Series

WEEK 1: GOD'S VISION FOR THE WORLD

Sermon Text:

- Habakkuk 2:14

Big Idea:

Contrast the current brokenness in the world with God's promised vision of future glory covering the earth, calling believers to embrace this vision with faith and join his mission through the church.

Main Points:

- The world is broken and ravaged by sin, injustice, and brokenness, leading to a sense of despair and hopelessness (like Habakkuk experienced).
- However, God promises that the knowledge of his glory will one day cover the earth like the waters cover the seas (Habakkuk 2:14).
- This vision of God's glory filling the earth is an "oasis" amidst the current desert, where the seeds of God's glory are waiting to bloom.
- The means by which God's glory spreads is through his church, made up of ordinary people empowered by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:20-21).
- In the midst of troubled times, believers are called to live by faith in God's promises, not by circumstances (Habakkuk 2:4).
- This vision of future glory should spur believers to actively join God's mission of spreading his glory to the ends of the earth.

Story/Illustration:

- The Atacama Desert illustration—it's the driest place on earth, but contains the seeds of 200 flower varieties lying dormant under the surface, ready to erupt in a vivid "superbloom" when the rains come.
- The image of the church being like mobile food trucks sent into neighborhoods to spiritually nourish the hungry.
- The exhortation to read Revelation 21:1-4 and envision the glorious culmination of the church as the holy bride of Christ.

Key Quotes:

- "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever." (Ephesians 3:20-21)
- "The righteous shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:4)
- "We see a desert; God sees a superbloom ready to happen."
- "A Christian living by faith with a vision of God's glory should never be bored."

WEEK 2: MOBILIZATION & MULTIPLICATION

Sermon Text:

- Matthew 28:19-20

Big Idea:

- Believers are strategically placed by God in their communities to be agents of redemption and transformation. This involves not only proclaiming the gospel but also actively engaging in the holistic well-being of their surroundings—addressing social issues, promoting justice, and demonstrating Christ-like love through practical actions. This integrated approach reflects the heart of God, who desires the flourishing and salvation of all people and communities.

Main Points:

- Redemptive presence: Christians are called to be a redemptive presence wherever God has placed them, actively seeking the welfare and flourishing of their communities.
- Integration of word and deed: the gospel compels believers not only to proclaim the message of Christ but also to demonstrate his love through practical acts of service and justice.
- Divine placement and purpose: just as God sent the exiles to Babylon with a purpose to seek the city's welfare, believers are strategically placed by God in their communities to fulfill his redemptive plan.
- Cultural engagement: Christians are to engage deeply in the cultural and societal issues of their cities, reflecting the countercultural values of the kingdom of God.

Story/Illustration:

- The Exiles in Babylon: God's command to the exiles to seek the welfare of Babylon illustrates the call for believers to engage deeply and redemptively in their local contexts, despite being in exile.
- Acts 6: The early church's handling of distribution issues among widows shows the integration of word (preaching) and deed (serving), emphasizing the importance of both aspects in ministry.
- Modern-day examples: Stories of individuals like the former prostitute in prison highlight the ongoing need for redemptive presence and the transformative power of the gospel in everyday lives.

Key Quotes:

- Jeremiah 29:7: "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."
- Acts 17:26-27: "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him."
- John 17:18: "As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."
- "Church planting puts you on the front lines to see Jesus flex—to see his power on display in the lives of his people."

WEEK 3: FINDING YOUR PLACE

Sermon Text:

Acts 13:1-3

Big Idea:

- How to discern and find your place in God's mission through understanding providence, spiritual gifts, and calling.

Main Points:

- God's providence: where you are is not by chance but by God's sovereign plan and purpose.
- Spiritual gifts: every Christian has a spiritual gift or gifts that equip them for service and ministry.
- Calling: sensing God's specific leading and direction for your role in his mission.

Story/Illustration:

- Examples of people being called into different ministry roles.
- The story of Joseph seeing God's providence work through his suffering.
- The example of Martin Luther's wife Katherine encouraging him with the gift of exhortation.

Key Quotes:

- "The mission of God disrupts our lives. He wants us to be on the front lines so we see what Jesus can do."
- "Spiritual gifts are the concrete, tangible manifestations of divine energy in and through followers of Jesus."
- "He is always calling the church into mission beyond our resources so that we have to depend on him."
- "The important thing is to know that you have been sent by God for the mission of God and the glory of his name."