
A sepia-toned photograph of a stage. In the foreground, a hand holds a camera on a gimbal, filming the scene. Several spotlights are directed towards the center of the stage, creating bright beams of light. The background is slightly out of focus, showing stage equipment and a person's legs in the distance.

We are an innovative partner, mobilized to share hope, wherever there is hardship, building communities that are just and know the love of Jesus.

The Salvation Army

#LivingOurVision 

Living Our Vision

WORSHIP PLANNING RESOURCE

Living Our Vision

WORSHIP PLANNING RESOURCE

A worship series based on the
***Vision Statement of The Salvation Army
Canada & Bermuda Territory***

Produced by

Mobilize 2.0 Vision Engagement Working Group

Edited by

Major Peter van Duinen



THE SALVATION ARMY | CANADA & BERMUDA TERRITORY
Commissioner Floyd Tidd, *Territorial Commander*

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Living Our Vision

WORSHIP PLANNING RESOURCE

FOREWORD

In November 2020, The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory released a vision that will guide the development of a focused strategy in support of our mission over the next decade. Our vision is the sum of many voices; it reflects the aspirations of the more than 3,000 people who provided input into its development.

Each element of our vision statement was tested against the many officers, employees, volunteers and partners who will ultimately carry it out in their local context.

The role of our vision is to provide direction for our movement, identifying where we are going. It is meant to be aspirational, perhaps even challenging. As our territorial commander, Commissioner Floyd Tidd, said at his 2019 installation ceremony, “If the vision does not intimidate you, it probably insults God.”

The territorial vision statement for The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory states:

We are an innovative partner, mobilized to share hope wherever there is hardship, building communities that are just and know the love of Jesus.

This worship planning resource is intended to aid corps in developing a worship series that unpacks the territorial vision statement, seeking to answer the question: “What does this vision mean for the territory, for my corps, and for me?”

Themes for the series are as follows:

One: *We Are an Innovative Partner*

Two: *Mobilized to Share Hope*

Three: *Wherever There Is Hardship*

Four: *Building Communities That Are Just*

Five: *Know the Love of Jesus*

Services contain:

- Calls to Worship/Scripture/Responsive Readings
- Corporate/Congregational Prayers
- Song Options
- Sample Sermon Outlines

Each worship outline contains elements that can be used to give shape to a themed worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. It is recommended that the headings of each section of the service be included in the bulletin.

Additional resources for children and teens are available in the *Learning the Vision Toolbox*.

APPRECIATION

In producing this series, the Mobilize 2.0 Vision Engagement Working Group expresses its indebtedness to Major Peter van Duinen (Guelph Citadel, Guelph, ON) for providing litany resources and editing this resource, and Lt. Colonel (Dr.) Susan van Duinen (Booth University College, Winnipeg, MB), Major Owen Budden (Meadowlands Corps, Hamilton, ON), Captain Daniel Rowe (St. Albert Corps & Community Centre, St. Albert, ON), and Captain Nicholas & Major Heather Samuel (London Citadel, London, ON) for their creation of the sermons. Special thanks to Craig Lewis (Music and Gospel Arts Department) and the MAGA team for their creativity in song selection. Translation into French has been expertly provided through Caroline Grailhe (Translation Department, Montréal, QC).



*innovative
partner*

 Learn
Live
Lead

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
We Are an Innovative Partner

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

Each worship planner contains elements for your worship service. The elements presented are only suggestions. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more material here than needed. Sermon outlines/manuscripts are included as a sample and not to be preached verbatim.

Litany Resources

Theme:

WE: The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory is comprised of thousands of people. We are more than an organization; we are a movement of people, a vast army (see Ezekiel 37:10). We are everyone who serves through, worships with, works for, supports and identifies with our Army and our mission as part of a unified movement in Canada and Bermuda. Together, we are The Salvation Army.

INNOVATIVE: Creativity and innovation in service of mission is a hallmark of William Booth's vision. Facing more challenge in recent times, we have responded by finding new ways of connecting with people, meeting human needs and sharing the love of Jesus. We will boldly build upon our pioneering tradition to best respond to the needs of the communities in which we serve.

PARTNER: To be relevant and effective in fulfilling our mission, we cannot do it on our own. Fostering strong partnerships with others, both internally and externally, working together, is critical to serving the diverse needs of our communities. We need hearts open to a fresh wind of God's spirit, seeking to join him where he is already at work.

Responsive Call to Worship:

Leader: We have come, broken, battered, and lifeless. Our bones are dry and we have lost sight of who we are.

People: Breathe new life into us that we might live.

Leader: We are dead and unaware of when our death occurred.

People: Breathe new life into us that we might live.

Leader: We need your resurrection power to fall in our lives today.

People:

Breathe new life into our lives,
Breathe new life into our homes,
Breathe new life into our neighborhoods,
Breathe new life into our relationships,
Breathe new life into our church.

Leader: We, like Ezekiel, Mary, and Martha, trust in your power to breathe new life into our dry bones and dead situations.

People: We stand waiting for your life-giving spirit to fall upon us so that we might be revived, restored, and renewed; so that we might live resurrected lives with newness and vitality in new and transformative ways.

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/we-have-come-broken-a-call-to-worship-based-on-ezekiel-371-11>

Pastoral Prayer:

(inspired by Ezekiel 37: 1-14)

Gracious God,
God of all compassion and consolation,
your breath alone brings life to dry bones and weary souls.
Pour out your Spirit upon us,
that we may face despair and death with the hope of resurrection
and faith through Christ, our Lord.
Help us to dance with the spirit,
the breath of life, which calls us out of the valley of dry bones
and into the Kingdom of God,
both a present reality and the grounding of our future hope.

Holy Father,
Father of Christ who revealed the way of life,
inscribe your law on our hearts that in this life,
we may be the body of Christ.
Help our hands to hold the sick and suffering.
Help our feet to walk with the poor.
Help our ears to listen to those who live in despair.
May our eyes be affixed upon the suffering of the cross
and the hope of the empty tomb
so that we may live as resurrection people.

Sovereign Lord,

Father of all in the power of the Spirit,
you know our faults and yet you promise to forgive.
Keep us in your presence and give us your wisdom.
Open our hearts to gladness,
call dry bones to dance,
and restore to us the joy of your salvation.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever, as we continue to pray saying,
Our Father, who art in heaven....

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/03/pastoral-prayer-ezekiel-37-1-14.html>

Benediction:

Friends and Beloved of Christ, you have been chosen to go into this world with the message of God's love. Bear fruit of hope and joy, peace and justice, with all that you meet. May God's peace be with you all. AMEN

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/entry/2749/worship-connection-may-9-2021>

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
We Are an Innovative Partner

Thematic Musical Resources

(SB Song Book, TB Tune Book, HC Hallelujah Choruses, SW Salvation Worship)

Theme, Song Titles, Lyric Location	Musical Reference
WE Come Join Our Army (SB#949) We're a Band That Shall Conquer the Foe (SB#990) We Are Marching On (SB#987) Cornerstone (HC#237) Lord I need You (HC #236) Let the beauty of Jesus (SW)	TB #809 Ring the Bell, Watchman TB #455 We Shall Win TB #644 Happy Song HC #237 HC #236 Salvationworship.com
INNOVATIVE I'll Not Turn Back (SB#649) I'll Go in the Strength of the Lord (SB#959) Lord Speak to Me (SB#773) Christ for the World (HC#282) Our God (HC #244) 10,000 Reasons (HC #246)	TB #490 I'll Not Turn Back TB #433 I'll Go in the Strength TB #5 Beethoven HC #282 HC #244 HC #246
PARTNER For the Mighty moving of Thy Spirit (SB#319) His Provision (SB#316) Come, Great Spirit Come (SB#311) This is amazing Grace (HC #266) Build my life (HC #287) Still (HC #228)	TB #616 For the Mighty Moving TB #658 His Provision TB #110 Spirit Divine HC #266 HC #287 HC #228

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
We Are an Innovative Partner

“Great Things Can Happen”
By Lt-Colonel (Dr.) Susan van Duinen

Scripture Reading: Matthew 16: 17-20

Scripture Cameos: 1. Joshua 2: 1-20
2. Exodus 3: 1-22
3. Acts 9: 1-19

(Notes: Please select the material needed for the sermon. Not all illustrations will be used but are supplied for your consideration. The Scripture Cameos could be given out prior to the sermon for preparation or could be used as personal or small group conversations following the sermon.)

Introduction

Today we're going to consider the church and “innovative partnerships”. To do this we need to have a world view and a biblical view of the church as well as an understanding of “innovative partnerships”. Scripture says, “*you are Peter, and, on this rock, I will build my church*”. *Matthew 16:18*.

1. World View of the Church

Basically, in the eyes of the world, the church is weak, ineffective, out of touch, the enemy of progress, and the list goes on.

- More than half Canadians are Christians (55%). Yet 3 in ten are unaffiliated with any church.
- About three-in-ten Canadians say they are either atheist (8%), agnostic (5%) or “nothing in particular” (16%).
- For years the “new normal” was to attend church once or twice a month. Then moved to only at Christmas and Easter.
- Now the new normal is not having attended a single religious service in the last 12 months.

An exploration as to why so many Christians leave church is important for our understanding. And that could be a sermon for another day.

2. Jesus' View of the Church

Basically, in the eyes of Christ, the church is uniquely precious, supremely valuable, an infinitely glorious.

And Canadians desperately need a new and compelling vision of the church. We need to see the church as Jesus sees her. We need to discover and then share the passion of Jesus Christ.

Consider these questions as a means for considering what "church" is:

1. If three Christians met at a bus stop every morning, are they a church?
2. What if they talk about the Bible on the train or at Starbucks, are they a church?
3. Is your small group at church?
4. A growing number of Christians have the idea that church is simply the plural of Christian. They feel that any group of Christians meeting at anytime or place is a church. Are they right?

Before we move into considering "innovative partnerships, let me share a few funny Kid Conversations about Church. Children are so wise and can cause adults to think deeply about life:

- After a church service on Sunday Morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mom, I've decided to become a minister when I grow up." "That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?" "Well," said the little boy, "I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell than to sit and listen."
- A Sunday School teacher challenged her children to take some time on Sunday afternoon to write a letter to God. They were to bring their letter back the following Sunday. One little boy wrote, "Dear God, we had a good time at church today. Wish you could have been there."
- A mother took her three-year-old daughter to church for the first time. The church lights were lowered, and then the choir came down the aisle, carrying lighted candles. All was quiet until the little one started to sing in a loud voice, "Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you."

3. Innovative Partnerships

Perhaps some real-life examples of innovative partnership will help us in its understanding. Consider these:

Charles E. Menches and the Syrian – Charles was one of 50 vendors serving saucers of ice cream at a fair in 1904 in Louisiana. Business was booming on a hot August day when

he ran out of clean saucers. Charles turned to the stand next door, operated by a Syrian who had come to the fair from Damascus to sell a pastry baked on a waffle iron. What Charles did was to roll the still soft pastry into a cornucopia and filled it with ice cream and handed it to customers. Success was instantaneous. The beginning of the ice-cream cone. ***Innovative Partners: Charles and the Syrian.***

"Innovate, don't imitate." That was meat packer George Hormel's advice to his employees. So, when the company that bears his name found itself with several thousand pounds of leftover pork shoulder, they transformed some of it into a unique product, a canned, minced pork and ham loaf that required no refrigeration. To market the product, Hormel offered a \$100 prize for a catchy name, and the winning entry was, can you guess? —SPAM. ***Innovative Partners: George and his employees.***

The garbage bag was invented by Harry Wasylyk and Larry Hansen in Winnipeg in 1950. The green polyethylene garbage bag they invented was bought by Union Carbide, who sold the bags under the name Glad. (Around the same time, a third Canadian in Toronto, Frank Plomp, invented a similar product and is often credited as a co-inventor.) ***Innovative Partners: Harry and Frank.***

Insulin was discovered in 1921 by Toronto doctor Frederick Banting and further developed at the University of Toronto by Banting, Charles Best, John Macleod and Bertram Collip. Banting and Macleod were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine two years later.

According to the Nobel Prize website, the team patented their insulin extract but sold the rights to the university for \$1, which used the money to fund new research. ***Innovative Partners: Banting, Best, MacLeod and Collip.***

In his statement, the UN secretary General Antonio Guterres said, "in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive development, we need to... **agree to mobilize**, not only governments, not only civil society, not only academia, but the business section... And **to be together** in a new form of partnership, **aimed at transforming** those agreements into areas of action that help prevent conflicts and other dramas that we face in today's world.

When you think of it through innovative partnerships the students today in school and University could be the generation in the next 15 years that solve the issues of poverty, that solve the issue of climate change, that solve the issue around homelessness and addiction.

Innovative partnerships, what does that look like for the church, the Christian, the person of faith today? Dr Richard Glover writes, "The growth of the church is not blind destiny, but the result of men's wise choice of the good and the beautiful."

"The destiny", Glover writes about requires a road map. A road map for alliances, a road map for how partnerships can – *mobilize people to share hope wherever there is hardship, build*

communities that are just and know the love of Jesus. After all, don't we believe our God is the most powerful, the greatest power in the world, or have we lost sight of that?

I would like to propose the road map to innovative partnerships through:

1. Unlikely Partnerships – Rahab and the Spies – Joshua 2: 1-20

Transformation often happens through action that reveals and develops faith, not passive belief. A great example is that of Rahab, who acts on behalf of God's people and is transformed from pagan prostitute to matriarch of the faith. How? She partnered with Israelite spies who came to spy on Jericho. Through this partnership her family were spared. The story is a messy one worth reading and tells about these two unlikely partners, a harlot and spies deciding where to stand, and acting courageously.

2. Unlikely Conversations – God speaks to Moses – Exodus 3: 1-22

Over 2,00 times in the Old Testament there are phrases which tell us that God speaks. He held conversations with Adam, Cain, Noah, Moses, Samuel, David, Saul to name a few in the Old Testament. Consider this unlikely communication mode from a burning bush.

3. Unlikely Approaches – Saul's Conversion - Acts 9:1-19

Interesting isn't it how God took this approach through Saul's eyesight, his vision. Paul's conversion showed that Jesus himself had a "vision" for the gospel message, the message we are charged to share with the world as well. He wanted the gospel message to go to the Gentiles. God often chooses the most unlikely approaches to accomplish his will.

Conclusion

Writing to the church in the New Testament, Peter says, *"you are a chosen people... That you may declare the praises of him who brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light."* 1 Peter 2:9.

Every local congregation has what John Stott calls the double identity of the church,

- we come to Christ in worship
- we go for Christ to live in mission

None of us is here by accident because it is God who gathers the church. The church is not a self-selecting group of people. It's never, you, me, and a few friends who we choose. The church is gathered by God, and he adds to it daily, the people who are being saved. And He does that through, unlikely partnerships, unlikely conversations, and unlikely approaches. How are we doing with our unlikely partnership, and conversations and approaches in spreading the gospel of Good News and meeting human needs?

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
We Are an Innovative Partner

“We Are an Innovative Partner”
By Captain Daniel Rowe

Scripture – John 5:1-15

Song Suggestions

- “I’m Trading My Sorrows”
- “King of My Heart”
- “Be Thou My Vision”

*Excerpts taken from Col. Hill’s Article, “A Whole Vision” found here - <https://salvationist.ca/articles/a-whole-vision/>

Introduction

- Share the Vision
- Share the purpose of the vision
 - “Visions make sure we’re all pulling in the same direction as an organization with the understanding the ultimate goal of winning the World for Christ. Friends, we have a part to play in the mission God has commanded us to accomplish. The Mission is our calling, and the vision tells us where we’re heading.”
- Introduce Week 1 – “We are an Innovative Partner”

Part 1 - WE

- 1 Cor. 12:18-20 states, *“But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”*
- Without all of us in this together, really what’s the point. *I am not the church; we are the church.*
- “We” are everyone who serves through, worships with, works for, supports and identifies with our Army and our mission as part of a unified movement. Together, we are The Salvation Army. Are you willing to give your voice, your time, your energy, your funds, in helping to grow the Kingdom of God through The Salvation Army? No one is stopping you! Come on board. We need you.

Part 2 - INNOVATIVE

- Simply put, innovation is solving a problem by doing something new.

- Creativity and innovation in how we accomplish The Salvation Army's mission is a hallmark of William Booth's vision. A lot of individuals tend to put unnecessary pressure on innovation, as in it has to be something completely new. But this isn't the case. Something that's worked in other areas of the world could work here – therefore, it would be innovative for our community even though it's not new. Understand?
- Sometimes the most innovative thing we can bring to a problem is another perspective.
- Speak about how Jesus was an amazing innovator (He met people's needs in many ways)
- Our mission is always the same, but the way this mission is carried out, needs to change. It needs to change. We can't do the same things, over and over, and expect different results – it won't happen!

Part 3 - PARTNER

- Use a personal story about partnership
- To be relevant and effective in fulfilling our mission, we cannot do it on our own. Fostering strong partnerships with others, both inside The Salvation Army and externally with other local organizations, working together, is critical to serving the diverse needs of our community.
- Suggest ways in which your congregation can partner or continue to partner with the community.

Conclusion

- Friends, I don't know about you, but for me, these are exciting times. Exciting times. So I ask you again, "do you want to get well?" Then we need to be willing to have a heart transplant from God, we need to allow Jesus to work on us in a way He's never worked on us before. I'm so excited for the future, and only God knows the future! But we're relying completely on Him, and on His plans.
- We can be well...we can be well; we just have to be willing. Let's start being an innovative partner.

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
We Are an Innovative Partner

“Go & Tell”
By Major Owen Budden

Partners in business; partners in card games, life partners. Partners do things TOGETHER. They succeed together, they fail together.

It's important to have a partner that's innovative- creative, suggest new ideas, new projects, new adventures. Partners stimulate each other, keep things moving and fresh. They are creative together.

Innovative partners can be found throughout scripture, with people working together. Today I want to consider how God chooses us to be innovative partners with him. God chooses:

1. Cooperative Partners: Adam and naming of animals (Genesis 2:18-19)
2. Uncooperative Partners: Moses and his calling (Exodus 3)
3. Confusing Partners: Balaam's Donkey (Numbers 22-24)

Before we consider these partnerships a few thoughts about innovation; What do you think is the most innovative idea the world has ever known?

Is it discovery of fire? Invention of the wheel? The Pyramids? The preposterous idea that mankind could fly. Go to the moon and walk on it? Re arrange the DNA and RNA molecular make up of living species?

These are all innovative, original, and creative ideas, but until someone acts on these ideas they remain as ideas.

The germination and seed of an idea must be acted upon. “In the beginning God Created.”

This idea of creation, an expanding universe growing and changing and bearing life forms a delicate dance with life and death. This is innovation beyond compare. Anything we may do or think is based upon the innovative ideas put into place by God.

The Salvation Army in Canada recognizes that many of the older tried and true methods of sharing the love of Jesus within our communities are no longer effective. Many of our younger salvationists are leaving the Army for other churches or leaving church and the faith altogether.

TSA realizes the need to be innovative and the need to be in partnership with others to continue its mission of Saving Souls, growing Saints and serving suffering humanity.

I. Cooperative Partners: Adam and naming of animals (Genesis 2:18-19)

Genesis tells us about the creation story. God created on his own. There was no one with God when the cosmos were formed.

After He had created the man, one of the first things God did was invite the man to be an innovative partner. Name the animals. God did not say to Adam “There’s a giraffe, that’s called a rhinoceros, and that ones an ostrich.

Adam was partnering with God when he named the animals. And Adam was an innovative partner. We are told he named them, without de-faulting to God. He names the animals. As more and more animals are discovered, man continues to name the animals.

It is a part of our ongoing innovative partnership with God. God does the creating- we do the naming. Adam was a cooperating and an innovative partner with God. We too are called to be a creative and innovative partner with God

God has also used

II. Uncooperative Partners: Moses and his calling. (Exodus 3)

Moses shared many reasons with God why he should not be his partner- I’m old, I have a speech problem, I have been away from the people so long, I will be recognized a as murderer. Yet as Moses unveils and deals with his flaws and his shortcomings, God reminds him that he has been chosen by God despite... anything Moses can say or confess.

Regardless of our own self-perception, when we entrust ourselves to God, we partner with God in promoting his kingdom and developing His nation

III. Confusing Partners: Balaam’s Donkey (Numbers 22-24)

Whenever God needs a mouthpiece, he will find one. If his message for the people is considered too difficult to share, God finds a way. His innovation is limitless. He takes the mouth of an animal designed to brey and gives it words.

It’s a fascinating story found in Numbers 22-24:

- Balaam is a non-Israelite prophet of God who is asked to curse the Israelite people.
- He is enticed to go to the king of Moab and along the way an angel of the Lord appears but is only seen by the donkey.
- The donkey (stubbornly) refuses to confront the angel and is severely beaten by Balaam three times.
- The donkey asks Balaam why he has been beaten.
- The donkey’s speech leads Balaam to repentance and develop a willing partnership with God.

Conclusion

God invites us all to partner with him. To cooperate with him; to be innovative with him. He desires us to partner with him in the advancement of the kingdom of God. We do this in many

ways, but one of the first ways is to recognize and decide within ourselves to be a willing and innovative partner with God.

Are we resisting God?

Do we choose to only go so far in our partnership with God? Stay in our comfort zone?

Are we sold out and willing to partner with God until the day we die?

We need to have within us a willingness to change, and morph and become the person God desires us to be. Christian living is so much more than “getting saved so I can go to heaven when I die.” Christian Living is also to be an effective and innovative partner with God in our living, and in our church fellowship, in our community and in our world.

Let’s commit anew our desire to accept God’s invitation- on a daily basis- to be an innovative partner with him.



***mobilized to
share hope***

**Learn
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Lead**

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Mobilized to Share Hope

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

Each worship planner contains elements for your worship service. The elements presented are only *suggestions*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more material here than needed. Sermon outlines/manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim.

Litany Resources

Theme:

MOBILIZED: When Bramwell Booth told his father, William Booth, that people were sleeping under bridges, he was instructed that words were not enough. This challenged him to “Do something!” We are called to faith in action. We must be organized, equipped and inspired—ready to live out our mission in the places and streets of our communities.

SHARE HOPE: Our territorial values remind us that we give hope through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To “share hope” is to promote a spirit of togetherness as we join in solidarity with those we serve. We will come alongside people and communities with respect, compassion and dignity, knowing we are all children of God. Recognizing God is at work in our world, together we discover hope and take bold new steps.

Responsive Call to Worship:

Leader: Do you hear it? Jesus is calling us, inviting us to journey with him.

People: Count us in! With us we bring our joys and fears,
our victories and defeats, our celebrations, and our sorrows.

Leader: Jesus is calling us, inviting us to journey with him,
even in the face of life’s strong winds and unexpected storms.

People: With us we bring our voice and song,
both of which are familiar to his ears.
When we call, when we shout, when we yell, when we cry,
when we sing, when we don’t know what to do, he hears us!

Leader: Jesus is calling us, inviting us to journey with him,
him whose ears are attuned to the voices of his Beloved!

People: His power is great! His voice is strong!
His actions are life-changing! He's just all that!

Leader: Everything - pain, loss, unemployment, heartbreak,
sickness, abandonment, isolation, abuse, evil – it all stops at his command.

All: And so, as grateful people, we who belong to God,
we praise the one who brings peace to our lives,
and we gather as the grateful, alongside brothers and sisters,
neighbors and friends, pew warmers and pulpit rockers.
We gather to rejoice and bear witness to him, who has done this for us!

(<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/when-the-spirit-moves/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-additional-liturgical-resources>)

Pastoral Prayer:

(based on Revelation 21)

We have hope.

John writes in Revelation 21:

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth;
for the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,*

*'See, the home of God is now among the people.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the old order of things have passed away.'*

*And the one who was seated on the throne said,
'See, I am making all things new.'
Also, he said,
'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'
Then he said to me,
'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega,*

the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.'

We pray for those who are lonely.

We hope in the promise that the home of God will be among people:
that God will dwell with us,
that we will be his people and that God himself will be with us.

We mention in our hearts those we know who are lonely or isolated.

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

ALL: 'Amen, make all things new!'

We pray for those who are crying;

the sad, the depressed and the anxious.

We hope in the promise that God will wipe every tear from our eyes.

We mention in our hearts those we know who are sad and who know tears.

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

ALL: 'Amen, make all things new!'

We pray for those who are experiencing the consequences of death,
the bereaved and those who are mourning.

We hope in the promise that death and mourning will be no more.

We mention in our hearts those we know
who are affected by death and mourning

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

ALL: 'Amen, make all things new!'

We pray for those who are in pain,
suffering from illness either physical or mental.

We hope in the promise that crying and pain will be no more.

We mention in our hearts those we know who are ill or in pain.

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

ALL: 'Amen, make all things new!'

We pray for those who are thirsty for truth, love and grace;

those who seek God and his life with earnest hearts.

We hope in the promise that God will give water to the thirsty without cost from the spring of the water of life.

We mention in our hearts those we know who hunger and thirst for God.

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

ALL: 'Amen, make all things new!'

Lord, your words are trustworthy and true.

You are the Alpha and the Omega,

the beginning and the end.

We pray all this in the powerful and hopeful name of Jesus Christ,

Amen.

<https://www.re-worship.com/search/results/for/Hope> (re-worship.blogspot.com)

Benediction:

We are being sent into a world in need of healing. We have been given all that we need to be God's messengers of peace. Go now into the world, rejoicing in God's presence with you. Bring the news of peace and hope to all you meet. AMEN.

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2322/classic-worship-connection-february-4-2018>

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Mobilized to Share Hope

Thematic Musical Resources

(SB Song Book, TB Tune Book, HC Hallelujah Choruses, SW Salvation Worship)

Theme, Song Titles, Lyric Location	Musical Reference
MOBILIZED Whosoever will May Come (SB#405) Shine Jesus Shine (SB#261) On We March with the Blood and The Fire (SB#932) Come, Oh Burning Spirit, Come (SW) More like Jesus (HC #281) Boundless Love (SW)	TB #936 Whosoever Will May Come TB #822 Shine, Jesus, Shine TB #876 The World for God Salvationworship.com HC #281 Salvationworship.com
SHARE HOPE People Need the Lord (SB#418) Someone Cares (SB#10) Tell Out the Wonderful Story (SB#200) Hosanna - Praise is Rising (HC #225) Living Hope (HC #288) Mighty to Save (HC #272)	TB #797 People Need the Lord TB #832 Someone Cares TB #949 You Can Tell Out...Sweet Story HC #225 HC #288 HC #272

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Mobilized to Share Hope

“Mobilized to Share Hope Wherever There is Hardship”
By Captain Daniel Rowe

Scripture – Mark 4:35-41

Song Suggestions

- “How Great is Our God”
- “Good, Good, Father”
- “Jesus, All for Jesus”

Introduction

- Review last weeks sermon, “We are an innovative partner”
- Talk about what a crazy storm COVID-19 has been (or maybe a personal story regarding a storm) and yet...
- “We must not forget that just because the world is isolating itself, the Gospel is not isolating or isolated. God can use all things and all methods to reach people. We must not allow fear to rob us of our faith nor panic to overtake our peace. We must learn from the disciples’ lack of faith and trust Jesus in this storm. We must remember that He is with us.”

Part 1 - Mobilized to Share Hope

- Ask the probing question, “Do you have hope and faith in Jesus Christ?”
 - Ask the deeper question, “How did you receive this hope and faith?”
- Highlight that answer to these questions is your testimony
 - I am still a firm believer on testimonies as the best way to share the hope we have in Jesus Christ with others. “You need proof of Jesus? Well, here’s how he gave me hope in my life...and here’s how he can give you hope in yours.”
 - Share snippets of your own testimony as an example.
 - “When we refuse to share our story of hope and faith, it’s as though the world is saying, ‘don’t you care if we drown?’” (Mark 4:38)
- Go through the list of what COVID has taken from us (Birthdays, funerals, family celebrations, etc.)

- “When COVID-19 is in the rear-view mirror, we will *need* to be mobilized to share hope...because our communities is going to need it, dare I say, more then ever.”
- The best way is still your testimony and the courage to proclaim it.

Part 2 - Wherever There is Hardship

- Our core mission field as a Salvation Army is *wherever* there is hardship.
 - “I believe revival will happen when we show we care beyond our building, beyond Sunday morning.”
- Mention that there is no gap between Community Family Services and the Corps; that we, as Officers and Salvation Army members should strive to constantly bridge the two.
 - “I’m going to say it, our congregation should reflect the work being done to reach those who have no hope...and you can jump right on board and help us with that by getting involved, by making yourself available.”
- If we want to practice sharing hope wherever there is hardship, we need to get involved beyond meeting together. Meeting together is only the start.
- We must understand that there will be storms in life, especially when we step outside of our comfort zones and try something new. However, we must be equally reassured that we believe in the One who calms the storms, who’s with us in the storms (Mark 4:39)

Conclusion

- “Jesus wants us to follow Him, even in the isolating and stormy season. Jesus still needs us to have a burden to go to the broken. We can be hope and light in the darkness of COVID-19. So, as we love our neighbors well by honoring what our leaders have asked, let’s start thinking of creative ways to share the hope of Jesus.”
- We must live in full confidence and faith that the one who holds all things in His hands...even coronavirus. He is in this with us.

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Mobilized to Share Hope

“Go and Tell”
By Major Owen Budden

Scripture: Psalm 103

Introduction:

The basis and root of the Mobilize 2 Mission statement is “Jesus.” Jesus is more than the reason for the season. Jesus is the reason for Hope and abundant life in the midst of life’s challenges: Pain, grief, pandemics, uncertainty; loneliness. The world needs hope and the hope found in relationship with Jesus

Tell a personal faith story about the need to change.

Lesson: the need to repent, to change an approach.

This word, repent, has long been associated with evangelism.

The real meaning goes beyond feeling guilty about our past behaviour. The Greek word is *metanoia* – and it encompasses more of an inward moral and intellectual change. After the thinking and processing of information or an event; we repent. We change.

To call to repentance is a call to “Be prepared to change your thinking after I give you this information.” It’s a call to find hope in the story of Jesus.

I. Repentance is the story of Jesus

Mark 6:12 So the apostles went and told people that they should turn to God (Prepare to make a change after you think about this) Prepare to change the way you think and act.

It is the charge Jesus gives his disciples when he sends them out in twos. Repent (change) *metanoia* -The kingdom of God is among you.

- Repent- *metanoia* was the message of John the Baptist. (Luke 3:8-14) “Do the things that show you have turned from your previous way of thinking and behaving.”
- Got 2 coats? Give one away. Got lots of food? Share it. Collecting taxes? Don’t be greedy and cheat. A soldier/law enforcer? Don’t accuse falsely or abuse your position...be content with your pay.

- Repent - *metanoia* was the message of Jesus.

- He told people to *metanoia* – Change the way you think; change the way you act- in all his encounters.
- Same message different words, different analogies, different situations same outcome: “Ye must be born again; go and sin no more; A day is coming when all will worship in spirit and in truth; Seek and save the lost- Lost coin, lost sheep, lost son.”
- The message of Jesus was ‘change’- *metanoia*- change the way you think about God, change the way you act toward others. Give after thought and change- make that 180-degree turn.
- Repent- *metanoia* was the message proclaimed by the disciples.
- In Mark 6: “When they returned, they were excited about what had happened. Demons were expelled, people were healed.”
- Could these demons be demons of jealousy, resentment, apathy, criticism, hatred? In addition to physical healings, could these healings be healing of broken relationships, renewed families, and restored friendships?
- The crowds were flocking around, excitement was in the air: Great opportunity to organize a fellowship and a movement. Yet, Jesus responds by calling them away to a quiet place. Nurture a relationship with him.

This is our message to the world today. This is why we are mobilized to share hope: relationship with Jesus is more than being in a crowd or being in a church service

II. Repentance is the story of The Salvation Army...past and present

(Ch 4 of Commissioner Phil Needham’s book, *Christ at the Door*, is all about *metanoia*.)

- Repent-(Change) Do not neglect the Poor and Marginalized; Clothe people, feed people, stop cheating people: Soup, Soup and Salvation.
- The Salvation Army pricked the conscience of the churches of the day.
- Being a Christian was more than being a member of a denomination. It was more than sitting on a board, being in a choir or a band.
- Being a Christian was more than wearing your finest stylish clothes on Sunday.
- Being a Christian was being involved in society in practical ways that called not just the needy to *metanoia*, but TSA called the church and society to *metanoia*- Give it some thought and after thinking it through – Change- your thinking, change your behaviour. High church practises were rejected by Booth

“I’m at home in the Army
More than I am anywhere
You can dress as you like.
You can sit where you like
You’re all quite equal there.”

(Needham, p.123)

III. Repentance is your story and my story

Your story/ my story is about *metanoia*; is it not?

- Before my Encounter with Christ, my thinking and my acting initially was to bring me enjoyment, thrills, and pleasure for life.
- My quest for something else was, in part, fuelled by a desire I had to bring me peace and purpose. Me Focused
- Once I encountered the kingdom of God and the ways of the kingdom, I began to change my thinking, and change my acting.
- Focus shifted from my thinking of others in ways that they could benefit me- to ways I could minister and bring help to them.
- Acting changed from doing things for me to doing things for others.
- This change of thinking and acting continues to be an ongoing experience in my life.

[List some areas of personal change in your life.]

This need for an ongoing *metanoia* is necessary to our holiness. Holiness is not about staying the same. Having a second blessing and that's it. Holiness is about increasing our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and opening ourselves to *metanoia* in our thinking and our doing.

And in our *doing* we are being mobilized to share the hope that can lead to change in someone else's life...change that can move someone closer to the love of Jesus.

Conclusion

Maybe a time has arrived in our personal lives to experience a *metanoia*, about ourselves, in our relationship within our church doors and in our community.

Be open to the Spirit's teaching. Be sensitive to your own spirit. Be responsive to the call of the kingdom to experience *metanoia*.

The kingdom of God is at hand. We must be mobilized by a change in our thinking and our acting so that we can share the hope of God with the world.



*wherever there
is hardship*

Learn
Live
Lead

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Wherever There is Hardship

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

Each worship planner contains elements for your worship service. The elements presented are only *suggestions*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more material here than needed. Sermon outlines/manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim.

Litany Resources

Theme:

WHEREVER THERE IS HARDSHIP: This is our core mission field. We recognize that anyone can experience times of overwhelming challenge and human need, and we will be with them where they are in those moments.

Opening Prayer:

Powerful God, from the very beginning you blessed creation.
You have loved and shielded your people through all joys and trials of life.
We come to you this day, rejoicing in the many blessings you have given to us.
We open our hearts again to hear your word for us
and to gather strength and joy for service in your world.
Be with us and bless us again, we pray. AMEN.

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2322/classic-worship-connection-february-4-2018>

Pastoral Prayer:

Tragedies abound, O Lord. Our newspapers, television newscasts, and media all report the troubled happenings in our world. War and strife seem to be the order of the day. And we are caught up in the midst of this chaos. Calm our spirits, Lord. Help us to focus on the love you have given to us in Jesus Christ. Remind us again that his healing mercies extend to us this day as surely as they did to the people of long ago. We have gathered on this day to hear your word, to be forgiven and healed, to find ways in which we may serve you in peace. We have lifted names of those near and dear to us who stand in need of your healing mercies and compassionate love. Some names we have spoken aloud; and others we have uttered in our hearts. You have heard all our prayers. You know our needs and concerns before our voices can frame them. Let us accept the love you give to us. Empower us to take that love and use it for good in your world. Let the message of hope and compassion go forth from us again to this

world which focuses on tragedy and turmoil. And once again, let us know fully that you are with us. AMEN.

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2322/classic-worship-connection-february-4-2018>

Benediction:

(based on Isaiah 40:1-11)

Go in peace—
love and care for one another in the name of Christ;
—and may the power of the Holy Spirit
make the rough places in your life smooth,
—may the dark valleys of your hearts
be filled and the rugged mountains leveled
and the way of the Lord be made ready in you,
—and may He come unto you
and bless you and shine forth from you
both now and forevermore. Amen.

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/11/benediction-isaiah-40-1-11.html>

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Wherever There is Hardship

Thematic Musical Resources

(SB Song Book, TB Tune Book, HC Hallelujah Choruses, SW Salvation Worship)

<p>WHEREVER THERE IS HARDSHIP Rescue the Perishing (SB#927) They Need Christ (SB#935) God of the Poor (SB#998) Boundless Love (SW) Solid Rock (SW) 10,000 Reasons (HC #246)</p>	<p>TB #808 Rescue the Perishing TB #886 They Need Christ TB #638 God of the Poor Salvationworship.com Salvationworship.com HC #246</p>
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LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Wherever There is Hardship

“Wherever There is Hardship”
By Captain Nicholas Samuel

Text: Isaiah 40:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

Since the production of ‘Annie’, the musical published in 1977, one of those catchy songs that has often been quoted says, ‘It’s a hard-knock life’. The words speak of perhaps learned resilience for the characters in the face of daily mistreatment. Such a catchy sentiment, in fact, that rapper Jay-Z borrowed the chorus for his own take on the song, releasing in 1998 what he titled, ‘Ghetto Anthem’!

While the original song may only take a light-hearted look at responding to hardship, the truth is that most people in our world will face hardship at some time in their lives. However, hardship looks very different depending on the circumstances, the context, and the experience of that person. In one situation, hardship can look like someone living in poverty, trying to scrape together enough food to eat each day, whether they are living off the land of a desert amid famine, or struggling to make ends meet to stay in their apartment. In another situation, hardship can look like someone trying to cope with a health crisis or a bereavement, causing the inability to manage typical everyday routine. In another situation, hardship can look like someone trying to work out the ‘what next’ after losing a job and the risk of losing a home, or wondering whether it will be possible to pay the staff at the end of the month. In another situation, hardship can look like someone doing their absolute best to achieve their goal, but being beaten down all the way, facing loss after loss.

‘Hardship’ is defined (dictionary.com) as ‘a condition that is hard to endure; suffering; deprivation; lack of comfort.

Our history books are full of stories who overcame hardship – legends are made of those stories! Sometimes there will come with that story a declaration of faith, ‘Thank you, God, that you brought me this far!’ Even with one of those classic out of context verses, ‘The Bible says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” and here I am today holding my gold medal for weight-lifting!’ Very rarely in those instances do we read the heroic stories of the people who helped along the way, or supported when it was needed most. And that’s ok, we don’t always need to know those moments, some of which are very personal. But those supporting people are who we are ALL created to be as human beings made in the image of God. We’re created to help each other along.

If you could change the world for one person, to make life better for them, who would it be, and what would you do?

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 40 marks the start of a period of consolation. David Guzik in his commentary (enduringword.com) writes, *'Remember where Isaiah 39 just ended: announcing the coming Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, and the exile of the nation. "The announcement that the Babylonians would someday capture Jerusalem and take the people into exile was a bitter blow. How could Judah celebrate the downfall of Assyria when everyone knew that a more powerful invader was on the way?" (Wolf)'*

The immediate future was looking bleak, hope was low, but the word of the Lord through Isaiah said, 'Comfort my people... speak tenderly...', with reminders of I AM with you, and that all is not lost... 'Haven't you heard...?' This is what God will do for us. In the midst of the hardship, wherever it is, that's our calling, too.

The first five verses are an introduction that give us an insight into what is to come.

LOOKING AROUND US: (vs.1-2)

- v.1: The word 'comfort' has its origins in two words, 'come + fort'; 'come' meaning to move alongside, and 'fort' meaning to strengthen. Therefore, the intent here is about coming to stand alongside God's people.

The story may or may not be as it is told in the history books, but legend has it that as William Booth walked with his son, Bramwell, under one of London's bridges, Bramwell commented about the growing number of people sleeping under that bridge. The General's response was, 'Go and do something!'

How often do we feel powerless to help, or overwhelmed by a situation, and find ourselves in a space of paralysis. Whilst our default mode as Salvationists is typically action, finding a solution to the problem or at the very least some kind of temporary ease for the burden in the process, so often our most effective first step is simply presence. Being a presence; a representative of Jesus in that moment; a reminder of that promise that 'I AM with you always.' The Holy Spirit is already there, but sometimes we have to make the effort of acknowledging Him to make others aware.

- v.2: To 'speak tenderly to Jerusalem', is about speaking to the heart. We speak to the place that hurts. To speak tenderly means not that we are so soft that we are useless in the healing process like a wet Band-Aid, but that we are aware of the visible hurt and we treat it gently and appropriately. We speak truth in a loving and healing way.

This requires empathy, and at times, sympathy. Our lack of empathy or sympathy is often because we lack understanding of the issue; we either haven't heard or we cannot see it. The

more we empathise with those around us, the more we discover that what is hardship for some, is not a problem to another. It's not unusual in a family household to have a child who loves math and science, whilst their sibling just can't get going with it; meanwhile, that sibling who despises math and science loves reading and art, while the other is bored by it! One struggling entrepreneur sees problems, another sees opportunities.

[INSERT STORY ABOUT BRINGING COMFORT]

- v.2: 'Her hard service has been completed...' There are times when we meet with hardship early in a long journey, and it's not appropriate in that situation to say, 'Don't worry, it's all over now.' Yet God wanted Jerusalem to hear those words before the physical battle began! Why? Because it was a reminder that he's bigger than this. Because of Him, we get to be 'more than conquerors...' (Romans 8:37), and he is above all things.
- v.2: 'Her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' There are times when our suffering is a consequence of our stupid choices; for example, if one was to jump from the top of a 20ft wall onto concrete sidewalk, breaking bones in arms and legs, we would like to presume that the potential outcome was at least recognised beforehand! However, we should never confuse the simple consequences of our actions in that type of scenario, with the notion that true hardship and suffering is a punishment for our sin. God doesn't do that. Because of Jesus, our confession of faith in him, and our confession of our sins, our sins are cancelled out. Hallelujah!

LOOKING AHEAD OF US: (vs.3-5)

So what is our responsibility? Looking around us we might be seeing hardship; people and places needing to know hope. We are called to be present, to listen, and to offer hope in the form of Jesus Christ. We bring comfort by sitting with the suffering, then in that fellowship space, invite them to lift their eyes and look ahead at the hope that Jesus brings.

[INSERT STORY ABOUT SHARING HOPE IN CHRIST]

- v.3: 'A voice of one calling in the wilderness...' It might feel lonely as we try to be the one who points to a better way in the midst of darkness and desert places. But we're called to be one who stands out; to be counter-cultural; to prove by our living that there is a better way.
- v.3: 'Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God...' The old SA slogan of , 'Soup, Soap, Salvation', reminds us that practical problems require practical solutions, but we pray for those solutions as we seek them out and work towards them; emotional problems require emotional solutions, in that we get to sit alongside with a box of tissues, but we pray for the solutions as we seek them out and work towards them, and perhaps that solution is in the form of directing towards a professional counselor. But through all of this, we pray together, and we remain true to

our ultimate goal of seeking the way of Christ together, even if it takes a while to sense that we're getting there.

- v.4: We have a hope that we get to see the valleys raised up, rugged roads evened out; we're tackling or removing the obstacles of life that cause the hardship and suffering. And all of this is by God's grace and for God's glory. How do we know? 'For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Because God said so!

CONCLUSION:

'Wherever there is hardship...' It can be anywhere. It might be everywhere. It's probably where we least expected it to be. But we're called by God to be there as salt and light, a balm, a presence, a signpost – whatever biblical analogy you find meets that need.

Alongside our practical assistance that we might be able to offer, we're called to be present and to stand alongside. We're called to bring truth and healing as we speak hope in the desert place. We're called to speak that hope that is not a 'find your truth and save yourself', but a hope that says, 'seek Christ'. A voice of hope that declares, 'Child of God, you are loved, you are forgiven, I AM with you always, whatever you may face.'

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Wherever There is Hardship

“Hardship in Self”
By Major Owen Budden

Today we consider 2 characters who experienced an awakening – a visitation – of God in their lives through the presence of Jesus.

In the introduction to Commissioner Phil Needham’s book, *Christ at the Door*, he quotes Markus Bart’s explanation of worship:

“Worship is not an affair of one hour of one day a week only, or of special seasons, or of people of certain social standing or race, or of the feeling, the mind, the bodily presence only. The worship to which we are called is enjoyment of an open access to God, wherever they walk.”

This access to God, wherever we are is worth noting– lost in a crowd or alone in a graveyard Jesus makes himself available for a visit- initiated by us, and sometimes by Jesus Recognizing our personal hardship is a key step of deepening our relationship with Jesus. Here I am in my brokenness, my pain, my fear and my anxiety, and still, you care for me- still you love and accept me.

Let’s dive right in.

Two characters to consider as we think about the hardships in ourselves

I. The Women Stricken with Bleeding – Mark 5:25-34

The first character is the bleeding woman as recorded in Mark 5:25-34.

- This is really a story embedded in another story. Jesus is on his way to the house of Jairus who came to him pleading to come and heal his daughter- while on the way this incident occurs.
- An unexpected interruption, brought about by a woman who was desperate for a healing in her body.
- For 12 years she has had this ailment. She had spent all her money seeking a cure. She had been treated by many doctors, with the only result being a deterioration in her condition.
- She recognized the hardship; she experienced it and took steps to bring healing.

- In a final desperate act, she goes to this teacher/rabbi she had heard about. Could he do anything for her?

She knows she has a hardship. She has sought to deal with it, and she endured it for years. When she hears of Jesus being nearby, she takes action. She joins the back of the crowd. She pushes herself closer and closer to the front where Jesus is. She's close enough to reach out and touch him. In a faith filled moment she reaches out and touched him. The moment she does, something happens in her and she knows she has had something new happen. She knows a healing has taken place. She knows instinctively that a pre-Pentecost experience has occurred. She is a new woman- at least physically. But the story continues:

- Jesus knows she has been touched. He asks who touched him because he felt power leave him.
- The woman steps forward and tells Jesus her story. – his response? “My daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your trouble.”
- He did not chastise and tell her she should have come to him first. He simply listened to her story

When we recognize the physical hardship in ourselves, we seek out the help available through our health care systems, through the miracle of modern medicine, but don't leave Jesus out of the healing picture. Your faith in any medical procedure will help you– but your faith in Jesus- who will never leave nor forsake us will give us strength and the faith we need to endure any physical hardship we may encounter.

Why God does not heal every Christian with a physical ailment remains a mystery to me. Yet I do believe that He draws near

II. The Demon-Possessed Man – Mark 5:1-20

Our second story that recognizes hardships in ourself is when we recognize a spiritual hardship.

In Mark 5: 1-20 we find a demon Possessed man in the tombs, no longer able to be restrained. He now spends his days wandering in the graveyard among the tombs. He goes into fits of rage, tearing away any restraints placed upon him. Day and night he goes about screaming and cutting himself. His condition is such that he has been abandoned by all. He lives among the dead, and in some ways, he is himself a breathing corpse.

- When Jesus asks for a name, he is told “Legion” for we are many.
- These spirits were preventing this man from living a productive life.
- He was condemned to a life of madness, pain, isolation and fear.
- When Jesus encounters him, we see a conflicted response- He runs to Jesus and falls on his knees. The scene makes us think he worships Jesus. Instead, he screams in a loud voice, “What do you want with me Son of the most high God?”- Please don't punish me.

- It is the spirits who recognize that someone has entered into this man’s life, who has power to exorcise them. They cry out and please don’t punish us.
- When Jesus asks him his name, he is told Legion, or Mob, because there were so many of them. The man’s voice continued to speak on behalf of these spirits begging not to be driven out of that region.

In other words, let us stay close by. We can enter him again once you leave his presence. They are prepared to experience anything except being destroyed and have their power removed. They suggest a herd of pigs. When Jesus agrees, the spirits leave then man, go into the pigs who run off a cliff and into a lake.

The man wants to go with Jesus, but Jesus tells him to go home to his family and his village and tell them what God has done. God has taken away the isolation, the madness, the anger, the malice, the jealousy.

Aren’t these the spirits prevent us and others from living a productive life? And Jesus says, “I have come that you may have life and life to the full.”

Spirits today are often explained away as human behavior; yet, when these “human characteristics” are taken to an extreme they are very destructive. These spirits are destructive to our selves as well. They create hardships in our lives and in our relationships. They isolate us from others, and suck life out of us.

I’ll name a few.

Rage	Murder
Jealousy	Broken relationship
Envy/ Covet	Thievery
Anger	Murder? isolation
Mistrust	Broken relationship
Greed	Murder
Pride	Loss of relationship
Apathy	Isolation
Judgemental Critical	Loss of relationships
Fearful	Self destruction

These so-called human traits, when not addressed or dealt with can lead to self- destructive behavior in the form of physical issues like ulcers, broken relationships; self abuse like cutting, addictions, pain killers

These spirits that seek to destroy our relationship with God, with others and even with ourselves need to be confronted, addressed and with time healing can take place. It may not be instantly like the man in our story, but we see he is sent to share in his village to be restored to his place as a contributing member.

We are all impacted by these spirits that pull us away from a Godly life experience. The problem is many of us deny they have any power over us, and the denial often leads to more pain, more hurt, more isolation.

O Come to the Altar

Lyrics

Are you hurting and broken within?
Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin?
Jesus is calling
Have you come to the end of yourself
Do you thirst for a drink from the well?
Jesus is calling

O come to the altar
The Father's arms are open wide
Forgiveness was bought with
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

Leave behind your regrets and mistakes
Come today there's no reason to wait
Jesus is calling
Bring your sorrows and trade them for joy
From the ashes a new life is born
Jesus is calling (Oh, oh)

O come to the altar
The Father's arms are open wide
Forgiveness was bought with
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

Oh, what a Savior
Isn't He wonderful?
Sing Hallelujah, Christ is risen
Bow down before Him
For He is Lord of all
Sing Hallelujah, Christ is risen

Bear your cross as you wait for the crown
Tell the world of the treasure you found

Source: [Musixmatch](#)

Songwriters: Wade Joye / Mack Donald Iii Brock / Christopher Joel Brown / Steven Furtick

Conclusion

Chapter 8 of Commissioner Needham's book focuses on worship. Our response to Jesus and his response to us.

Comment on what the following statements mean to you:

- "The response of Jesus may bring about something entirely different from what we expected." (p. 137)
- "The Spirit wants to move everyone in that worship gathering as he did at Pentecost." P. 142
- "True worship destroys pride and humbles us all, and in doing so, opens us to the Holy Spirit." P.143
- "Worship is where we exhibit Gratitude to God, dependence on His grace, reliance on the love and support of fellow travelers, humility before others, and confidence to live your calling." P.151

Which spirits do you think impacts our society today that leads us away from Jesus?

What spirits do you think the church has to contend with in order to experience life to the full as promised by Jesus?

This quote by Richard Rohr indicates that discovering and growing an inner peace is the key to reaching out to others with a spirit of peace and love.

"Ultimately, we have just one moral duty: to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and to reflect it toward others. And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will also be in our troubled world."

– Richard Rohr

What are your thoughts on this quote?

Is there a favorite line in the song *O Come to the Altar* that resonated or spoke to you in a special way?

A photograph of a woman with glasses reading a book to a young child. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent reddish-brown filter. The text "building communities that are just" is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

*building
communities
that are just*

The logo for "Learn Live Lead" features a stylized white outline of the state of Utah to the left of the text. The text "Learn Live Lead" is stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font.

Learn
Live
Lead

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Building Communities That Are Just

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

Each worship planner contains elements for your worship service. The elements presented are only *suggestions*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more material here than needed. Sermon outlines/manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim.

Litany Resources

Theme:

BUILDING COMMUNITIES THAT ARE JUST: Each of us is a part of a community— where we live, work, worship and share life with others. By living our core values—hope, service, dignity and stewardship—in all that we do, we will be equipped and prepared to contribute toward communities where people can flourish.

Responsive Call to Worship:

(Based on Micah 6:8)

LEADER: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

PEOPLE: Amen.

LEADER: Holy God, you not only comfort us but you also challenge us. Your Word awakes us to love justice.

PEOPLE: Lord, make us whole and keep us honest.

LEADER: Holy God, you bring justice to those who are marginalized. In our community help us to be advocates of what is right.

PEOPLE: Lord, make us whole and keep us honest.

LEADER: May our worship this morning flow into our actions, our pocket books, our attitudes and our relationships.

PEOPLE: Lord, make us whole and keep us honest.

LEADER: People of God, with what shall we come before the Holy One, and bow ourselves before the Lord on high? (Micah 6:3)

PEOPLE: God has shown us what is good.
What does the Holy One require of us,
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with our God?

LEADER: With the prophet Amos let us proclaim our hope for the world:
PEOPLE: Justice shall roll on like a river, and
righteousness like a never-failing stream!
Amen.

[\(http://modernliturgist.org/project/justice-call-to-worship/\)](http://modernliturgist.org/project/justice-call-to-worship/)

Prayer of Confession:

Holy God
You called all that is into being
and offered humanity life in all its fullness.
Yet we have allowed good relationships to be broken.
We have become distant from you and our neighbour.
Lord have mercy

At times we have failed to speak out for justice,
leaving the voiceless without an advocate.
Christ have mercy

To all who fall short of God's glory
you offer pardon and peace.
Lord have mercy

Assurance of Forgiveness:

God is just and forgiving.
God receives us as we are,
lifts us up and calls us again to
be people upholding justice and peace.
Receive God's pardon and peace,
knowing that all sins are forgiven
Thanks be to God!

Prayer Litany:

(Adapted from Psalm 72:1-10, & Amos 5:24)

ALL: God let your justice and fairness
flow like a river that never runs dry

ONE: Please help those of us who are rich
to be honest and fair just like you, our God.
May we who have such abundance
be honest and fair with all your people,

especially the poor.
Let peace and justice rule every mountain
and fairness flow as a river that never runs dry.

ALL: God let your justice and fairness
flow like a river that never runs dry

ONE: May we your people defend the poor,
rescue the homeless,
and crush everyone who hurts them.
May we be as helpful as rain that refreshes the ground,
to those who are treated unjustly.
Let the wholeness and fairness of your kingdom
live forever like the sun and the moon.

ALL: God let your justice and fairness
flow like a river that never runs dry

ONE: Because you our God,
rescue the homeless and have pity on those who hurt
May we who are rich stand up for the poor
and let peace abound until the moon fades to nothing.
Let God's kingdom of justice and fairness
reach from sea to sea, across all the earth.

ALL: God let your justice and fairness
flow like a river that never runs dry
Amen.

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/search?q=justice>

Benediction:

Let us go with Jesus, the light who guides us on our way.
May our hope be that the Sun of Justice will rise one morning
on all humankind.

May the God of Peace, our constant companion,
lead us along paths of solidarity and hope,
and give us the joy of being united in God's love.
Amen.

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/10/benediction-peace-sunday.html>

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Building Communities That Are Just

Thematic Musical Resources

(SB Song Book, TB Tune Book, HC Hallelujah Choruses, SW Salvation Worship)

<p>BUILDING COMMUNITIES THAT ARE JUST Help us Build a Loving World (SB#1001) Here Am I My Lord Send Me (SB#580) The World For God (SB#933) Build my Life (HC #287) Your Kingdom Reigns (SW) Mighty to Save (HC #272)</p>	<p>TB #533 A New World TB # 235 To the Uttermost He Saves TB #876 The World for God HC #287 Salvationworship.com HC #272</p>
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LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Building Communities That Are Just

“Building Communities That Are Just”
By Captain Daniel Rowe

Scripture – Psalm 11:7

Song Suggestions

- “Here for You”
- “Your Grace is Enough
- “God of Justice”

Introduction

- Review last weeks sermon, “Mobilized to share hope wherever there is hardship”
- State the Vision again
 - Visions make sure we’re all pulling in the same direction as an organization with the understanding the ultimate goal of winning the World for Christ. Friends, we have a part to play in the mission God has commanded us to accomplish. The Mission is our calling, and the vision tells us where we’re heading.
- “By being hope and light in the midst of COVID-19, we can then build a just community - which is the next part of our vision statement.”
- Scripture leaves no room for interpretation that God is a just ruler and desires equality for all humanity. Psalm 11:7 states, “For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.”
- As image bearers of the Righteous One, humanity is also hardwired to value justice and fairness. When we are wronged, or when we see examples of injustice, we feel strong emotions of anger, frustration, and confusion. We have a craving to see ourselves and others treated fairly and to see society function to ensure that justice is afforded to all, and that is good.

Part 1 - Biblical Justice vs. Social Justice

- Ask, “**Is there a difference?**”

- “Justice in its simplest form, means to set things right. Yet, how do we know what is right? Who defines “right”? Is it society-at-large or the culture we live in? Is there a moral law that we inherently know to follow?”

Part 1a - Biblical Justice

- As Christ-followers, the answer is simple. Our sense of justice is imparted to us by our Creator God. He is loving, kind, and merciful and He is also righteous, holy, and just.
 - Deuteronomy 32:4
 - Psalm 89:14
- God is just. It is part of His character, which means He is always just. We hear that God is love and God is holy more often than we hear that God is just. Do we understand that He also sets the standard for justice? Pursuing biblical justice means we follow God’s way to make right that which is wrong, and we look to Scripture to define what is “right”. And what is right is that Jesus did not die for only certain groups in human society.
 - Use Biblical examples of who Jesus died for (Spoiler alert...it’s everyone! This even means the Biblical characters we don’t like)
- We do not have to look far to see that Jesus is our standard of righteousness. Jesus is our standard of justice. Throughout the Old and New Testament, our call to do justice is clear.
 - Psalm 82:3, Isaiah 1:17, Micah 6:8, Luke 11:42
- We are called to take action and confront evil, to care for the vulnerable, and to make right that which is wrong. This mandate is not new. It is not a cultural fad or something that is simply a trend in today’s society. Which leads us to social justice.

Part 1b - Social Justice

- Social justice is a common term used today.
- There are many different definitions of Social Justice
- “In contrast to social justice, which focuses on a temporal view of addressing injustices in society, biblical justice starts with the eternal in mind.”
- “As the Church, we may partner with those doing the work of social justice in our communities but let us not be confused about our ultimate mission. Our mission is not about picking up another cause because it sounds appealing and makes us look good. Our mission is about fully embracing the cause of Christ. The end goal of biblical justice is seeing lives reconciled to God and eternally transformed.”


Part 2 - So What Can We Do?

- Can we, the Church, lead the way and pursue justice on behalf of the oppressed, the widow, the orphan, and the enslaved? If we know the One who is completely just, should we not lead the charge? YES!

- First, we need to stop allowing “justice” to be this political thing where we have to align with a certain party because we like the way they deal with “justice.” Whether you realize it or not, by associating yourself with The Salvation Army, you’re an advocate for the poor, for the outcast, for the beat down and we have a responsibility to understand this. This means, church, we need to understand what’s going on in the world around us so we can fight for Biblical justice.
- It starts with the church getting it right.
 - We are a pilot plant of the future kingdom of God, a place for the world to get a partial glimpse of what the humanity will look like under Jesus’ kingship and justice.

Conclusion

- Fueled by the compassion of Christ, we engage in issues of injustice – protecting the vulnerable, fighting for those held in oppression, walking alongside the wounded, and pointing them to the One who heals, restores and redeems. This is true justice.
- It involves time and sacrifice. It means stepping out of our comfort zone and persevering with patience. It means walking in wisdom and not jumping in haphazardly or foolishly. Our just God leads, and we follow as He empowers us through the Holy Spirit. So, let’s go. Let’s engage in the fight for biblical justice.



*know the love
of Jesus*

 Learn
Live
Lead

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Know the Love of Jesus

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

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Litany Resources

Theme:

KNOW THE LOVE OF JESUS: We know the transformative power of Christ—life is experienced in full when we journey with him. Our work and our lives must continually affirm this truth. Our mission is clear: “The Salvation Army exists to share the love of Jesus Christ.” All that we do supports the fulfilment of this mission.

Opening Prayer:

(based on Ephesians 3)

Holy One,
we bow our hearts before you this day.
Strengthen us in our innermost being
and dwell in our hearts through faith.
May we be rooted and grounded in Christ,
whose love is beyond all knowledge.
Help us comprehend even the smallest part
of the beautiful mystery of your grace.
Grant that we may experience the fullness
of your presence with us. Amen.

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/entry/6159/worship-elements-july-25-2021>

Pastoral Prayer:

Almighty God, whose love is beyond understanding, whose mercy is beyond comprehension—we lift up our hearts to you in prayer. Though we were captives of our sinful and rebellious ways, your love has released us. You have freed us to experience divine love in our own lives. Your atoning love has freed us from the penalty of sin, which was rightfully ours to pay. How can we express our thanksgiving, except to praise your name and to allow your love to be seen in us. Grant to us a determined faith and a fervent love, that we might be reflections of your

divine grace. Hear our prayer, O Lord, as we offer our petitions in the name of the One who is love, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2710/worship-elements-may-3-2015>

Benediction:

May you know the richness and fullness
of God's grace.

May you experience every dimension
of the love of Christ.

May the Spirit dwell within you through faith.

To the Holy One, whose power works within us
to accomplish more than we could ask
or imagine or comprehend,
be glory forever and ever! Amen.

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/entry/6159/worship-elements-july-25-2021>

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Know the Love of Jesus

Thematic Musical Resources

(SB Song Book, TB Tune Book, HC Hallelujah Choruses, SW Salvation Worship)

<p>KNOW THE LOVE OF JESUS I Believe the God the Father (SB#34) I Know A Fount (SB#197) Heaven Came Down (SB#307) Knowing You (SB#565) Let the Beauty of Jesus (SW) Christ for the World (HC #282) Build My Life (HC #287)</p>	<p>TB #360 Bethany TB #489 I Know A Fount TB #652 Heaven Came Down TB #725 Knowing You Salvationworship.com HC #282 HC #287</p>
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LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Know the Love of Jesus

“Know the Love of Jesus”
By Major Heather Samuel

Scripture: Ephesians 4:32-5:2

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Introduction:

- The book of Ephesians is a love letter: Paul is writing to share the love of Jesus to the community in Ephesus and sharing the love of Jesus to us as well.
- If you want to know more about the love of Jesus, read the book of Ephesians.
- What is love? **dictionary.com** definition of love is this: “a profoundly tender, passionate affection for another person; a feeling of warm, personal attachment or deep affection, as for a parent, child, or friend.” Sounds lovely, like what we do pretty much all the time.
- The love of Jesus is so much more than this!
- “Agape”, one of the several Greek words in the New Testament used for love means this: “The love of God or Christ for humankind; the love of Christians for other persons, corresponding to the love of God for humankind; unselfish love of one person for another without romantic implications.” (**dictionary.com** via Kristi Walker from **christianity.com**)
- It is this second kind of love, the Agape” love that is the closest definition we as humans can use to describe the love of Jesus.
- So: What is the love of Jesus? How can we know it? Ephesians 5:2 gives an excellent description of the love of Jesus. It says: “...as Christ gave himself up for us, as a fragrant offering.”
- There are four ways we can know the love of Jesus in our lives:

I. The love of Jesus is self-sacrificing

- To know the love of Jesus is to know what it cost him, and what it costs us. It is self-sacrificing. This is unselfish love for another person that we looked at love when defining Agape love
- Jesus loves us so much that he was willing to go to the Cross for each one of us, and to give up his own life, so that we can have relationship and life with God

- John 3:16!!!
- This self-sacrificing love tells us that our lives matter to God! Regardless of our past, regardless of our mistakes, regardless of anything, we matter to God!
- Challenge for us all: to show that unselfish love of Jesus to all we encounter!

II. The love of Jesus is generous

- Romans 5:8 says: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- Jesus literally gave up everything for us: his very life, his earthly family, security, anonymity, everything for us to experience his generous love in our lives!
- This is not generous in money, or power, or fame, but rather, generous is hope, generous in grace, generous in mercy
- It is generous because we do not deserve this love!!
- Challenge for us all: to love those we feel are undeserving of our love! This is not easy to do: hurts, pain, grudges, guilt, shame, anger, etc. all well up within us and tell us that so and so does not deserve our love, our mercy, our grace, even our hope. To know the love of Jesus is to know and to share his generosity to everyone!

III. The love of Jesus is undeserved and often unreciprocated

- Ephesians 4:32, our Scripture for this morning tells us: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”
- How difficult is it for us to forgive? Kindness and compassion are sometimes easier, particularly if there are no previous hurts with people, but forgiveness is hard!!!
- It is even harder when we feel that the person we need to forgive doesn’t deserve our forgiveness! Forgiveness is not solely about the other person: it is also about us.
- Forgiveness is our choice to live in love, to live in freedom, rather than being bound up be carrying the grudges, the hurt, the anger, or whatever. It allows us, and the person that we are forgiving the ability and strength to move towards knowing and sharing the love of Jesus. Probably the greatest benefit, but also the greatest challenge!
- Matthew 5:43-44 says: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...”

IV. The love of Jesus is unending

- 1 John 3:1-3 says: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure."
- To know the love of Jesus is to know that it is unending!! It is lavished on us!

- Lavish is a decadent word: it shows favor, specialness, something that feels incredible! This is the love of Jesus for us all, and it is unending!!
- Look at how many times the disciples didn't "get it" or "mistook what Jesus meant" and yet, Jesus never abandoned them, but rather promised to be with them always!
- We are promised that the Lord' love is unending. Lamentations 3:22-23, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Challenge

- We have seen how challenging it can be to know the love of Jesus, particularly when the stuff of life happens.
- To know the love of Jesus is to share the love of Jesus
- To know the love of Jesus is to be grounded in his love so we can be sent out to show the love of Jesus to all with whom we come into contact
- John Piper has said: "Becoming a loving person means living with the roots of your life sunk deep in the love of Christ for you."
- Ephesians 3: 17-18, 'Being rooted and established in love!'"

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Know the Love of Jesus

“Go and Tell, Go and Live, Go and Be”
By Major Owen Budden

Text: Matthew 20:29-34
Matthew 15:32
Mark 10:21

*“Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes.
Immediately they received their sight and followed him.”*
(Matthew 20:29-34)

*“I have compassion for these people;
they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat.
I do not want to send them away hungry,
or they may collapse on the way.”*
(Matthew 15:32)

*‘Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said.
“Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.
Then come, follow me.”*
(Mark 10:21)

These encounters with Jesus indicate what must be the first thing we demonstrate if people are to know the love of Jesus: We must have compassion; We must how love, demonstrating that we genuinely care

I. Deepening Inward Relationship

- Let me first begin by acknowledging the importance of deepening our inward relationship with God.
- This continual inward journey, experiencing God’s unfathomable love within, is a critical element of sharing Christ in our outward relationships.
- The quality and depth of our relationships with others is often dependent on how well our inward journey is.
- If we feel distant from God, how do we share about a God who loves us and draws close to us?

- If we feel a sense of guilt, and we are downhearted in our relationship with God, how do we tell others about God's unconditional forgiveness and love?
- If we neglect or ignore the importance of time spent with God, how do we share with others the benefits of placing yourself in God's presence?

II. Deepening Outward Relationships

- Jesus, who often withdrew to lonely places to pray (deepening inward relationship with his Father); had a positive impact on people (deepening outward relationship with others).
- People were drawn to him. He was approachable. He was real and willingly connected with people.
- Jesus saw people as people, not as projects or a means for him to gain popularity. Jesus did not ask "What's in it for me?"
- Jesus looked at people and had compassion on them. He loved those on the margins, who were considered unworthy of God's love. These are the people Jesus loved, and healed as he did with these two blind men in Matthew 20.

III. Moving from Inward to Outward Relationships

In deepening our outward relationships, we understand that it's not about spending more time with our friends and those who belong to our social economic group, our own faith, and cultural groups. It is about letting our inward relationship with God shape our outward relationships with those outside our circle of fellow believers.

Commissioner Phil Needham, in his book *Christ at the Door*, writes: "Our Army does not need soldiers like us. It needs soldiers not like us, disciples who bring unique perspectives, understanding, and capacities to relate to the changing needs and cultures around us" (p. 237).

"Love your enemy," says Jesus. Even the pagans spend time with their friends and share food with each other.

As followers of Jesus, we are asked to step outside our comfort zone of friends and family, we are called to invite our enemies – those who are outside our circle of friends, outside our cultural circle of acquaintances.

So, when we step outside the proverbial comfort zone, and invite those who may be considered our enemies – different cultural groups, different ethnicities – to share a meal and demonstrate the love of God in our lives, then we are on the road to evangelism. Not as a project, but as a relationship based on Love and compassion.

Jesus did not *grow* into a loving relationship with people over time. Jesus looked at the Rich young ruler and loved him. He looked at these two blind beggars and had compassion on them. He looked at the crowds and had compassion on them.

His compassion and love for God that he was continuing to develop inwardly became the catalyst for his outward actions.

Once we have received and accepted this story of God's love operating in our own lives in a deep and personal way; only then can we make God's story our story. And tell this story with passion and compassion. It becomes a story that inspires others to pursue this God relationship through Christ that leads to the abundant life- life to the full.

This story – our story – helps others to come to know the love of Jesus.

Commissioner Needham offers us some more thought-provoking, and for some perhaps even disturbing, ideas:

- “The church must not become the object of its own affection.” (p. 225)
- “Over time movements take on characteristics of institutions that focuses on its own prosperity and survival.” (p. 226)
- “I believe Our Army in the western world will continue to decline spiritually and numerically if we do not make discipleship our priority.” (p. 228)
- “A Corps is not called to grow per se, it is called to make disciples.” (p. 230)

The whole of chapter 12 of Needham's book focuses on this two-fold need to be healthy and growing spiritually as an individual, and as a result live like a disciple; speak like a disciple, act like a disciple. This involves imitating Jesus, especially in the way of love and compassion.

Conclusion

The writers who came after Jesus and wrote to the early churches had a laser focus on this inward compassion God has for us.

- Hebrews 5:2 states: “He can have **compassion** on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.”

Also, the focus on this outward compassion we are to show toward others.

- I Peter 3:8: “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers and sisters, be tender-hearted, be courteous; By this, says Jesus, “they will know you are my disciples if you have love one for another.”

As this love and compassion reaches outwards and upwards to those outside our church doors, as well as those within, we will experience the true meaning of discipleship.

In the words of General Albert Orsborn:

*Except I am moved with compassion,
How dwelleth Thy Spirit in me?
In word and in deed burning love is my need;
I know I can find this in Thee.*

May we seek to experience this compassion from God, and share this compassion with those we encounter, and in so doing we help people come to know the love of Jesus.

Amen.

LIVING THE VISION
Worship Series
Know the Love of Jesus

“Building Communities that Know the Love of Jesus”
By Captain Daniel Rowe

Scripture – 1 John 4:7-21

Song Suggestions

- “To God Be the Glory”
- “I Love you Lord”
- “No Outsiders”

Introduction

- Review sermon, “Mobilized to share hope wherever there is hardship”
- State the Vision again
 - Visions make sure we’re all pulling in the same direction as an organization with the understanding the ultimate goal of winning the World for Christ. Friends, we have a part to play in the mission God has commanded us to accomplish. The Mission is our calling, and the vision tells us where we’re heading.
- “Paired with building communities that are just, we also have a second part to this part of the vision. Not only are we to innovate, give hope, and build just communities, but all of these share the same purpose to letting the community know why we love them and why we’re doing what we’re doing – because of the love of Jesus.

Part 1 – Scripture

- Paul is the apostle of faith. Peter is the apostle of hope. James is the apostles of good works. And John is the apostle of love
 - We can start with the command, and I won’t spend any more time on it than to say that we are to love one another. Simple enough, right? But very hard to do.
- There are actually 3 reasons given in v.7-8 why we should love.
 - Love is from God.
 - Love is evidence that a person is born of God
 - Love demonstrates that you know God.
- God is love. How was that manifested? What is the standard of love? What I mean is this: what makes love, love?

- Our emotions and feelings change all the time. They don't make a good standard.
- In this is love: not that we have loved God. It means that Jesus was the substitutionary atonement, he took our punishment that we deserved, and then the second part of the meaning is that Jesus fully satisfied the wrath of God. So nobody who accepts Christ will ever face the wrath of God.

Part 2 – Showing God's Love

- Break down each of these and add your own examples and stories.
 - Love by Listening
 - Love by Encouraging
 - Love by Praying for Others

Conclusion

- Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, not a select few. He died for our sins without conditions. In fact, He suffered and died knowing the world rejected Him, and we continue to reject Him daily when we fall short. Yet He loved us enough to take our place.
- This is what God's love is all about! It is love with no strings attached. His love expects nothing in return. Pure, sacrificial love.
- When we show this kind of love, we are showing God's love. It's His love shining through us. If it seems difficult to muster up your own love for someone, focus on the fact that you are being a conduit for God's love to flow through. It's not by your own strength, but through God's. This is how you show God's love to others even when it seems difficult.
- How can you show God's love to someone today?

Finish up the series by highlighting key points from all four sermons, reading the vision again, and asking your congregation to make a commitment to see the vision realized.

We are an innovative partner, mobilized to share hope wherever there is hardship, building communities that are just and know the love of Jesus.