



## Citizens & Strangers (Part 12) – The Kingdom Now

Matt Chandler – May 20, 2018

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[Video]

**Female:** The kingdom of God is as multifaceted and mysterious as our Creator, a kingdom we only see now through a glass darkly. Though we can't picture it fully, God's kingdom is the story told in Scripture, from the garden to the city, and in the middle of the story God chose to reveal his kingdom in a new way.

The gospel is not only Jesus coming and dying to save us from our sins; it's also the story of God establishing his dwelling, dominion, and dynasty in the world. We live as both citizens and strangers, prisoners of hope in this shadow kingdom, all while knowing it's not our true home, that something better is coming, that God's perfect kingdom *is* coming.

[End of video]

Good morning. It's good to see you. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab those. We're going to be in Acts, chapter 2. We will be finishing our series on the kingdom of God today. The last 12 weeks it's what we've been talking about, looking at, diving into. It also is Pentecost Sunday, that Sunday the church has historically celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit and the expanding of the kingdom of God to the ends of the earth.

I thought we could finish the series by going back to the very first weekend of the series when we defined what the kingdom was. We used Steve Timmis' definition of the kingdom. Steve is the CEO of the Acts 29 church-planting network. We are heavily involved in that network...700 churches, something like 30 languages, all over the world. It's pretty cool.

Here was his definition: "The kingdom of God is where the Father's rule is exercised through the Son by the power of the Spirit..." There's your triune nature of God playing itself out in this way.

Where the reign and rule of that God is "...willingly obeyed, gloriously displayed, and happily enjoyed among his people." One of the reasons I love Steve's definition is that both biblically as well as experientially this is how we have learned to submit to the God of the Bible.

He starts with that stage one of sanctification, where we willingly obey the Word of God. You can't usually start with "happily enjoyed." The reason "happily enjoyed" isn't the starting point is, for many of us, we have to grow in a trust of God as our Lord and Savior. Many of you will remember what it's like to become a Christian and for there to be these spaces where it was really, really easy for us to say yes to God and follow him, but then there were these other places that required faith.

There were these other places that really had us wrestling with ourselves and saying, "No, no, no. I'm going to trust the God of the Bible more than I trust my own intuition." That willful obedience to the Word of God then led to the glorious display of God's goodness and grace, because all of the "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" in the Bible are about your joy and his glory.

Every time we submit our compulsions to the Word of God and orient our lives through the power of the Spirit to God's revealed will, we gloriously display his wisdom and mercy to the rest of the world. Then finally, upon those two things, it can be happily enjoyed among his people, but you don't start with "happily enjoyed." You start with "willful obedience." "I'm going to submit my life to God as King." That's very, very different than "I'm a social conservative." That's a very, very different thing than "I grew up in the South." That's a very different thing than [you fill in the blank].

The submission to King Jesus as Lord of our lives is willful obedience. It shows and proves (this is the thing I want to continue to harp on, because I believe it's a confusion of our day) that Christianity is not primarily about personal comfort or human happiness. Are you with me? That's not what the kingdom is about. That's not what the gospel is about. In fact, you and I find ourselves, as Christians, in the tension of human flourishing and the cross and self-denial.

God has made known to us the path of life, all the "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" about our joy, but we live in a fallen world, so we find ourselves in the tension between human flourishing and the cross of Jesus Christ. It makes us weirdos, because if there's any unforgivable sin in 2018 it's not giving in to your personal impulses. That cannot be forgiven, because that's who you really are.

"Those impulses you have sexually, those impulses you have financially... You should never subject those things. Those are who you are. Give yourself over to those things. If there's one thing

thousands of years of human history have taught us it's that we know what's best for us. If anyone can lead us into our own personal happiness, it's us."

I'm making a little joke there, because if history shows us anything it's that we break everything. Every philosopher in every culture has had to try to get to the bottom of why we can't get ourselves into our own happiness. The Greeks tried it. The Romans tried it. They all had these ideas about, "Okay, why can't we get to where we want to get?"

C.S. Lewis says it this way. It's probably my favorite way I ever read this idea. "I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity." Think about how foreign that sentence is to large swaths of American evangelicals: If what you want is to feel really, really comfortable, then I certainly don't recommend Christianity. What did Lewis say could bring him that? A bottle of port.

Do you want to be happy for a few moments and then be overcome by guilt and shame? There's a way to do that. But coming to Christ as King ushers you into the kingdom, not of personal comfort and human happiness but what I would argue is a joy of soul that transcends circumstances. In fact, where Christianity becomes about personal comfort and personal, individual happiness it tends to die, and where it becomes about self-sacrifice in the kingdom it flourishes.

So I wanted to end our time on the kingdom talking about the kingdom here and now. We've been talking about what the kingdom is, what it looks like, what citizens look like in that kingdom, and then last week we looked at the kingdom when it's consummated: new heavens, new earth, and where we're moving toward. Now here we are in the space in between. What does it look like for us to be a part of the kingdom of God that is ever-expanding in all directions? Well, I'll give you my outline if that would be helpful to you.

What I want to show you from Acts 2:1-13 is that *the unwelcomed are now welcomed* and *the outright rejection of force or withdrawal*. That's what the kingdom looks like now: the unwelcomed, welcomed and the outright rejection of force or withdrawal. There's my outline. Let's dive into Acts, chapter 2.

By the way, if you're new, don't think number of points has anything to do with length of sermon, just to prepare your heart. You're like, "Oh, thank God. Only two points." It doesn't matter. Let's dive in.

Starting in verse 1. **"When the day of Pentecost arrived..."** By the way, Pentecost is when the Jews would celebrate the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. It was one of three Jewish festivals that required a pilgrimage to Jerusalem if you had the means to do so. If you had the means, you would pack up your family and travel to Jerusalem to be in Jerusalem where the temple was to celebrate that God gave you the Law as his people. He gave you the way of life. That's what Pentecost is.

**"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place."** That means the disciples of an ascended Jesus. **"And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."**

**Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?**

**Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.' And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others mocking said, 'They are filled with new wine.'"**

They were saying, "They're drunk. That's what's going on. These brothers got Pentecost party last night, and they still have a bit of it in their system." Now this isn't in my notes, but it's for free today. Wherever the Spirit of God does profound things, you will always find mockery among the religious. Wherever the Holy Ghost does profound things, you will oftentimes find even the religious mock the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

You see it here. You see it in other parts of the New Testament. You see it certainly throughout human history in the first and second Great Awakenings. You see it in the Welsh Revival. You see it at Azusa Street. So you have these revivals that are breaking out, the Holy Spirit really pouring himself out, and you'll always find this group of religious people mocking it when it comes out. Pentecost is not different than the human experience.

It's where we get a clear picture of how religious folks who try to control what God does will then, in turn, mock an outpouring of God's Spirit that dismantles their framework of understanding. So that's what we see here, but I think the bigger thing we're seeing in this moment, if we're talking about living for the kingdom, is you have this radical invitation into the kingdom of God at the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples of Jesus are praying and seeking. They're worshiping and fasting. The Bible says the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, was sent and indwelt them. When it indwelt them, when it was sealed in their hearts, which, Christian, is what happened to you at conversion...regeneration, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit... When that happened, these men, most of whom were cowards, all of a sudden are crazy emboldened and go out and proclaim the good news.

But who do they proclaim it to? The unwelcomed. They go out into this crowd, and it literally reads like a list of Who's Who of not welcomed. He walks out and begins to preach the good news of the kingdom of God in different languages to different nations, where what's being communicated is "Hey, this isn't a nation of Israel thing; this is a world thing, and I'm calling the nations into the kingdom." It's important to note especially that the Cretans and Arabians are there.

Why those two in particular? Well, the Cretans in particular were a despicable group of people. If you're like, "How dare you say that?" I'm telling you what they said about themselves. In Titus, chapter 1, Paul quotes one of the Cretan prophets, and the Cretan prophets said about Crete, about what their culture was like, "We're all liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons." That's a weird thing to go, "Here's how we culturally identify."

*This* ethnic culture has *these* things that could be celebrated and are awesome, and you're kind of like, "Oh, that's amazing." And this culture has *this*, and here's what the Cretans had: "We lie. You have to know you're getting into that. We're Cretans. We lie. All of us? Every one of us. That could be a lie right now. I don't know. We're liars. But we're also evil beasts, and I'd fight you in my evil beastery, but I'm also lazy and feel like eating something."

They're there and by every metric excluded from the kingdom, but who did the message go to? The Cretans and the Arabians. At the coming of the Holy Spirit, in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the followers of Jesus Christ, there wasn't a wall that was built up but rather a welcome that was issued to the unwelcomed. This was the way of Jesus and became the way of the *people* of Jesus moving forward.

What was Jesus most despised for? Loving sinners, eating with sinners. It drove the Pharisees and Sadducees insane that he would humanize them, love them, show compassion to them, empathize with them, weep with them, serve them. They would put him on blast constantly for his affection for sinners. In John, chapter 4, Jesus runs into the woman at the well, a woman who had been married five times and was currently exchanging sex for rent, and reveals himself to be the Son of God first to this Samaritan woman.

The woman caught in adultery. What does he do? He extends welcome and asks her to sin no more. The woman of the city, which does not mean she had a loft downtown, who came in and washed his feet with her tears he used as an example to rebuke the disciples and the more religious, clean-looking men and women who couldn't see the beauty in what she was doing. Never excusing sin, but always welcoming in.

Do you hear me? Don't confuse that. He's not saying, "Hey, keep sleeping around. That's great." He loves her too much for that. He wants her to understand, "You've been made in the image of God. You are worth far more than being consumed by foolish men who wouldn't see your personhood. Don't treat yourself cheaply. Come into the kingdom." Not, "How dare you treat yourself so cheaply? There's no place for you in the kingdom." No, this is about the welcome of the unwelcomed.

We see this when Jesus eats with Zacchaeus, the wee little man. A tax collector...no moral equivalent I am aware of...a despicable human being. Jesus says, "Hey, come down. I'm having dinner at your house," and it infuriated the most conservative, clean group around. Jesus lives his life this way. Then the followers of Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, carry this welcome out. This is what you're seeing in the book of Acts.

You're seeing the Samaritans invited in in Acts, chapter 8. You're seeing the Ethiopian eunuch come in in Acts, chapter 8, and then head back to Ethiopia, where the Ethiopian church becomes a catalyst of the great Reformation when Luther actually gets to know a deacon in the Ethiopian church and

leads the reform in the 1500s. That was all birthed out of the Holy Spirit of God indwelling his people and expanding the kingdom as they went.

We see this in Acts 10 when the Italians came in. Praise God that the Italians came in. Love the Italians. The Italians and Brazilians are my people. They're loud. They talk with their hands. They're touchers. They hug. They're my people. Now I'm a little too pasty for them. You might be looking at my pigment going, "No, brother. You are not. You are English." Which is fine. I don't hate that either. I just feel like those are my people.

Anyway, the Italians come in there. It's not a mistake that all of this is happening in Jerusalem. Why? Because Jerusalem is where the temple is. It is the one place that the Jews said, "This is where the presence and power of God is," which is why all of these Jews who had the ability are making this pilgrimage into where the presence of God is. Well, what does the Spirit of God do when it comes? It indwells the believer so that the temple now goes out and is not fixed.

This is why you and I will be with Christ forever, regardless of whether we ever make a pilgrimage and see Jerusalem. It's why Jerusalem, as a location, is not the epicenter of the kingdom of God. *We* are, and wherever we are the presence and power of God goes, because we have been sealed with the Spirit of the living God. This is where you can't get confused. *We* have been indwelt. *We* are the temple of the living God. God is expanding his kingdom through *us*, wherever we are and wherever we go.

We see in this the rejection of force and withdrawal about how the kingdom will expand and grow. Look in Acts 2, starting in verse 42. The Holy Spirit of God comes. The kingdom is established. It's aggressively moving forward, but *how* is it moving forward? Jesus addressed some of these ideologies during his day, and we're going to see, when the Spirit of God comes, those ideologies further rejected and a new way of kingdom living established. Let's look at this.

**"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common.**

**And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their**

**homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."**

There are some ideologies here that are being rejected. They were already rejected by Christ, and then when the Spirit of God came and God formed his people those ideologies were rejected. The first was the ideology of the zealots, that the kingdom of God would come through force and violence and the spilling of blood. Jesus rejects that in his earthly ministry, even going so far as to rebuke Peter who started a fight with one of the high priest's guards who tried to arrest Jesus, if you remember that story.

He pulled his sword, struck at the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Jesus put the guy's ear back on and rebuked Peter. Not the man illegally arresting him but Peter for thinking the kingdom could be brought about by violence. We don't take. We don't overthrow. That's not how the kingdom works. What happens when God forms his people? What happens when the kingdom breaks forth through the Holy Spirit? Fellowship, care, love, dinner happen.

Love for the poor, love for one another, service to one another, submission to teaching, worship, and joy among the people of God serve as the subversive kingdom that rots out the tyranny and power of Rome underneath it, in it, leading to its demise 400-something years later. The Holy Spirit of God coming at Pentecost, filling and indwelling believers, leads to a fellowship among the believers that rejects force and violence as the way of the kingdom.

It also rejects the ideology of the Essenes, which is all about withdrawal. The Essenes set up basically a compound out in Qumran. They were basically like, "We're just going to leave this world. This world is not savable. It's not salvageable. It's too evil. It's too dark. It's too broken. So we're going to take our scrolls and head out and form our own little community here, and we're going to do our deal." Jesus rejected that in his time.

I don't know if you're noticing this, but the brothers and sisters here in Acts 2 have not withdrawn from culture or Jerusalem. They're right in the middle of it. They're embodying Jesus' plan of being in the world but not of the world, being salt and light, being other than, living by a different set of metrics. What were the early church's metrics? Together, sharing, loving, serving, "one anothering" in such a way that was disruptive to the status quo.

A church that made sure no one had any needs? That's crazy, and that's what was going on. That's what the kingdom is doing. It's not withdrawing; it's dead in the middle of the brokenness of the world, shining like a light in the darkness. Jesus and the apostles and the testimony of the early church is that the kingdom is taking place *now* in the midst of our everyday lives and that God will use the ordinary, human means of work, neighborhoods, and play as the conduits through which his Holy Spirit breaks forth the kingdom into the domains of life we live in.

So here's the tension I'm going to constantly ask you to walk in. I know it's a tension. First, the most significant shapings of your life are going to take place over a period of decades in ways you cannot perceive you are being shaped at the time. Way too many of us look at the apostle Paul and ignore Peter. We look at Paul. Converted in an instant. He preaches his first sermon 48 hours later and rarely shows a weakness his whole life.

Few of us look at Peter, who has these high highs and then epic crashes and then another high high where people get around him and go, "Oh my gosh. Maybe he has finally learned his lesson. It looks like we're not going to have to talk about him again." Nope! We don't even pay attention to Peter. We just look at Paul, who's like on a high-rise with a cape in the wind. The only thing he ever says is "Not that I've already obtained all these things." Like, who has to say that? Peter doesn't have to say, "Not that I've already obtained all these things." Paul does.

You and I are in the ordinary, and God forms and shapes us in the ordinary. You will get up and read your Bible, and you will read your Bible and get up. It's not these profound moments where you open the Word of God and all of a sudden there's an angel standing to your left. "I'm glad you decided to spend time with our Savior this morning. He sent me here today. I've got some things I want to talk with you about."

That's not going to be most of our experiences, or maybe *any* of our experiences. We're just going to read our Bibles and pray and try to live faithfully. We're going to come to church and worship. It's not wrong for us to come expectant. We're going to come being expectant. Sometimes we'll be like, "Yeah, it was good. I mean, it was all right. I liked the music. The sermon was okay. It certainly wasn't a steak. It was more like ramen noodle, but whatever." But ramen noodles will sustain you until you can come back together.

This is how God works. Not a lot of silver bullets in the kingdom. Progressive sanctification. Yet as I preach for you to never despise the ordinary, I want, as the Bible commands me, to point out there

are these moments where the Holy Ghost breaks through and brings about that future kingdom we looked at last week in the here and now. We want to expect that and pray for that and long for that and hope for that and rest in the tension that's created when you see both in the Bible.

Gosh, we've been together long enough... We have seen God heal people miraculously, and we have prayed and fasted and sought his face to do the same for others, and he has said, "No." I don't pretend to understand those "noes." As I said last week, there are probably 20 stories I could tell you where I can't fathom how God got glory from that death or that tragedy, and I *still* can't, but we're going to be a people that prays and expects and holds with open hands the results, because God is God and we are not. That's life in the kingdom: in but not of, ordinary with supernatural breakthrough.

With these things said, I want to talk about what this would look like organically and then how The Village Church has tried to organize around being in but not of. When we have talked about what it means to participate in the gospel of kingdom... The week we introduced the Sermon on the Mount, we said living in the kingdom has everything to do with your relationship with God and your relationship with one another. Living in the power of the kingdom has to do with relationship with God that leads to right relationship with others.

On that relationship with God, if we're going to be walking in the kingdom, there are some things we have to consider, think about, and cultivate. Here would be the two in relationship with God. If we're going to walk in the power and joy of the kingdom, we must cultivate lives that long to be in his presence. We want to organize our lives and cultivate *in* our lives a desire to be in the presence of God by faith...not by feeling but by faith...rooted in the Word of God.

It means our pursuit of God probably goes past 10 minutes of quiet time in the morning. (By the way, we need a better word for that. It sounds like punishment.) What does it look like to give myself over to, in the transitions of my day, reorient my heart around who I am in Christ and what God has called me to? What does it look like to build into my life natural rhythms that lift my eyes up in awe? I'll be teaching on that later, so no more on that.

Then the second thing. Not only do we need to cultivate a life that's serious about being in the presence of God by faith, not by feeling (although when the feelings come that's pretty sweet)... The second thing is to really believe and embrace in the deep parts of our souls that God is not

disappointed in us. You will never know the joy and freedom of the kingdom if you think the King is perpetually disappointed in you.

When you think about God, if his arms are crossed and he just can't wait for 10 years from now concerning you, I just don't know how you would ever walk in the joy of the Lord. What you're banking on, if that's the way you think God thinks about you, that there's some future version of you out there he's crazy about but you right now, it's just a really difficult season for him...

The only way that could possibly be true is if God thought 2,000 years ago, with all of your screwups in sight, that you were going to be worth his sacrifice for his glory and your joy, but then as he got closer to you, you turned out to be a lot less attractive than he saw 2,000 years ago. Two thousand years ago he saw you and was like, "Oh, all right. I like that guy. I like that woman." Then as he got closer he was like, "Ooh, yeah. Nah, mulligan. Do-over. I'm not purchasing this fool with my blood." No, no, no.

We know God is not *inside* of space and time but *outside* of space and time. He is *here* and he is *there*. He is with us today and he's 20 years in our future, not as something he knows but a place that he is. If that makes your mind hurt, you're feeling the right thing. So God knows. You have nothing he doesn't know. Christ went to the cross and paid that bill in full. We know that, because Jesus isn't in the grave but is alive and risen.

You will not experience the joy of God's grace and kingdom if you think the King is always disappointed in you. He is working on you, growing you, shaping you under the banner and covering of his love. He doesn't need you to get your act together. He is *helping* you get your act together. This doesn't mean we don't repent of sin. This doesn't mean sin doesn't grieve our hearts. This is not permission to walk in rebellion. God disciplines those he loves. It *does* mean God is for you, not against you. He loves you.

This must be cultivated in his presence. "No, he's for me. He's not against me." I don't want every time something bad happens to let my imagination immediately go to, "God is upset with me, and that's why this happened." Isn't that where we naturally drift, that we're being punished? That should lead to an overflow in how we love one another. This is kingdom stuff. This is organic. We can't orchestrate around this. *You'll* have to orchestrate around this.

So then what does it look like to love one another that's an outflow of that right relationship and love for God? Well, we talked about it a few weeks ago. It was both awesome and awful. The Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." A kindergarten teacher didn't invent that. I don't know if you know that. That wasn't Miss Hancock when you were 5 who was like, "Here's a cool phrase. Let me put that..." No, no. That's actually the Bible.

Jesus said that little Golden Rule sums up the Law and the Prophets. Do you want to sum up the Law and the Prophets? Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Now this is why that's both awesome and challenging to modern sensibilities. The impulse you have of what would be nice is actually the Holy Spirit revealing to you how you might serve others. Isn't that awful? So you're driving through your neighborhood. "Man, it sure would be nice if somebody would pick up all the trash these people are throwing around here." Guess what.

If that's how you live in your neighborhood, if that's how you live at work, if that's how you live at church, then instead of your posture being "Why don't these people...?" you instead become what you wish people were. What is our criticism and harshness toward anybody creating and building? Who has ever been nagged into the kingdom of God? Do you know anybody who just got nagged to death and was like, "You know what? I love you and I love your God. Let's do this"?

So how *are* people? Well, remember back to Acts 2. How is it happening? They're eating. They're loving. They're serving. They're giving, and day by day God is adding. What does it look like at work for you to be sitting at work, whatever you do, and go, "Do you know what would be nice?" and then just do that...if it's legal? What would it be like in your neighborhood if you looked around your neighborhood and went, "Do you know what would be nice?"

It could be something as random as, "Man, it would be great if our neighborhood felt like a neighborhood." Go grab some hotdogs and just throw a party in your neighborhood. Just be what you want everybody else to be for you. This is what it looks like to "one another" one another. Now, organizationally, what does that mean for The Village? Well, in some ways, we want to build environments where these things can be cultivated.

We want to be really serious about our gathering. We're going to preach the Word of God unapologetically. We're going to sing and make much of the Lord. Elder-led prayer is going to become what we call *Encounter Nights*. It will be an hour and a half long. We're going to worship

and sing and ask the Spirit of God to heal our diseases and move in ways that are miraculous and out of the step of human ingenuity but just by his power.

We want to put you in group life, because we know group life is not easy, but it provides you an opportunity to "one another" one another. Then we're going to give ourselves over organizationally to the mission of God as the kingdom of God expands in every direction to the ends of the earth. We do that primarily through church planting, we do that through global missions, and we do that by giving away a ton of money to that end.

We have planted a ton of churches in the last 15 years. Here are just some of them. In fact, this year, God by his grace gave us our great-great-great-granddaughter church. Can you believe that? We planted a church that planted a church that planted a church that just planted a church. That's crazy. With each one of these, people from our church left our church to be a part of these plants. We financially have given to these planters, and then we've given people and money to the plants of those plants.

Even now, we sit with four of our gifted, godly pastors in the next 12 to 18 months about to roll out and plant four more churches that will be church-planting churches. Here's a brief four-minute video on those four brothers, and then I'll come back and talk about the global piece, talk about the dollar piece, and we'll leave rejoicing that God has been so kind to us.

[Video]

**Josh Patterson:** *Multiply* is our vision, as a church body, to directionally move forward with campus transitions, where we take our five current campuses and prepare each campus into becoming an autonomous local church. *Multiply* also includes church planting, which means we long to start new works, new local churches, both here in Dallas/Fort Worth and beyond. We find ourselves in this exciting time. We're preparing four new church planters. We're preparing four new families, and not just those four men and their wives but their families, and they represent many, many more here at The Village Church who we're preparing to go out.

**Adam Griffin:** There are relatively few gospel-centered churches that we'd say are doing the kind of work we'd like to see done in our own neighborhoods. So that's all part of why the Lord has put this on our hearts to start a new church over there to say, "Let's be a church that wants to reach the incredibly diverse population, socioeconomically and ethnically, of this side of town and to be a

church that cares about those things in really obvious ways that demonstrate we are disciples of Jesus Christ and you can tell by the way we love this community."

**Travis Cunningham:** One of the most challenging aspects to planting in California is the fact that most people are fairly hostile to the gospel. We want to confront that with the true and beautiful story of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and through that we want to continue to make disciples who will live as family, belong to God and one another, who will be servants of our city and of those who exist and dwell in our city and then are sent out as missionaries from the unreached people groups that live in Rancho Cucamonga to the nations and will plant more and more multiplying churches.

**Josh:** When we think about going to the ends of the earth, it might not sound like Richardson is the ends of the earth or California is the ends of the earth, but it gives an opportunity for the gospel to be localized in those particular areas, in that particular context; to create an outpost, to create a gathering point for people who are there who love a particular neighborhood, love a particular region, love a particular area of the city or the country, where the gospel can take root and begin to expand out from there.

**Kyle Worley:** I pray in the next seven or eight years we're baptizing Muslim-background believers and we're praying over them as we send them either back into their neighborhoods or into the nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm praying we'll see more churches planted in the Metroplex through Mosaic Church.

I'm praying we'll see missionaries sent to unreached people groups through Mosaic Church, because we believe that is what the gospel can do. It's not because we have a great plan or a great model or a great strategy. We just believe Richardson deserves a gospel-centered people begging the Lord for that hope to become a reality.

**Rob Daniels:** We want to reach our neighbors. We want to reach our communities. We want to be involved in the schools. We want to shop in Lewisville. We want to gather in Lewisville, so that this church, Christ Freedom Church, could be a city on a hill, that we would be salt to the earth of Lewisville so people can taste and see that the Lord is good.

Not only that, but because the nations gather in Lewisville and live in Lewisville, we would love to see and hope to see a multiethnic, multicultural church plant, where we figure out how to do life

with brothers and sisters of different ethnicities, where they see themselves as valued and that they are a part of the worship environment at Christ Freedom Church.

**Josh:** I personally didn't have to travel to the Middle East to hear the message of the good news, but that message of the good news came to me. It took the courage and the bravery and the sacrifice of men and women and families who saw the gospel leave this central location and move out to the perimeters. We want to be a part of that.

We want to be a part of planting churches that plant churches, because we want to see men, women, boys, and girls come to faith. We want to see the gospel proclaimed and heralded, not just in *this* church but in new churches in other cities, in DFW and then beyond that. So our past and our present I pray are indicative of what our future will be, that we will be a church that plants churches.

[End of video]

One of my favorite things culturally about The Village Church that I certainly didn't bring here 15 years ago with me is Highland Village First Baptist Church, now known as The Village, has always been serious about global missions. When I became the pastor here, there was a committee called the *missions committee* that a woman named Deborah ran. She was easily the most powerful force here, other than the Spirit of God himself. This church has always been really serious about this issue.

If you were here when we were in the red brick building and we had 440 seats and blew out the back walls to move to 725 seats... Anybody here for that? When we raised money for that, do you know the biggest question we had? "Is this going to affect our missional giving? Is this going to affect our capacity to send out missionaries?" When we were at six services and turning away and needed to raise \$4 million to buy this building, what do you think the question was? About missions, about our missionaries, about whether that would stymie.

When we raised the 10 to retrofit this so we would have a space to meet, what do you think the question was? When we do our little Budget Town Hall... I know there are only like 16 of you who show up every year for that, but the people who show up have literally done the math on our budget, which is a massive, complex budget, and they want to tease out every little penny and where it's going to the nations.

I love that about us. I don't want that to ever change about us. Those are the right questions to be asking. Because, by the grace of God, that has been our culture, here's a map of where all of our long-term missionaries are. These aren't Go Trips. These aren't people who are there for six months. These are people who have embedded their lives among the unreached peoples of the earth, and they're sharing the gospel and planting churches and doing profound things for the gospel of the kingdom.

So we start here, and then maybe God calls us up and calls us to go, but this is just out of our church. This has nothing to do with our partnership with Acts 29 that, like I said, is 700 churches globally, like 30-something different languages on six different continents. We are all in on this. On top of all of that, since 2012, The Village Church has given \$11.8 million to missions and church planting globally. You have done that.

Now keep in mind this is just organizationally. If you have given anything personally to any kind of ministry, global or local, none of that is included in the organizational oomph of believing the gospel of the kingdom is going to fill the earth like the waters cover the seas, and you and I have been invited into that. That is what our church wants to be about. This is the heartbeat of my heart, of our hearts. Everything is about this.

The training program is about this. Our Bible studies are about this. Our Home Groups are about this. Our worship gathering is about this. Our hopes are around this. The vision of Multiply... Who purposefully shrinks their church by five or six thousand? *We* do. Why? Because we believe in the gospel of the kingdom. We think those campuses becoming autonomous, contextual gospel outposts, while at the same time planting four other churches like we're morons, really lines our hearts up with the heart of God, and that's where we want to be.

That's where we think life is. That's where fruit is. I don't know how you want to spend the days of your life, but I'm not interested in giving my life to the building of a brand or the building of anything other than participating in the one thing that cannot fail: the expansion of the kingdom to the ends of the earth. You should never be bored as Christians. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for my brothers and sisters. Thank you for our guests today. We love you. Thank you for the rain. I just ask that you would bless us as we leave these places of worship more dialed into your kingdom, more empowered for willful obedience that leads to a glorious display of your

majesty that leads to us happily enjoying you together as family. We love you. We bless your name,  
amen.

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