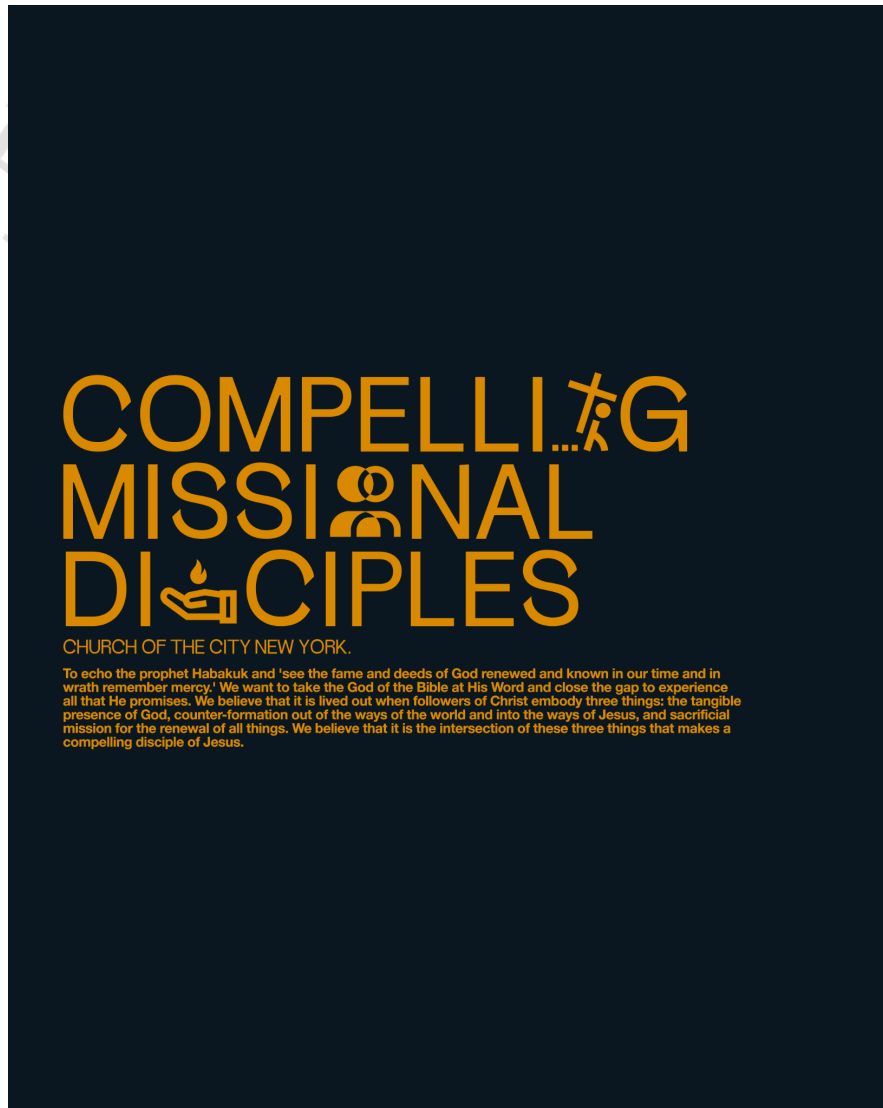


# Compelling Missional Disciples Series Discussion Guides

## September - November 2023

### Week 1 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Overview



### Teaching Text

#### Matthew 28:18-20

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

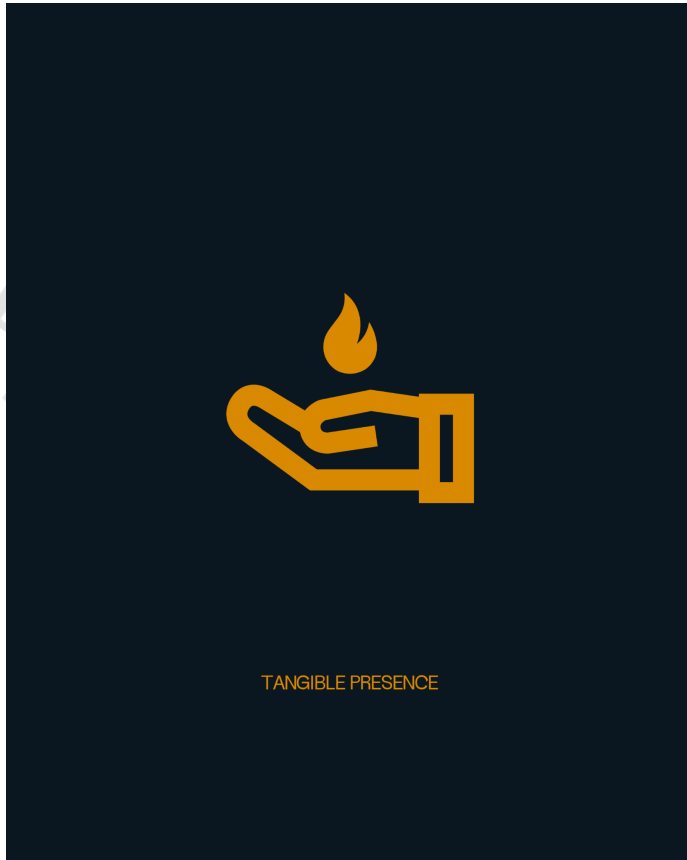
## Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Jon kicked off our Fall sermon series, Compelling Missional Disciples, with an overview of Church of the City's vision for discipleship. He began by acknowledging the underlying angst surrounding discipleship in the Western church, and how it has been warped by our consumer based, secular culture. Today, it seems people are more formed by the world we live in than Jesus, and embrace a shallow discipleship to Him, or false version of discipleship to something or someone else. As a church community, we must resolve to close the gap between what we are experiencing in our culture and what Jesus actually offers through discipleship to Him.

Disciples of Jesus are meant to submit themselves to following Him, learn His Words, practice His way of ministry, imitate His life and character, and finally find and teach more disciples for Jesus. This requires an integrated vision of discipleship, with equal attention and care dedicated to pursuing the tangible presence of God, being counter formed into the ways of Jesus, and living on sacrificial mission for the renewal of our world. Focusing on one or two of these areas will lead to imbalanced discipleship, but Jesus has invited us on a journey of whole life transformation. He desires to transform our minds to believe what He believed, our character to act as He acted, our relationships to love as He loved, our practices to live as He lived, our service to minister as He ministered, and our influence to lead as He led.

As we find in the calling of Matthew in the gospel accounts, Jesus' invitation to discipleship is not withheld because of our past, or even current, sin. His only requirement is that when He asks us to follow Him, we give our wholehearted yes and go. Like Matthew, we have been invited to leave behind all our guilt and shame and walk with Jesus into a new life of deep meaning and significance. Saying 'yes' to Jesus is surrendering to the best love we will ever know. Jesus is worthy of giving up everything to be wholeheartedly devoted to Him and His invitation to walk in the fullness of life.

## Week 2 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Living an Attentive Life



### Teaching Text

#### Luke 10:38-42

*As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*

### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Jon continued our Fall sermon series, Compelling Missional Disciples, with a teaching on living a life that is attentive to the presence of God through

the story of Mary and Martha. Being attentive to the presence of God is not just about big, dramatic encounters with Him, but about cultivating an awareness of Him in every area of our lives.

When Jesus visits Mary and Martha's house, we find Mary captivated at Jesus' feet, but Martha caught up in her social responsibilities of hospitality. By the end of the story, Martha has not only lost her joy in serving, but also missed out on enjoying her access to Jesus' presence. Jesus' response to Martha's indignation at her sister's actions reveal that it is possible to 'do the right things' and be generally faithful, but still miss the moment. Martha's spirit of worry and distraction has infiltrated our current age through technology and secularism in a conspiracy to rob us of our intimacy with Jesus. Oftentimes, we are worried, or being pulled apart, by internal thought cycles of narcissism, shame, and anxiety. All the while, being distracted, or dragged away, by the cultural default of seeking constant productivity instead of embracing silence and boredom, or giving into the "God-optional" lie of secularism and idolizing our careers, celebrities, and our politics instead of seeking first the Kingdom of Heaven.

The world tells us to seek everything we think we need, but Jesus invites us to seek first His Kingdom by positioning ourselves at His feet, even when it goes against what we 'ought' to do. To have a spirit of Mary in a Martha world, it is vital that we pay attention to our attention. We have to ask what our attention is going to, and where we invest our brain power and emotional energies. Then, we have to evaluate where our attention should be going, and where we should be investing our mind's energies. As followers of Christ, we must determine to steward our attentions and affections toward 'the one thing', which is Jesus and His Kingdom. In the presence of God there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore, and we have been given access to live in full awareness of His presence. Let us not be a people who are pulled apart or dragged away from the invitation of Jesus to come and sit at His feet.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. Summer 2023 is coming to an end. What is your favorite memory from this past season?

### **Character**

Ask someone to read Luke 10:38-42 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What truth(s) do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

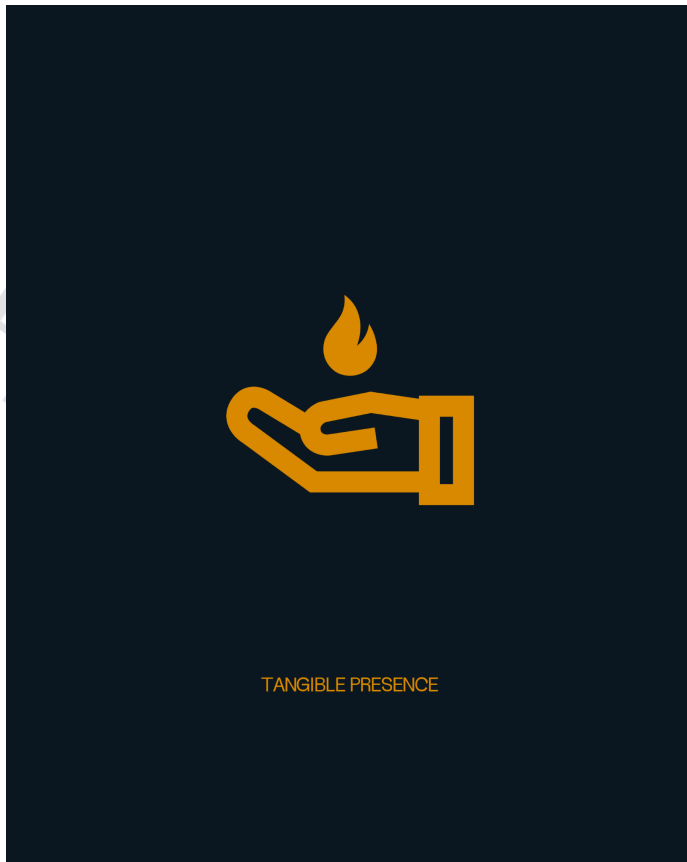
### **Consider**

1. What is currently blocking you from deeper intimacy with Jesus by pulling you apart (internal distractions), or dragging you away (external distractions)?
2. Pastor Jon explained that becoming aware of God's presence takes discipline, and that often, great revelations arise from seemingly boring, obedient acts of pursuing God. Can you think of a time when you felt God convicted you toward a certain practice that seemed repetitive or uneventful? Did you receive any revelations or breakthroughs?
3. Consider that our distractedness causes us to miss out on our identity, our creativity, and our ability to love (empathize). When is a time (past or present) that misplaced attention hindered any of these areas in your life?
4. Our attentiveness to God is not only for our own spiritual growth and healing, but allows us to "hear the healing songs He plays" us so we can share it with others, and spur them toward experiencing healing and freedom for themselves. Have you ever comforted others by pulling from how you've been comforted by God? Can you think of a time someone else has done this for you?

### **Cover**

Pray that in a world that aims to distract us and convince us we can live without God, that we will experience refreshed delight in communing with Him. Pray that we reclaim our awareness of what Jesus is doing in our midst and make us a generation that knows God's voice for ourselves. Then, cover personal prayer requests as people feel led to share.

## Week 3 - Compelling Missional Disciples | The Knowledge of God



### Teaching Text

#### **Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESV)**

*For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

## **Sermon Recap**

This Sunday, Pastor Sam continued our Fall sermon series, Compelling Missional Disciples, with a teaching on the importance of devotedly pursuing the knowledge of God, because having a proper view of God will determine everything else in our lives. God desires to bring us into a deeper awareness and fascination with who He is, but we need His help to know Him. In Paul's letter for the church at Ephesus, he prayed that they would receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. Wisdom builds space, or makes room for God to show up, but revelation requires that we ask God to fill that space. However, Pastor Sam pointed out that there is often a gap between the communion we desire with God and what we seek.

In Psalm 27, we find King David, the man after God's heart, seeking to close that gap by asking to dwell in the house of the Lord, gaze upon His beauty, and inquire of Him in His temple. These practices build onto one another, but each requires discipline and intentionality. To dwell with God, we must develop a practice of sitting in solitude and silence to quiet our inner lives and begin to abide in His presence. To gaze upon the Lord's beauty, we must push past our boredom, determined to not be pulled apart or dragged away, and allow the unreasonableness of His grace to produce an unreasonable response of devotion in us. To inquire of God, we must put our own concerns aside, and instead ask Him what He is doing, or wants to do, in our lives and in the world. When we clear the clutter of our minds and our schedules to make room for God to reveal Himself we can cultivate true intimacy with Him, and witness more of His transforming majesty in our world.

Paul's prayer continues with the promises of what we can receive whenever we pursue the knowledge of God. The light of His presence surrounds us, even in the midst of deep darkness, our hope gets delivered from human systems and strategies and becomes rooted in the reality of our eternal home with Jesus, our identity as Jesus' inheritance and reward becomes increasingly clear, and we are able to receive and move in the very power that raised Christ from the dead. The more we recalibrate our lives to the radical pursuit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God, the more of His splendor can be released on the earth through our lives.

## **Discussion Questions**

## **Connect**

1. What is one thing you have done that was once on your bucket list?

## **Character**

Ask someone to read Ephesians 1:15-23 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What does it mean to have the eyes of your heart enlightened? Do you feel like you've experienced this before?
3. What is something new or compelling that you see about Jesus in this passage?

## **Consider**

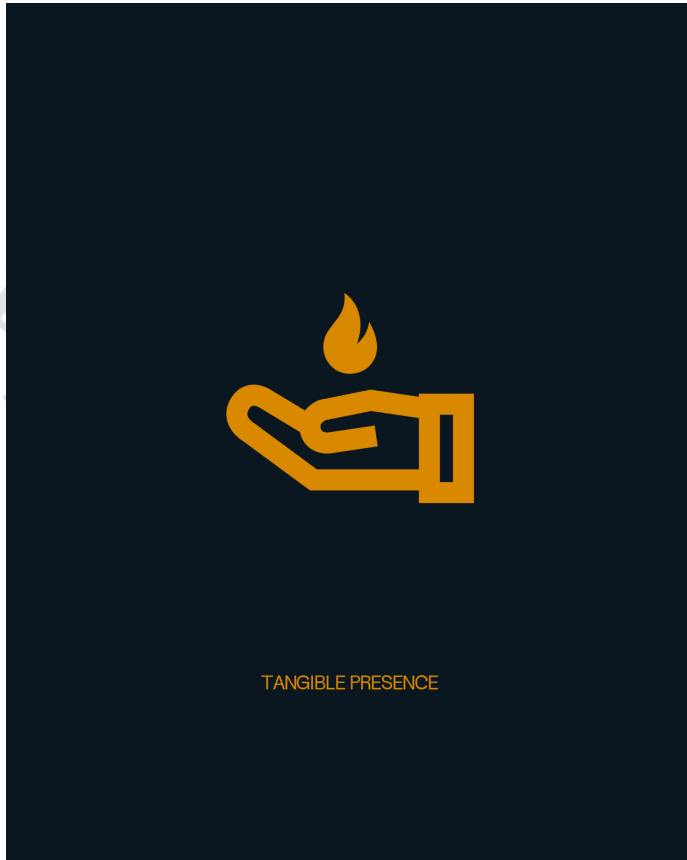
1. Pastor Sam defined a life of wisdom as one that carves out space for God, and a life of revelation as one that asks God to fill that space with insight. In other words, "make room; ask God." What are a couple of ways can you make room for God this week?
2. Psalm 27:4 says, "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." It's not enough to simply desire the presence of God, but we must also seek after it. What is something you desire to see happen to your walk with God but are not seeking after? What would it look like to begin taking steps toward seeking?
3. Dwelling in the house of the Lord and gazing at His beauty require stillness, solitude, and oftentimes, a little bit of faith-filled boredom. Do you carry in your life the stillness that leads to the awareness of Him? What would it look like to seek inner stillness?

## **Cover**

Inquiring of God means asking Him questions rather than telling Him what to do. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to fill the room, and take five to ten minutes to practice solitude and silence together. Ask Jesus how He is praying for you, your neighborhood, or our city, and listen for what He says. After the time of silence has come to an end, invite your group to pray out what Jesus spoke to them as they feel led.



## Week 4 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Pursuing the Presence of God



### Teaching Text

#### **Zechariah 8:20-23**

*This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, 'Let us go at once to entreat the LORD and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.' And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him." This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'"*

### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Jon continued our Fall sermon series, Compelling Missional Disciples, with a teaching on the importance of pursuing the tangible presence of God

and how we can become people of His presence. The main problem with sin is that it separates us from God, who we were created to know and be known by. However, the saving work of Jesus on the cross extends forgiveness for our sins over us, and restores us to right relationship with God and restores our access to His presence.

We can pursue the tangible presence of God first and foremost through His Word. Christianity is a revealed religion, and the primary way God has chosen to reveal His character, heart, and desires to us. The Word of God has the ability to separate out our feelings from what is really happening, judge our motivational structures, and lay us bare before the Lord in a way that allows Him to heal even our deepest wounds. We must approach the Word in humility and with hunger, believing it has both created saints and convicted sinners, and willingly wrestle through the confrontation, calling, and comfort it can offer. God also reveals His tangible presence through prophetic words, senses, and images. When the spirit of prophecy is at work and in order, it will land as a loving word from the Father on both the believer and the non-believer and lay them bare before Him. Finally, the tangible presence can make itself known through promptings of the Holy Spirit, who is at work in every believer to free us from being driven by our fleshly desires and reorder our hearts to be driven by God's desires. There are stories all throughout Scripture and history of people being prompted by the Holy Spirit to go somewhere or meet someone, because they made a conscious effort to be available to God and His plans, and whole individual lives and communities were changed.

When we tune in, and commit to being obedient to however the Lord wants to move us, we get to take part in the Holy Spirit's work of closing the gap between what Jesus accomplished on the cross and what is experienced in the world. Becoming people marked by the tangible presence of God begins with asking the Holy Spirit to fill us. Each day, we can submit to God's total dominion in our lives, confess and renounce all sin, receive the full forgiveness of Christ, ask God to take back any ground in us we have given over to the enemy, and receive, by faith, the filling of the Holy Spirit. It is from this posture we are able to pray, "Lord, I am available," and be led to where He is at work in the world around us.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. What is a hope or dream you have been working toward lately?

## **Character**

Ask someone to read Zechariah 8:20-23 aloud. Then ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What does it mean to you to seek the Lord? What kind of seeking is the passage talking about?
3. How can this passage inform the way we should live today?

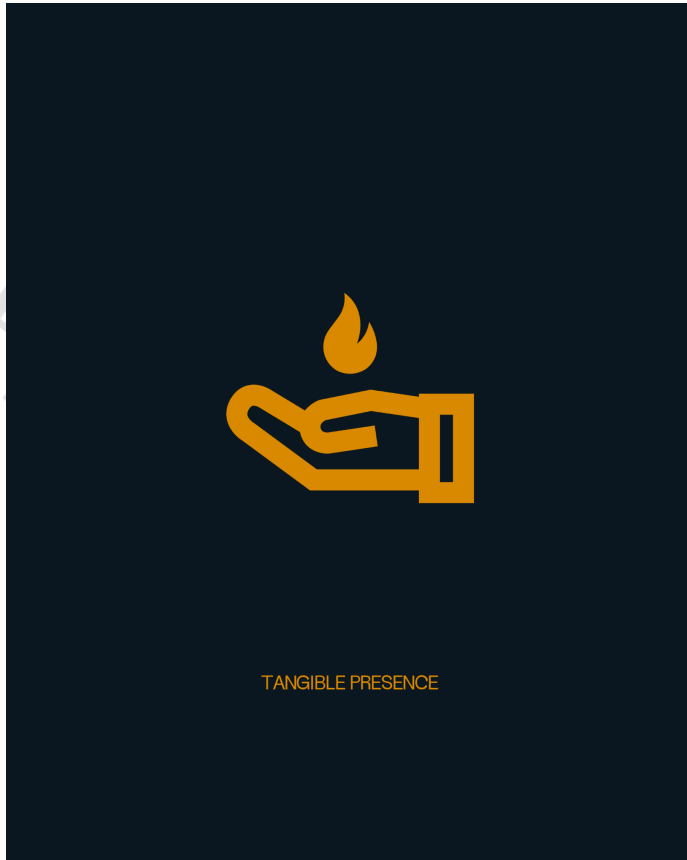
## **Consider**

1. Pastor Jon talked about the tangible presence of God as part of the normal Christian life. What does the phrase "tangible presence of God" mean to you? Has it meant something different in the past?
2. What are some ways that you see the presence of God in your life today, and what are some of the ways that you feel it is missing?
3. Pastor Jon listed five practices that can help bring God's tangible presence into your daily life: Scripture, prophecy, promptings of the Spirit, prayer, and weakness. Which of these comes most naturally to you? Which of them is the most difficult?

## **Cover**

Take a few moments to consider the way that God moves through the world, and the way that He affects the lives of people all around us. Spend time in prayer to ask Him for insight into the way He might want to work through you to affect spaces you frequent and the people there, and ask for His help to move in obedience.

## Week 5 - Compelling Missional Disciples | God's Presence is Everything



### Teaching Text

#### Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, guest teacher, Pastor Darren Rouanzoin, continued our Fall sermon series, Compelling Missional Disciples, focusing on one major point: God's presence is everything. The Western church is full of connoisseurs of content rather than people desiring God's true presence, but He longs for us to have more.

Pastor Darren exhorted us through Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8, that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on us. There is an undeniable power and anointing that follows begin filled with the Holy Spirit, and historically, this power has always

marked men and women who seek God and His Kingdom. While our society beckons us to fill ourselves with things like consumerism, social media, and work, they all lead to comparison, despair, and discontentment. Instead of trying to handle our hunger with things that can never truly satisfy us, we must make room for God to fill us with Himself.

After His ascension into Heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of all who believe in Him. This restored our access to the presence of God, and Scriptures tell us there is even more available for those who ask, but making room for more of God requires a willing spirit of repentance. The Holy Spirit pressures us with grace to repent in any area where we have strayed from the heart of the Father, not to shame us, but to turn us back to Himself and rid us of lesser loves. If we are to follow Paul's command in Ephesians 5:18 to continually be filled with the Spirit, we also have to commit to embracing true repentance. As followers of Jesus, we are called to seek the things of the Kingdom instead of the things of the world, make space in our hearts for God, humbly ask for more of His presence, and continually be filled with His power for the expansion of His Kingdom here on earth.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. What is something you are looking forward to this Fall?

### **Character**

Ask someone to read Acts 1:8 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What does this verse reveal about our mission as disciples of Christ?

### **Consider**

1. As the Church, we are called to continue the ministry of Jesus. Mathew 4:23 summarizes the three main components of Jesus' ministry: proclaiming the Kingdom of God, healing the sick, and casting out demons. How does this verse affirm or provide new insight into your perspective on the ministry of Jesus?

2. Pastor Darren mentioned that the default setting when we wake up is begin formed by the culture, and this is why we need counter formation in the way of Jesus. What does the phrase "counter formation" mean to you?

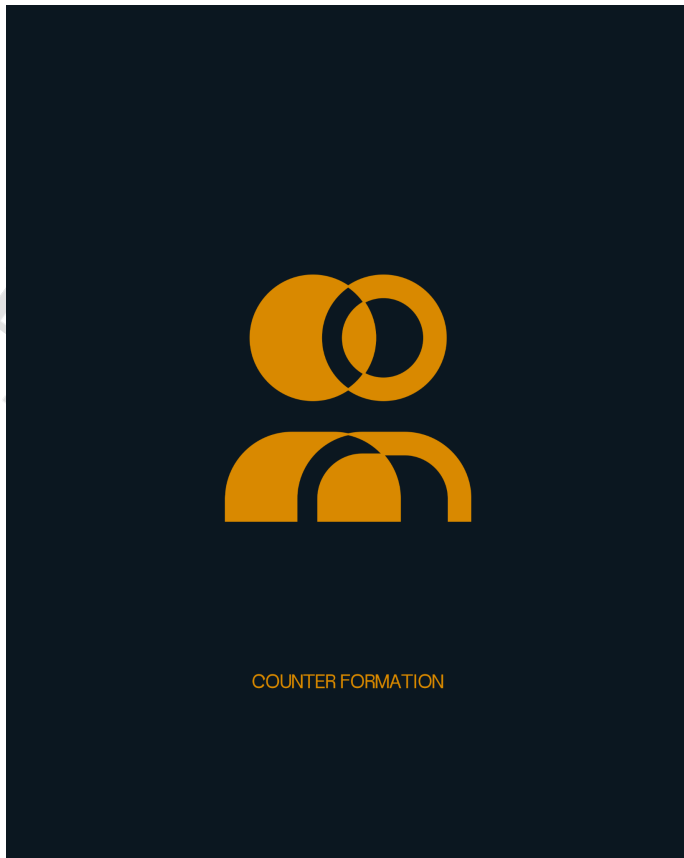
3. Read Ephesians 5:18 and consider this quote by John Piper that Pastor Darren shared, *"If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great."*

We have all at some point been stuffed with smaller things— whether our careers, our ambitions, or even our fears. What are some of the “small things” you are holding onto that are taking up space God longs to occupy? How can you empty yourself of those “small things” today?

### **Cover**

Take a few moments to invite the presence of God into the room. Pray and ask Him to reveal any areas in your life where you have been filled with lesser things. Ask that as you lay down those lesser things, the Holy Spirit will fill the space until there is room for nothing else. Pray that the Holy Spirit will empower the Church to continue the ministry of Jesus as described in Matthew 4:23. Then, cover personal prayer requests as people feel led to share.

## Week 6 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Identity Formation



### Teaching Text

#### Genesis 32:22-31

*That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name" But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared. The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip."*

## Sermon Recap

This week, Pastor Ashley Anderson continued our Compelling Missional Disciples sermon series with a message on the role of identity formation in becoming a compelling missional disciple. In traditional cultures, identity is determined by looking to one's community for validation, while in modern cultures, identity is found by looking inward. Both of these are fragile frameworks, for we as humans cannot be our own source of identity. The pressure to create our own significance is crippling and exhausting. In the Bible, Jacob's story offers a perfect example of this: after growing up in the shadow of his brother Esau, Jacob exploits Esau to deceive his father Isaac in order to receive blessing, which results in Jacob running for his life. In Genesis 28, Jacob hears from God, but he spends the next two decades deeply insecure, putting more weight on the words of his family and his own troubled emotions than on God's words over him.

From Jacob's life, we learn that God can say something true about our identity, but other voices can make us question it. When we listen to what others, or even our own selves, say about our worth, we operate from our false selves. The first step in renouncing the false self is to identify it. Where are we living from deficit rather than blessing? In Genesis 32, Jacob wrestles with God and leaves a different person after encountering God face to face. God had already blessed Jacob's life years before, but Jacob needed Him to bless his identity. Just like Jacob, we must wrestle the truth God says about us from our memory and into our heart. To wrestle with God is to encounter God, and this encounter will mark the difference between what you know and what you believe. What we do with our lives has less to do with what we believe about ourselves and more to do with what we believe about God. To reach this place of belief, we will leave our encounter with God changed, just as Jacob left limping and dependent on Him.

Our identity and purpose are intertwined, and the enemy wants to distort our identity so we lose our sense of purpose. Jacob was purposed to be the father of nations, but he could not walk in that calling until his identity was restored. Similarly, the resurrected Jesus met Peter in his shame of denial, and allowed Peter to reaffirm his love for Him. After Peter's identity was restored, Jesus restored his purpose. We must consider what we have falsely believed about ourselves, and then ask God to reveal our true selves and invite us into our purpose. No matter what, we can rest by



knowing and believing that the truest thing about us is that God is good and we are deeply loved by Him.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. What does your name mean? Do you know how or why it was chosen for you?

### **Character**

Ask someone to read Genesis 32:22-31 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What does Jacob's story show us about false identities and how they shape us?
3. What does this passage show us about God's identity and what He says about our true selves?

### **Consider**

1. Pastor Ashley acknowledged we can be knowingly or unknowingly formed by our culture, context, familial environments, and more, but that these are inconsistent sources of value. What in your life have you previously relied on to define your value, whether consciously or unconsciously?
2. What words were spoken over you, or never spoken over you, that created a false narrative you believed, or still believe, about yourself?
3. When we grow in knowledge about who God is, we gain understanding about who we are, and finally, why we are here. Believing our true identities leads to the revelation of our true purposes. What is the true identity God has spoken over you, and what purposes do you feel like God has invited you into?

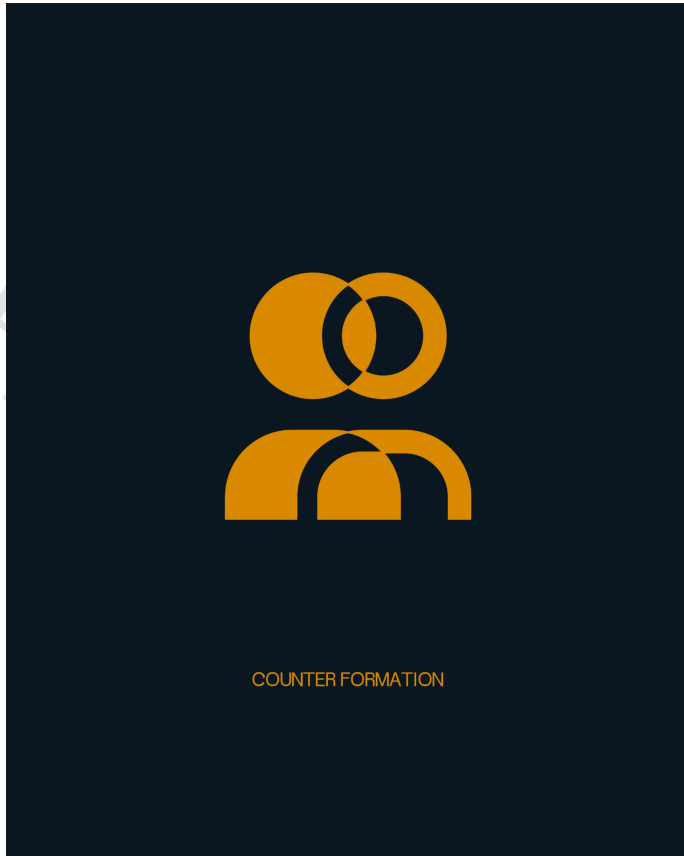
### **Cover**

Break off into groups of two or three and confess any false identities that came up on Sunday or during group. Take time to ask God for the identity He wants to give each of you in exchange. Practice listening to the Lord on each other's behalf, and share if

prompted by the Holy Spirit. Pray for courage and confidence to walk out the identities the Lord has spoken.

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## Week 7 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Intentional Formation



### Teaching Text

#### ***Galatians 4:19***

*My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.*

### Sermon Recap

This week, Pastor Jon Tyson (AM) and Pastor Sam Gibson (PM) continued our Compelling Missional Disciples series with a teaching on the importance of being intentional in our formation, and challenged us to examine our hearts to see who we are becoming by the things we do each day. On any given day in New York City, we face the pressure to do more. Whether it's taking on more tasks at work, achieving a higher status, or filling our schedule with activities, we live in a culture that expects us to constantly strive for bigger and better things. This culture can easily seep into

the Church, and produce people who do the things of Jesus but do not have His heart. Proximity to the presence does not yield to whole life transformation. This can only come from being in authentic relationship with Jesus, not from good programming or high performance. Intentionally stepping out of the rhythms of the world that promote striving in all we do is required to be formed in the way of Jesus.

Intentional formation will also move us from the shallows of life into the depths. The majority of the world exists in the shallows of cultural banter and loose connection, and while some spaces embrace the midlands of personal anxieties and concerns, these are still mainly dealing in the external affairs of life. However, the way of Jesus calls us to share depths of our hearts with one another. The Gospel should make us profoundly aware of God's holiness and our own sin, and we must commit to embracing this awareness in community and go to the depths with one another. It can be hard to humble ourselves enough to be honest about our brokenness, but Jesus offers transformation without rejection.

Finally, formation in the way of Jesus moves us from bondage to freedom. There are four main deficits that prevent us from being formed by our identity in Christ: The acceptance deficit tells us we'll never be enough, the freedom deficit says we are a slave to our desires, the belonging deficit says we are alone, and the authority deficit says we have no power to move forward. In order to be formed by Jesus into His likeness, we need to let Him redefine these major fears in our hearts. The Gospel message does not say "do more," it says "it is finished." By dwelling daily on the justification we have in Christ, we remember that we are accepted beyond what we achieve. Our sanctification through the blood of Jesus gives us power over sin and fleshly desires. The Holy Spirit, who is always within us, disrupts the lie that we are alone. The authority we have through Christ's victory on the cross gives us freedom to resist and expel the powers of darkness. When we allow the voice of God to silence these false voices in our hearts, we can operate from the freedom offered to us in Christ Jesus. By asking who we are becoming by what we are doing, committing to go to the depths with God and our community, and listening daily for the truth God is speaking over us, rather than the pressures of the world, we will be increasingly formed in the way of Jesus.

## **Discussion Questions**

## **Connect**

1. If a biography were written about you at the end of your life, what do you hope the title would be?

## **Character**

Ask someone to read Galatians 4:19 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What does Paul mean by having “Christ formed in you”?

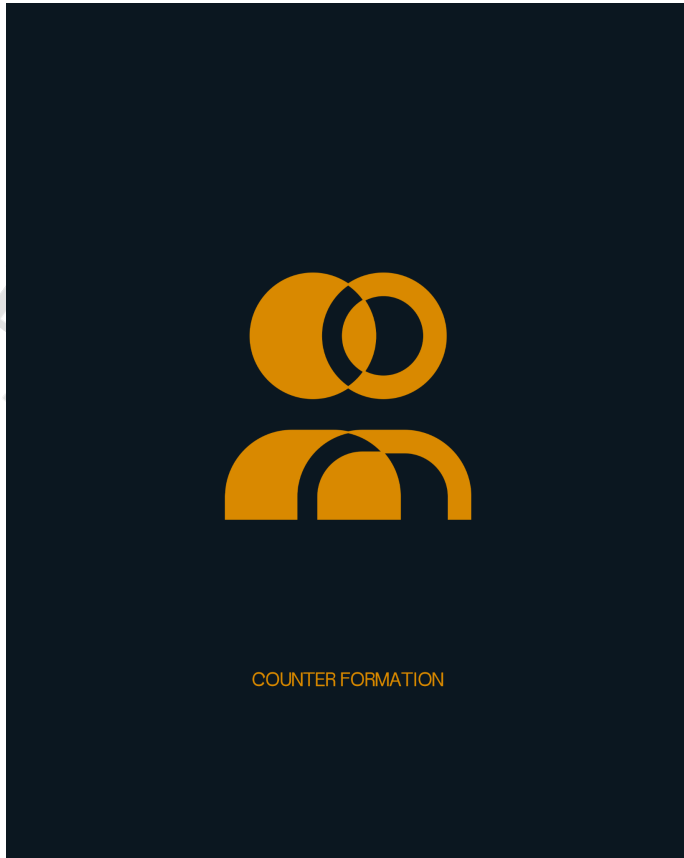
## **Consider**

1. Pastor Jon explained that a transformed heart is always the goal of grace. In what areas do you feel God is holding out an offer to transform your heart? Do you feel surrendered to that process or resistant?
2. Can you point to a time when your motivations were being transformed by God’s power? *Consider that the work of the Gospel is to heighten our awareness of the holiness of God (His Justice and love), and our awareness of the depth of our sin (in your life and in the world).*
3. Which of the four deficits (acceptance, freedom, belonging, and authority) do you most frequently find yourself operating out of and why do you think that is?

## **Cover**

Break off into groups of two or three and share a motivational structure of your heart you feel God wants to transform. Spend time asking God what He wants to replace those motivations with, and what surrendering would look like. Then pray for the ability to accept His grace in this process.

## Week 8 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Filling Formational Gaps



### Teaching Text

#### **Luke 6:39-40 (NLT)**

*He also told them this parable: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher."*

### Sermon Recap

This week, Pastor Jon Tyson continued our sermon series on Compelling Missional Disciples with a teaching on how to become fully trained. As maturing disciples, our goal is to become like Jesus, our master, unwilling to settle for anything less than all that He offers us. So in order to level up our training, Pastor Jon gave us three shifts to help fill our "formation gaps."

First, is the shift from a separated life to an integrated life, because we live in a world that is too complex for one-dimensional disciples. Like Paul, who was able to discern what ministry tools to use depending on the situation he was in, we also must develop discipleship competencies that will equip us to fight wherever the fight takes us. This will require choosing our mentors wisely and putting ourselves in awkward spaces where we are not yet competent so that we can be trained. This also looks like opening up our schedules in joyful exploration to make ourselves available to Jesus and the adventures He may have for us day to day.

Second, is the shift from an acceptable standard to a radical standard. In the book of Acts, Stephen's role was simply to distribute food to those in need, but he did it with a courageous heart, a wise tongue, and a radical anointing that led to signs and wonders. As disciples-in-training, we need to set a higher standard for how we live and put ourselves around people who are abiding by this radical standard of living and embracing all that Jesus offers.

Third, Pastor Jon encouraged us to shift from defense to offense. Rather than apologetically shrinking back when sharing about our faith, we want to become disciples who are empowered to speak from the heart of Jesus, to cross cultural barriers, to be generous, and to lead with humility. We want to love proactively and constantly be experiencing transformation of our mind, character, relationships, practices, service, influence, and power.

As a church, we are on a journey of becoming disciples who are fully trained and fully mature. Thankfully, since God is the one who started this work of formation in us, He will carry it on to completion. So let's ask the Holy Spirit to blow on the coals of our faith. Let's add a little more intensity and intentionality to what we're already doing in our discipleship. Let's be diligent and resolute, refusing to be robbed of our full inheritance or stopped from reaching our full redemptive potential.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. Who is the best teacher you've ever had and why?

### **Character**

Ask someone to read Luke 6:39-40 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What do these verses show us about discipleship?
3. How does Jesus want us to be disciplined?

### **Consider**

1. Paul is given as an example of someone who developed "discipleship competencies" that equipped him to share the Gospel in many different circumstances. What are some examples of discipleship competencies? Which do you want to develop in your own life?
2. What would it look like to start your day making yourself available to Jesus? How would your daily routine shift with this "joyful experimentation"?
3. How would your life change if you fully believed you were equipped and authorized to share the Gospel?
4. What are some things that you already do in your discipleship that you could add just a little more intensity and intentionality to?

### **Cover**

Break off into groups of two or three and share a motivational structure of your heart you feel God wants to transform. Spend time asking God what He wants to replace those motivations with, and what surrendering would look like. Then pray for the ability to accept His grace in this process.



## Week 9 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Crystallization of Discontent



### Teaching Text

#### 2 Kings 20:19 - 21:3 19

*“The word of the Lord you have spoken is good,” Hezekiah replied. For he thought, “Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?” As for the other events of Hezekiah’s reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? Hezekiah rested with his ancestors. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.*

*Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother’s name was Hephzibah. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them.*

## **Sermon Recap**

This Sunday, Pastor Keithen Schwahn continued our Compelling Missional Disciples series by unpacking the pessimism and passivity that has invaded the American church and tends to drive its view on the next generation. Our culture is in the midst of one of the largest shifts in religious affiliation ever seen, particularly among young people, who are leaving the church in the millions. The Western church as a whole has reacted to this movement with pessimism, a lack of hope or confidence in the future, or passivity, an acceptance of what will happen without an active response or resistance. However, Pastor Keithen drew our attention to the alternative narrative of hope that the Holy Spirit is inviting us into, that we are actually on the cusp of the greatest missional opportunity in the history of America.

Rather than accepting the statistics as just another one of fear-inducing and paralyzing stories we encounter daily, this knowledge should crystallize our discontent with the state of things, and create a sacred window of time to enact restorative change. Pastor Keithen pointed us to two opposing stories in the Scriptures of people encountering discontentment. In the midst of Judah's leadership chaos, King Hezekiah gave into passivity towards the end of his days, and settled for peace in his own lifetime while dismissing the future generations to destruction. However, his grandson, King Josiah, turned his discontentment with peace ending after his reign into fuel to raise up the next generation with a faith that would withstand the pains of exile.

We must, like Josiah, devote ourselves to blessing future generations with whatever we have at our disposal, even our wounding. Caring for the next generation is close to the heart of Jesus, who said, "let the little ones come to me." Joining Jesus on mission means taking responsibility for the young people in our spheres of influence by not only interceding for them and sharing our lives with them, but by expecting more from them and empowering them to walk in the ways of Jesus. As we continue to develop as compelling missional disciples, we must embrace the mission to reverse the narrative that young people are a lost cause in the Western church, and dedicate ourselves to being a part of raising up the next generation.

## **Discussion Questions**

## **Connect**

1. If you were a kitchen appliance, which one would you be and why?

## **Character**

Ask someone to read 2 Kings 20:19 - 21:3 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What do you observe about generational transfer in this passage?

## **Consider**

1. Pastor Keithen shared two definitions during his teaching: pessimism, a lack of hope or confidence in the future, and passivity, the acceptance of what happens without an active response or resistance. Do you struggle with either of these when you consider the current state or future of the church? If yes, what do you think drives pessimism and/or passivity in you?
2. Crystallizations of discontent are moments of realization that things are not as they should be and that they must change to usher in healing and renewal. Have you experienced the crystallization of discontent in your life?
3. Pastor Keithen shared a story about one of his mentors who was devoted to seeing his wounding turn into blessing for the next generation. What are some of the wounds in your story that God might want to use to bless young people you encounter?

## **Cover**

Pastor Keithen challenged us to expect more and empower the next generation. Spend time praying over the babies, toddlers, pre-teens, teenagers, and young people in your lives by name, asking the Holy Spirit for words of encouragement and wisdom for them. If anyone in your group is 25 or younger, set aside time to pray for them as a group as well.

## Week 10 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Cultural Renewal



### Teaching Text

#### Genesis 1:26-28

*Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. "*

### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Jon Tyson continued our Compelling Missional Disciples series by surveying the current cultural landscape, and pointing us to the Biblical mandate God has given us to create and steward a culture that glorifies Him. It seems as though

Christians have never been more confused about how to interact with culture, but followers of Jesus should have and be driven by the most compelling vision of it. As the only creatures with the distinct ability to acknowledge what is beyond ourselves, Pastor Jon invited us to live with God's vision of cultural renewal in our time, brought by our intentional stewardship of God's gifts to us.

In Genesis, God created humanity to live with the ability and authority to steward the raw resources on the earth to bring about the flourishing of the world. Despite God's hopeful vision, the Fall made way for evil and sin to enter the world, and sadly this is often what we see culture marked by today. Satan ushered sin into the world through his desire to be the center of culture and continues to tempt us to turn inward toward ourselves and away from God. The enemy's quest for cultural power denies humanity of its God-ordained authority to create and steward a generative culture that reflects the goodness and beauty of life with the Lord. However, this is not the end of the story. Jesus offers a path for cultural redemption in His example of life on earth, and the personal redemption we receive through following Him. As a man, Jesus resisted temptation, rejected Satan's advances, and recovered the promise granted to mankind from God by dying on the cross. He created a new culture of redemption, and offers each of us the opportunity to join Him.

Our vision is to be a generative church in the middle of New York City, acknowledging the calling on each of our lives to be here in this moment of time, and stewarding our gifts and resources for the creation of a renewed culture. As culture continues to be formed and transformed in the world around us, we hope to live with a faith-informed, strategic, vision for bringing about cultural renewal in our time, and anticipate the day we can be cultural co-creators with the Father in eternity.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. What is one of your favorite Christian contributions to modern culture? It can be artistic, technological, philanthropic, etc.

### **Character**

Ask someone to read Genesis 1:26-28 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?

2. What do these verses reveal about our cultural mandate to create and bring things into existence?

### **Consider**

1. Culture-making requires taking the raw resources of a particular domain and building something new to glorify God and help others flourish. Is there a domain you feel especially drawn to do this in? Some examples include: music; fashion; technology; sports; law-making; economics; art.

2. Pastor Jon says that sin is the best diagnosis for the brokenness we see in culture. Why do you think people are afraid to label this brokenness as sin? What are some words or ideas that people may use interchangeably with "sin"?

3. There is disillusionment between the Church and culture because we often do Church well and culture-making poorly. Do you have any passions or gifts that you've used to serve the church but not the wider culture? Or vice versa? How can you use your giftings in both?

### **Cover**

The Church is sent out to renew culture. If the Holy Spirit highlighted any areas where you can take culture-making seriously, share them within a small group. Encourage one another to go to the broken places and actively participate with God in healing the culture. Pray over one another and ask God for fresh cultural vision to serve New York City.

## Week 11 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Missional Work



### Teaching Text

#### **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**

*You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*

### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Jon Tyson followed up on last week's sermon on cultural renewal with a part two on the theology of work and calling, reminding us that a call to redemptive work is part of our God-given identity. We are called to work with our hands, reflecting God's own work when He reached down into dust to create mankind. Throughout Scripture, God describes Himself as a gardener, a shepherd, a potter, a physician, a teacher, a vinedresser, and a metal worker.

When we work in our respective vocations and callings, we honor God and live fully into our created identity. The Church should be a place that forms people in the way of Jesus and equips them to live out their calling in the world. However, the Church often fails in this task, and it is easy for us to believe one of two lies regarding our work. We can be tempted to believe that work is futile and doesn't really matter, or we can fall prey to the lie to make work an idol, becoming addicted to achievement.

Jesus' vision for our lives is that we would view work as worship, service, and calling. When we do all our work unto the Lord and strive for excellence to honor Him, seek not only to respect others but to bless them, and view our work in the greater context of the Kingdom, we can strategically begin to bring about redemption and restoration into our respective industries. As we live out this vision, we have full permission to dream the dream of God that is in each of our hearts. When we do this, our vocation becomes a place where God can use our sacrifice to bring glory to Himself and re-enchant a broken world.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. Thanksgiving is coming up! What are you thankful for this week?

### **Character**

Ask someone to read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What do these verses reveal about the consequence of our attitude toward work?

### **Consider**

1. Reflect on the three components of a Christian theology of work: work as worship, work as service and work as calling. Which comes most easily to you? Which do you find most challenging to exercise?
2. Consider that we have the opportunity to re-enchant the cultural imagination through our work. What do you think that looks like in your current occupation?



3. Pastor Jon encouraged us to have patience with our calling, knowing that God is with us for our whole lives. Do having a strong sense of calling and trusting in the slow work of God feel compatible to you? Why, or why not?

4. In describing work as worship, Pastor Jon explained that the place from which we create (our intentions and heart posture) has the power to render what we produce holy. Think about what you produce: deliverables at work, art, music etc., and the way you create now. What would rendering from a place aiming to produce holy output look like?

### **Cover**

We are called to do redemptive work that produces restoration through sacrifice. If the Holy Spirit highlighted any areas where you can bring renewal to the secular imagination through your vocation, share them within a small group. Pray over one another and ask God to increase your capacity and desire to be sacrificial with your calling to create more room for God to redeem culture through work. Be sure to also cover personal prayer requests.

## Week 12 - Compelling Missional Disciples | Reaching People with the Gospel



### Teaching Text

#### 1 Peter 3:13-17

*Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Tim Brown closed out our Compelling Missional Disciples series with a teaching on Jesus' missional call to believers to share the Gospel with all people. Church of the City's mission is to create compelling missional disciples,

marked by the pursuit of the tangible presence of God, counter-formation in the ways of Jesus, and joining God on sacrificial mission in His work of renewing all things. Pastor Tim pointed out that mission is not just something that we do, but part of our identity as followers of Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul tells us that in Christ we are new creations and we have been reconciled to God so that we can be Christ's ambassadors on the earth. Evangelism is often misunderstood and neglected in the Western church, but the reality is we must embrace this practice to fully live into the identity Jesus won for us on the cross.

The Gospel of Jesus truly is good news, but when it comes to sharing this story, we often fall into a cycle of guilt and fear. Guilt can be driven by apathy or overwhelm, and says, "I know I am supposed to do this," while fear falters under the weight of reputation and relational risks, and says, "I can't do this." However our desire should be to join with God, who, as Jesus tells us in Luke 15, delights in going after the lost and receives joy when even one is found. Pastor Tim encouraged us with the reminders that 1) we are not meant to distance ourselves from people who seem disinterested in faith, but draw near as God drew near to us, 2) the power to save is God's alone, He is only seeking our willingness in sharing His story, 3) we are often invited to just play a role in a person's journey and we might not get to see the end result.

In 1 Peter 3, as Peter addresses the highly persecuted church in Rome, we find instruction for overcoming fear in evangelism today. The enemy wants to beat faith out of us and replace it with fear and shame, but as those filled with the Holy Spirit, we can speak truth in boldness. We must determine in advance to set Christ as Lord in our hearts, and live as though we belong to a different Kingdom because we do. We must also always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that we have to anyone who asks, no matter the situation. Revelation 12 tells us we triumph over the evil one by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony, meaning we should be equipped to share not only the Gospel, but a first hand experience of how God has moved in our lives. These are both strengthened by focusing on the hope that we already have in Jesus. There is so little hope in our modern world because culture has narrowed its view to only the present circumstances, but in Christ, these do not get the final word. Christian hope is rooted in the reality that even if life is going terribly wrong, our God is a God who will bring life out of death. One of the disciplines of the Christian life is fostering hope and sharing that hope with the world, but Peter closes by reminding us to do this with the utmost gentleness and respect for those we are

sharing with. There is relief in the forgiveness and mercy of Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Let us be a people determined to share this Good News with everyone we meet.

## Discussion Questions

### Connect

1. Christmas time is about to be in full swing in New York! What Christmas activity or tradition are you most looking forward to in December?

### Character

Ask someone to read 1 Peter 3:13-17 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What do Peter's instructions reveal about God's will for His people?

### Consider

1. Pastor Tim talked through the cycle of guilt (“I know I’m supposed to do this.”) and fear (“I can’t do this.”) many Christians fall into when it comes to sharing the Gospel. Do you find yourself leaning one way or the other more often? What experiences have you had that might have driven your relationship with evangelism in this direction?

2. As we build relationships with and interact with non-believers, God’s only requirement of us is willingness to share about Him and His work in our lives. What tends to hinder your willingness?

3. Pastor Tim gave this framework for sharing our story in 15 seconds: “*There was a time in my life when \_\_\_\_\_, but more recently God has taught me \_\_\_\_\_.* Has something like that ever happened to you?” What could you fill in the blanks with today?

### Cover

Spend time praying silently, and ask God to bring to mind people in your life He wants you to share His story of ultimate hope with. Break into groups of two or three and pray for opportunities and willing spirits to share the Good News of Jesus with them.