



**Brook Hills: Vision, Mission, and Goal**  
**Psalm 67**

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, I'm going to invite you to open with me to Psalm 67. And turn over in the notes that you have in your worship guide to a pretty full page. I crammed in a lot there. A lot of ground to cover.

You know, I am...I am overwhelmed and awed and humbled by God's grace every month or two when I stand before our impact class—our new members workshop that meets right behind where we are sitting right now. Always a full room with people who are praying about becoming a member of this faith family. And every year, literally hundreds of people locking arms with our faith family. And what I do is I share with them in that first week of Impact who we are as a church and what we are about. Just trying to give a basic biblical foundation behind how we understand The Church at Brook Hills and what we're giving our lives and what we're giving this church to. And every time I do this it's just a fresh reminder for me of why I do what I do as I explain why we do what we do. And I started thinking that it would be good periodically, maybe once-a-year or so, just to give a fresh reminder to all of us biblically about who we are and what we're about.

So I wanted to take today and maybe—maybe a Sunday next year and the following year—we'll see, just for us amidst the busyness of everything we're doing in our lives, amidst the busyness of everything we're even doing in the church is to take a breath and remember, "Okay, this is who we are and this is what we're about." So I'll go ahead and tell you if you've been around Brook Hills for very long, there's not going to be a lot new here but there are going to be things that are important and significant and essential enough for us to talk about over and over and over and over again. So, I don't know of a better place to start than with Psalm 67.

And so I want to invite you if you've got the ESV to read along. If you don't have the ESV, if you've got another translation, feel free to look up on the screen. The words will be there. But I want us to read this Psalm out loud together. So if you've got the ESV then read it there. If you have NIV or NAS or The Message or something, (I don't know why you would have The Message) but anyway. Sorry, that was unnecessary. It is not necessary for me to take a shot at The Message (which is not a translation of the Bible, by the way). So anyway. All right. Psalm 67. Let's read this together. When in doubt, let's go to the Word. All right. Let's read this together. Psalm 67 verse one.

*"May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face to shine upon us, Selah  
that your way may be known on earth,  
your saving power among all nations.  
Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!  
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations upon earth. Selah*

*Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!  
The earth has yielded its increase;  
God, our God, shall bless us.  
God shall bless us;  
let all the ends of the earth fear him!"*

Let's pray. Father, this is the cry of our hearts, as the people called The Church at Brook Hills. We want you to be gracious to us and bless us. Make your face shine upon us. So that your ways may be known on earth and your salvation known among all nations. We pray that you would, by your Spirit, through your Word, teach us what that means. That you would engrain that desire. Lodge it just deeper in our minds and our hearts this morning. That you would bless The Church at Brook Hills for your namesake among all the peoples. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

## **Psalm 67**

All right. Let's dive right in. I crammed as much as I can on the one page. Psalm 67. Two primary truths applied to us.

### **God has Given Us Extravagant Grace**

One: God has given us extravagant grace. This first verse in Psalm 67 is just overwhelming when you think about it. "*May God be gracious...*" These are sinners praying. "*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine upon us.*" It's a Levitical, priestly prayer of blessing rooted back in Numbers. That God would "*...be gracious to us and bless us,*" and the imagery! "*...Make His face...*" Oh God and turn your face to shine upon us.

And the reality is, in this room, so applying this to The Church at Brook Hills, God has been very gracious to us in this room. He has given us extravagant grace in two ways, based on this Psalm. One, first and foremost, He has given us spiritual truth—He has given us the gospel. The reality that we in this room who make up The Church at Brook Hills were once children of wrath, objects of the wrath of God, due the condemnation of God, deserving of eternal damnation, rebels against God, hopeless under His judgment. And He sent Christ to live the life none of us could live, to die the death we deserve to die, to conquer the enemy we could not conquer, to rise from the grave in victory over sin and death, taking the payment due your sin and my sin upon Himself forever. So that you plunge yourself beneath His blood, you lose all your guilty stains. Your guilty stains are gone, forever!

That's grace. That's mercy. Talk about the face of God shining upon us. In our darkness He is light! Hopelessness, He is our hope—our joy. If you are here today and you are not a part of The Church at Brook Hills and you have not trusted in Christ to save you from your sins, then we as The Church at Brook Hills today would urge you and invite you to do that. We would invite you to receive the grace and the mercy of God, to see His favor in even bringing you maybe to this seat right now where you are sitting for a reason that you would hear that He has sent His Son to die for sin, to rise from the grave in victory over sin so that you, right where you're sitting today could receive the mercy of God, the grace of God. Receive Him. And Church at Brook Hills, as well as those who are maybe just hearing this for the first time, it is the sheer mercy of God that we are counted among the reached with this gospel.

We have talked before. We will talk later about how there are literally billions of people who have never heard of the love and mercy of God in Christ. They've never heard the gospel. You, on the other hand, were born into a context where you have heard the gospel even if today you are hearing it for the first time. You were born into a context...God has lead you to a place where you have heard the gospel. You and I had nothing to do with where we were born. It is the sheer mercy of God that we've even heard the gospel, even more so received the gospel.

So, as if that is not enough, He's given us spiritual truths. He has also given us material treasure, which is part of the emphasis here in Psalm 67:6, the Psalmist says, "*The earth has yielded its increase.*" This is the language of harvest. This is the Psalmist praising God because He had blessed them with a physical, material, bountiful harvest. And though we might not use the same harvest language today, Church at Brook Hills, we know this: He has blessed us with material treasure. We have talked about this over the last couple of weeks. We are literally the wealthiest people ever to walk on the planet. He has given us much. And every good gift comes from God. He's given it to us. So get this: in a world of urgent spiritual and physical need, we are a very wealthy people—wealthy first and foremost with the gospel. And then, wealthy with physical treasure—material treasure. We are wealthy.

### **God is Worthy of Extravagant Glory**

And so the question I want to ask is, why? Why has God given us such wealth? Why has He given us the gospel? Why has He given us the material treasure that He has given to us? So "*that your way may be known on earth*" (verse 2). "*Your saving power among all nations.*" God has given us extravagant grace and God is worthy of extravagant glory. He desires to be known (verse 2). He desires to be praised (verse 3). He desires to be feared in His justice (verse 4), and He desires (beginning of verse 4) to be enjoyed. "*Let the nations be glad and sing for joy.*"

God desires to be known, praised, feared and enjoyed by all nations. Not just by a few nations but by all nations. Not just by a few peoples; "*let all the peoples praise you*" (Ps. 67:3). Everywhere. Every kind of person on the planet, know and fear and worship and enjoy God. He is worthy of worship, not just from certain kinds of people, but from every kind of people. And that is why God blesses His people, for His praise among all peoples.

We've seen this before. It's all over Scripture, cover-to-cover. Remember the bookends, Genesis chapter 12, God forms His people Israel, says, "Abraham, I'm going to bless you as the leader of the people of Israel. I'm going to bless you and through you all the peoples of the earth will be blessed. You will be a conduit of my blessing to show my glory to all the peoples of the earth." It's a promise. All the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you. You get to the end of the Bible, Revelation 7, and all the peoples of the earth, every nation, tribe, tongue and language sing praise to God for His salvation. Every tribe, tongue, language, nation—blessed. That's the whole purpose. God is in the business of blessing His people to the end that His glory is made known among all peoples.

### **We Cannot Disconnect the Blessing of God from the Purpose of God**

So all of this summarizes why? We cannot disconnect the blessing of God from the purpose of God. And we are tempted to do that at every turn—to disconnect these two. To think that God has given us the gospel, that God has given the gospel to us, only for us. That's not Biblical. Yes, He's given the gospel to us, for us, but not only for us; He's given the gospel to us for the spread of the gospel. His ways may be known on earth. His salvation (gospel) may be known among all peoples, all nations, everywhere. That's the purpose of His blessing.

So here's where we're tempted to disconnect the two. We are tempted week after week after week to begin to think that the whole purpose of this church is to sit back and be comfortable and create programs and things that revolve around us and our preferences and our designs. And that is not true. We have been given the gospel, Church at Brook Hills, for the spread of God's glory in all the earth. Every one of us; all of us together, spending our lives in Birmingham and to the ends of the earth, making this gospel known no matter what it costs us. That's why we have the gospel. That's why we have money. That's why we have money.

God gives material wealth for the world's worship. That's a very different way to think in this culture. God gives riches so that everybody will be reached. God has given more than we need, not so that we can indulge in more wants. He's given us more than we need so that we can take this gospel and meet the world's greatest need. This is why He's blessed us—for this purpose. And to disconnect the blessing of God from the purpose of God is to miss the point of the Bible, and we are tempted at every turn to do this in our lives and in the church.

## **We Glorify God by Making Disciples of All Nations**

So then, as a result of Scripture... So we're going to come back to Psalm 67 in a minute and kind of here and there throughout. But this is where I want us to see this one statement that sums up who we are as The Church at Brook Hills and it is simple. This is the statement that when I'm speaking in front of our Impact (New Members workshop) I say, "This is the statement that sums up who we are and what we do. That I hope every leader and hopefully every member of the church would know, Hey, this is what we're about—this one sentence. We glorify God by making disciples of all nations." And in that statement you see our vision—our vision to glorify God; our mission—to make disciples. We're going to unpack each one of these. And our goal is to do that in all nations.

We came to a point a few years ago where we...where we said, "You know, we're doing a lot of things in the church. A lot of good things going on. But if we're not careful, we'll get so busy doing a bunch of good things that we'll miss out on the best things that we need to be doing. We'll do a lot of good things okay, but we won't do the best things well." And so basically we said, "What are the best things that we really need to give ourselves to and make sure we do well?" And these, practically, is where this played out. How do we glorify God? Through worship gatherings that glorify God, that then fuel small groups who are making disciples, leading to global mission that impacts all nations. And basically the conclusion we came to is, "If every member of this church is involved in a worship gathering where they're glorifying God, if they're involved in a small group where they're making disciples, and that they're praying, giving and going or connected with global mission impacting nations for the glory of Christ, if every member of this church is worshipping in a way that glorifies God, small groups, making disciples, connecting with global mission, then we will all be, the WIN, world-impacting disciple makers. Every single one of us in the church. And so we put our eggs in those three baskets and said, "We want to do those things well." Amidst all the good things that might vie for our attention and our affection and our resources and our time, we're going to focus on these things. And if we're all doing this, then we will be glorifying God by making disciples of all nations.

## **“We Glorify God...”**

### **We Exist to Exalt the Glory of God**

So let me unpack each of these. And I’m going to do my best not to preach like 50 different sermons in here because there are 50 different sermons in here. So first, our vision: we glorify God. We exist to exalt the glory of God. *“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord”* (Ps. 150:6). We live, we breathe and we die for the glory of God’s name. It’s what drives us. This is the purpose of all history. So this this is what drives us because this is what drives God. God orchestrates all of history to display His glory. Everything in history, God has designed for the display of His own glory. God lives to exalt Himself. God is God-centered. It’s all over Scripture. Hear the prophets. Hear extravagant grace for extravagant glory. Isaiah 43:1-4, *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned... For I am the LORD your God... you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you.”*

What affectionate words from God toward His people! For what purpose? Isaiah 43:7, “You are the people whom I have created for my glory.” Grace for glory. Ezekiel, the prophet, chapter 36 says to His people, *“It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act...”* (Ezek. 36:22). He’s talking about how He’s going to bless them and how He’s going to discipline them. He says, *“It’s not for your sake that I’m going to do these things, “...but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes”* (Ezek. 36:23).

God says, “When I do what I do among you, it’s not for your sake. It’s for my sake.” It’s the Psalms. Psalm 23. *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want...He leads me (He guides me) in paths of righteousness for (what?) his name’s sake”* (Ps. 23:1-3). Why does God guide you, Christian? Why does God lead you? He leads you for the sake of His own name. God lives to exalt Himself and if that rubs you wrong, then I would ask the follow-up question: Who else would you have Him exalt? For at whatever point He were to exalt someone or something else, He is no longer the one God who is worthy of all exaltation. And He is. There is no one who is worthy of exaltation but God. If you or I lived to exalt ourselves, we are in the wrong. God lives to exalt Himself. He is in the right because He’s got things right. He is worthy of all exaltation.

So the beauty is God orchestrates history to display His glory and the way He glorifies Himself is through the salvation of sinners. God ordains His church to enjoy His glory. As we receive His grace, we enjoy His glory. God has designed your heart to experience deepest delight in Him. We’re a people who believe that living and breathing and dying for the glory of God is the most enjoyable way to live. Not the easiest way in the world to live, but the most enjoyable way in the world to live. Our hearts sing for joy in God. Psalm 63: *“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you...my soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food”* (Ps. 63:1-5).

Does that sound like somebody who’s miserable? No. It sounds like somebody who is glad in God. And your heart was created to be glad in God. That’s the whole point when it comes to

the “what” he talked about in 1 Timothy 6. When it came to riches, your heart was not made to be glad in riches. Your heart was made to be glad in God.

### **We Glorify God as We Become Like Christ**

So how do we glorify God? If this is what we were created for and saved for, if this is what we have breath for, how do we do that? That sounds a bit ambiguous. What...how do I...what do I do today to glorify God? Well, we glorify God as we become like Christ. The more we look like Christ, the more we feel like Christ, the more we think like Christ, the more we love like Christ, the more Christ is formed in us, the more God is glorified through us. So then, following Christ and becoming like Him is our vision.

You know I’ve asked some in churches, “Well, what is your vision?” And some might say, “Well, our vision is to have this many thousand people or this many buildings or this many programs or have this thing or that thing.” Whenever we say things like that we show that somewhere along the way in the church we’ve lost our pursuit of Christ in the pursuit of stuff. We don’t want stuff; we want Christ! Philippians 3:10—“I want to know Christ.” It’s what drives us. Our eyes together as a church, fixed on Christ. We want Him. We want to be conformed into His image. We want to look more and more and more like Him. That’s the vision. A church where our eyes are set (vision) on Christ.

### **Through Our Worship Gatherings, We Exalt God as the Only One Who is...**

So then, through our worship gatherings we want to exalt God as only one who is first of all worthy of our worship. He’s the one who is Lord over us. Christ is our Lord. Every time we gather together in this room, we gather to confess His Lordship, to celebrate His Lordship, and to submit to His Lordship. We remind ourselves every single week when we gather together in this room that we have sacrificed the right to determine the direction of our lives. We do not determine where we live. We do not determine what we drive. We don’t determine what we wear. We don’t determine our plans, our dreams, our families, this or that. Christ determines these things. He is our Lord. We don’t tack Him in on Sundays to the regular life we live here. No. Our life has been abandoned to Him.

He is worthy of not just some of our worship. He’s worthy of all of our worship. But not just our worship. He’s also worthy of their worship. And this drives us. “Their worship.” What do you mean, “their”? Who is “they”? Well, “they” is every single person in Birmingham who you know who at this moment does not know Christ. Christ is worthy of all their worship and that drives us. When we walk out of this building, we want to make the glory of Christ known to every single person in Birmingham because He is worthy of their worship.

That’s why we don’t stop there. That’s why we’ve got teams in Seattle right now and in the Midwest; why we’re about to next month send out a team in New York City because we know there’s a couple hundred million people in North America that are apart from Christ right now and Christ is worthy of every single one of their worship.

That’s why we’re not going to stop there. It’s why we’re going to Africa because there’s 3,000 animistic tribes in Africa that are following animistic religions and spirits that completely ignore the one true God. And there is one true God and He’s worthy of all their glory. And it’s why we’re going to Japan and Laos and Vietnam. Because there’s 350 million Buddhists in those countries that are following Buddha’s rules and Buddha’s regulations and Buddha is not worthy of their glory. Christ alone is worthy of all their glory.

That’s why we’re going to India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Nepal because there’s 950 million Hindus in those countries that are following more gods than you or I can even fathom. And there’s only one God who is worthy of all their glory. It’s why we’re going to China and

North Korea and Laos and Cuba because there's over a billion people in those nations—communistic nations—that have grown up in atheistic philosophies that completely deny the existence of God. And there is a God who exists and He is worthy of all their praise. And we want them to know He's worthy of all their glory. That's why we're going to the tough places. Why we're going to North Africa and the Middle East and Central Asia and Southeast Asia because there's over 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 billion Muslims who are fasting and giving alms and making holy pilgrimages to Mecca and praying five times a day to a false god. And Jesus has died on the cross. He's risen from the grave. And He has ascended on high. He is alone worthy of all their glory. That's why we go to these places. Because a people who believe that God is worthy of that kind of glory will give their lives making their...His glory known to the ends of the earth.

So the question is, "Do we believe this?" A people who gather... We are not a people who gather together in our worship, sipping our lattes, casually moving on with our lives. We're a people who have put down the lattes. We're giving our lives to make this glory—the glory of this God—known to the ends of the earth, no matter what it costs. That's what drives us. (I'm never going to get through this). But this is the key. This is the key. This drives everything. So people of God, people called The Church at Brook Hills, be gripped by the glory of God in a way that you will gladly, gladly abandon possessions and dreams and plans and things and whatever He asks to make His glory known to the ends of the earth.

### **"...By Making Disciples..."**

We glorify God. Well how do we do that? I'm glad you asked. By making disciples. This is obviously Matthew 28:18-20 when Jesus says, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*" In other words, "I am Lord over everything." He's worthy of glory. "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"

#### **As We Become Like Christ, We Want to See Others Become Like Christ**

So here's the deal. As we become like Christ, we want to see others become like Christ. Jesus in us turns us outward. And this is the essence of Jesus' command for us to make disciples. We're not making disciples of ourselves; we're making disciples of Jesus. We're leading other people in Birmingham, North America, the nations... We're leading other people to become like Christ. That's what it means to make disciples.

What did Jesus say when He initially called His disciples? "Follow me and I will make you a what? Fisher of men." If you're a follower of Christ, you're a fisher of men. Every follower of Christ in this room is a fisher. Every follower—a fisher. All of us. This is where our conviction is. It's clear.

#### **Every Disciple is a Disciple-Maker**

We believe in this church that every disciple is a disciple-maker. Every disciple of Christ is commanded by God to be a disciple-maker. This is huge. No one is sidelined in this thing. No one. There are no spectators in The Church at Brook Hills. No one in this church is created by God to sit and observe on a week-by-week basis. Everyone in this church has been created, saved by God to serve in the greatest mission on the planet. We are not an audience of service attenders. We are a community of disciple-makers. Oh that this one truth would just take hold in the church.

This is what I want to pray and I want to work toward. I want us as a faith family, my life ministry to work toward. For far too long we have farmed out disciple-making to programs and events and projects. To pastors and missionaries and select leaders who have farmed out disciple-making to parachurch organizations when this is the command given to every single follower of Christ. Make disciples.

Some of you know Francis Chan or have heard of him. And he and I have connected over the last year a good bit and we're working together on trying to say, "How can we together from The Church at Brook Hills and together with him and the ministry that he is doing and others, platform disciple-making at the center of the local church. Saying, "This is what must drive us." So I would encourage you to pray. We've put together some material and we're kind of working through as elders even here. And some other things that I hope will come from that. But this is key: that we would really believe every disciple is a disciple-maker.

### **Four Primary Facets of Disciple-Making...**

Now four primary facets of disciple making. What does it mean to make disciples? Well look. Matthew 28, Matthew 4, John 17. Four primary facets of disciple making involves disciple making involves sharing the Word.

We share the Word. We lead people to Christ. Every single follower of Christ in this room is equipped with the Spirit of God to spread the gospel of Christ. So here's the beauty. The evangelistic strategy. How are we going to reach Birmingham with the gospel? The evangelistic strategy of this church is not to bring as many people into this building to hear me talk. That would be a very poor evangelistic strategy on a variety of different levels. The evangelistic strategy of this church is not to bring as many people as possible into this building, but to send as many people as possible out of this building every single week, equipped with the Spirit of Christ and the Word of Christ to spread the gospel of Christ.

You think about it. Just today, 4,000 plus brothers and sisters gathered here then spreading to workplaces and neighborhoods and schools all over this city with the Spirit of God in them and the gospel of Christ entrusted to them. The potential for Kingdom impact this week, if we believe that every disciple is a disciple-maker, if we put that into practice, sharing the Word...

But not just sharing the Word—not stopping there—but showing the Word. So going, baptizing people in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, showing them the importance of identifying with Christ and showing them what the life of Christ looks like in action.

This is 1 Corinthians 11:1. "Follow me," Paul says, "as I follow Christ." You saying to other people, "I want you to look at my life. I want you to look at my family. I want you to see how I'm following Christ and you follow after me. And in the process of following me, you'll be following Christ."

Philippians 4:1 and 9. "The things you learn, heard, seen in me, put into practice." This is huge. The disciple-making involves... So say you lead somebody to Christ. How is that new believer going to grow in Christ? Traditional answer is, "Stick them in a program. Stick them in a class." No. How is that new believer going to learn to pray, for example? Sure, you could stick them in a class on praying but wouldn't it be far more valuable if you invited them into your quiet time and you said, "Here's what I've learned about prayer. Here's where I've fixed my focus and my attention and my affection on God. Here's how I keep my mind from wandering. Here's where I spend time in concentrated continual prayer and then

concentrated, structured prayer that then fuels continual prayer all throughout the day.” And you continue to show them what that looks like as you pray with them.

How’s that new believer going to learn to study the Bible? Sure, you can stick them in a class on Bible study but wouldn’t it be far more effective if you were to sit down with that new believer and say, “All right. Here’s what I do when I open up the Bible. I’ve got a chapter here. Here’s the questions I ask. Here’s how I read through. Here’s how I memorize. Here’s how I study the Bible. Let me show you how to do the same thing.” Now, at that point, some people start thinking, “Well, man, I don’t know if I can do that—if I’m equipped to do that.” This is where we realize God has this thing rigged. He’s got this thing rigged. Not just for others to grow in Christ—He’s got disciple-making rigged for you to grow in Christ because in order for you to teach somebody else how to pray, you got to know how to pray! In order for you to teach somebody else how to study the Bible, you got to know how to study the Bible.

And this is the beauty that as we begin to give our lives for others to show them how to follow Christ, we begin to go to new heights and depths in our relationship with Christ. I am convinced that every Christian in this room... You will stagnate in your Christian life until you give yourself to disciple-making. You will have a ceiling over your head as long as your faith is self-saturated and only about you growing in Christ. But when you begin to give your life for others and others are dependent on you for their spiritual growth in a good healthy way, then you begin to grow to new depths and heights that you never even could have even touched before, by the grace of Christ, as you obey the commands of Christ, showing the Word

Then leading to teaching the Word. We teach the Word. “Teaching them to obey everything Christ has commanded us.” So some people in the church are called and gifted to do this formally. All of us though are commanded to do this informally—teaching the Word of Christ. That’s the reason we ask the question a lot around here: Are you a receiver or a reproducer? You remember the image that we always go back to? Picture being in a hut in the middle of Sudan with some Sudanese brothers and sisters. You’re teaching them the Word. The whole time you teach them you never see their eyes. It’s not because they’re sleeping or they’re just kind of wandering around, it’s because they’re writing down every single thing you say. And they come up to you afterwards and they say like they said to me, “David, we know that we have a responsibility to take everything you have taught us, translate it into our tribe’s languages and teach it in our tribes.” They’re not listening to receive. They’re listening to reproduce.

So bring it in here this morning. I’m guessing there are some in here who might be sleeping or wandering off, but even for those who are on the edge of your seat paying attention. “Yes, I want to receive. I want to get something out of the Word today.” If that’s the only question you’re asking, you’re still living in a self-saturated Christianity that is missing the point. The Word is not intended just for you. The Word is intended to be spread through you. It’s not intended to be received. Intended to be received with the intent of also reproducing—making the Word known.

I remember one Sunday I asked the question at the very end of a sermon. I said, “Will the Word stop with you or spread through you? Will the Word stop with you or spread through you?” And the next Sunday, a guy comes up to me, probably about 19 years old, and he said, “Pastor, that just really...that question just penetrated my heart and stuck with me in a very real way.” And he pulls up his sleeve and he has tattooed...he’s gotten a tattoo on his arm that says, “Will the Word stop with you or spread through you?” That will make you think twice before you put something down on sermon notes, like, you start thinking, “If

this was painted on somebody's body forever, like, would that...?" So, but that's, okay, I'm not thinking that that's necessarily the application you take away from this but that it would be engrained in our hearts. Is the Word intended to stop with us or spread through us? It's intended to spread through us.

So who are you sharing the Word with? Who are you showing the Word to? Who are you teaching the Word to? How are you sharing, showing, teaching the Word? This is for all of us. This is what we help each other do. We do that, all of that, sharing, showing, teaching the Word, in all nations. We serve the world which we'll talk about in a minute.

### **The Question We Are Constantly Asking in Our Lives and as the Church: How Can We Most Effectively Make Disciples of all Nations?**

So the question we are constantly asking in our lives and as this church is this: How can we most effectively make disciples of all nations? This is the beauty. When you think about it, in each of our lives we all have different gifts, we've got different jobs, we've got different platforms, we've got different opportunities. You can make disciples in ways and among people that I can't. I can make disciples in ways and among people that you can't. This is no program. This is no event. This is our life as you live, as you go, Jesus says, "Make disciples in your life." Do this, in our lives and then in the church.

There are no sacred cows in The Church at Brook Hills. No programs too precious. No events too important. We will do whatever it takes to most effectively make disciples of all nations. That's the question that drives us. Obviously we will slip and falter and fail along the way, but this is the question that will constantly drive us as we move forward. This is the prayer I pray for my life all the time. I pray for others; I pray for you. That God would lead me...you to the people, places, positions where you can most effectively make disciples of all nations. And I know, I know that God wants that prayer answered in my life and your life more than we do. He wants His mission to be accomplished.

So how does this play out practically in The Church at Brook Hills? We believe small groups are the primary avenue for disciple-making to occur. You look biblically, disciple-making does not happen in mass. We cannot simply do this by sitting next to one another in a worship gathering.

You look at the precedent of Christ. Yes, there were times when He had a whole crowd. But then He had 12 disciples and among those 12, He even had three that He was even closer to. He revolutionized the world by pouring Himself into a few men. And you look in the early church and you see...yes, you see sometimes where they're all gathering together and that is good, but you also see the church meeting from house to house, sharing life with one another.

And this is why we place such a higher priority on brothers and sisters locking arms with one another in the context of a small group to do two things. One: to experience biblical community. This is never intended to be about sitting in a class. This is about sharing your life. Ups and downs together. Fighting the fight of faith on the front lines together. Carrying out all the Biblical commands—loving one another, serving one another, praying for one another, rejoicing with one another, weeping with one another, bearing one another's burdens. These are all these things that don't happen when you just sit next to somebody. All these things that happen when you're sharing life with others. That we need—all of us need.

Experiencing Biblical community, and (second) accomplishing Biblical mission. Because it's not just, again, to come back to the whole point, it's not just about us experiencing

community but us together locking arms, going outward to spread the gospel in the context of the community. So it's never intended to be either-or. "Well, our small group is more community focused than mission-focused." Or, "Our small group is more mission-focused than community focused." Disciple-making is the intersection of Biblical community and Biblical mission.

And so here's the deal: If you are a member of The Church at Brook Hills and you are not involved in a small group, let me urge you to get involved in a small group. Where the commands of Christ and specifically the command to make disciples can play out. Even on your worship guide, you can turn over on that tear-off portion, put your information on the front and then write on the back, "I want to join a group." And somebody will contact you and help you get connected with a group. Some of you, it's time to stop receiving and start reproducing. I know there are believers, brothers and sisters around this room, who are more than qualified to lead a group. So if that's something you need to do, put, "Lead a group," on there. And somebody will contact with you and walk you through a process that would lead to leading a group—a small group. So I want to encourage you, first, if you're a member of The Church at Brook Hills and you're not involved in a small group, refuse to continue as a mere service-attender. Plug in to locking arms with brothers and sisters.

### **"...Of All Nations."**

If you are involved in a small group, I want to encourage your small group maybe in the next week or two to look at both of these things and say, "How are we doing when it comes to biblical community and how are we doing when it comes to biblical mission. And where can we grow? How can we more effectively make disciples through our small group?" These are good questions to ask. Why do we do this? Because we want the glory of God. And we glorify God by making disciples. We believe the primary avenue for that to occur is small groups that are making disciples of all nations.

#### **Everything We do at Brook Hills, We do Ultimately for the Sake of God's Glory in all Nations**

This is where we come to the reality that everything we do at Brook Hills we do ultimately for the sake of God's glory in all nations. Why? Because He deserves the praise of all peoples.

Now we've talked before. It's interesting. Psalm 67. You get into the original language of the Old Testament here and you see this word "peoples" that's repeated over and over again. And you see "peoples" and "nations." And there's a few different words in the original language in the Old Testament that are translated peoples and nations here. And we've talked about this. We know that when the Bible talks about nations, it's not talking about the 200-or-so nations that we might think of when it comes to nations today. We know that this is groups of people. Most often groups that share similar languages, language culture, ethnic characteristics.

And we've talked before about how Biblical, anthropological, missional scholars together identified over 11,000 people groups in the world. Over 11,000 people groups in the world. Distinct groups of people in the world. And out of those 11,000, over 6,000 people groups are still unreached with the gospel. Just as a reminder, unreached means less than two-percent evangelical Christian. Which the way that practically plays out is if you were born into an unreached people group, the likelihood is that you will be born, you will live and you

will die without ever hearing the gospel. Comprising those 6,000 people groups, comprising one-and-a-half to two billion people.

Brothers and sisters, this is not acceptable. For a people who have this gospel, it is not even close to tolerable for us to hear that and not have our hearts just wrenched within us. How is it possible that all of these people groups have still not been reached with the gospel and we have been commanded to make disciples of all of them? It's a... That's a command. This is not an option for us. This is not a suggestion, brothers and sisters. This is a summons from Jesus Christ Himself. "Make disciples of all the people groups." So how shall we be obedient to that summons?

### **A Three-Tiered Strategy...**

Three-tiered strategy as this plays out here. First, through short-term mission, giving two-percent of your life during the year to go to a different context. This is what we challenge ourselves to every year and I want to put the challenge before you today, to consider spending two-percent of your time over the next year (which works out to be about one week of your life) making the gospel known in a context outside of Birmingham (North America, Burma, other places in the world). You've got in your Worship Guide... Kind of turn over to the to the left and the bottom half of the page that's parallel in the notes. It says, "Go." It's simple. And this is just...I mean it is. It's simple.

I want to encourage you to first, pray about your involvement in one of our unique short-term mission opportunities by visiting [BrookHills.org/go](http://BrookHills.org/go). You can go there. You can pick up this...pick up a sheet with this on the way out in the lobby too. And so, here's the deal. Let me pause here. Pray. So I'm obviously... There's no place in Scripture that I'm going to say, "Hey, Jesus said, give two-percent of your time," in Matthew 19. Jesus said, "*Make disciples of all nations.*" That's a command for all of us. That's a command. It's not a calling. That's a command. Calling is how this plays out. So what I want to call you to do is with that command upon your life, simply go to that list and say, "Lord, do you want me to go on any of these?" That's all I'm calling you to do. And every one of us can do that. Every one of us should do that. Blank check. Okay? I'm willing to do any of this. And so I want to just... And pray over that and wait for an answer. Pray over that and wait for an answer.

As you pray, submit an online application as the Lord leads. Support, sacrificially give, raise, receive a global offering scholarship to fund your trip, work, train, receive ministry in cross-cultural training from your team leader—a huge part of this whole picture. This is not just short-term tourism around the world. This is fueling long-term disciple making in other places with partners that we have where we've gone deep in relationship with, that have said, "Some people think, 'Well what can I do in one week to make disciples somewhere else?'" Well, the reality is, we're working with partners overseas who have said, or in different context, some of them overseas, who have said, "We've got long-term disciple-making processes in place and here's how a short-term team can help fuel that." And then, so you have an opportunity then to go, work with our field partners to make disciples of all nations (five). But then number six, six, transform. Let God use your time away to affect the way you live at home. That two percent of your life there transforms the other 98 percent of your life you lived here. And you begin to see, "Hey, I can do some of these same things across the street."

Some of our most effective ministry in Birmingham was actually birthed out of ministry in context around the world. So you come back and you see, "Wow, I can do this here." And then you share. Tell others about your trip and consider leading a trip next year. Some of you have gone on different trips and it's time for you to lead a trip. So there's short-term mission.

Leading to mid-term mission. So then many people begin to spend two months to two years of their lives in different contexts. We got... I want to talk more about this next week. We've got numerous folks out there like this right now from our faith family. We're about to send out in January a whole new group of people. So this is high school graduates, college students, college graduates, semi-retired, retired brothers and sisters who have anywhere from two months to two years, able to go into another context, then feeling long-term mission. So some people in the faith family say, "Well, I did the two percent trip, now I'm ready to take a 98 percent trip over there and come back two percent of the time here." And so moving life and family to another context. Come back for your two percent trip every once-in-a-while here to visit.

And I was just... As we were singing, I was looking up on this covenant behind me and just saw names. Sudecoe's at the top who are serving in Ecuador as a part of this covenant faith family. And you see the Debeljuh's right in the middle who are serving in Croatia. And so we go out as a faith family sending out brothers and sisters. So here's the deal. Again, I'm not saying that this is any of these are mandated by Scripture—that you go short-term, or mid-term, or long-term. What I am calling us to though, as a church, is that you—every individual and every family in this room—put a blank check on the table and say, "Do you want me to go short-term? Mid-term? Do you want us to go long-term?" Put it out there and ask Him and wait for an answer.

### **We Want to be a Part of Accomplishing the Great Commission and Seeing the End of the World as We Know it**

We can trust Him with our salvation. We can certainly trust Him with our lives. And He wants this to happen. He wants His praise known among all peoples. So put it out there. And as we do put that out there, let's say together, "We want to be a part of accomplishing the Great Commission and seeing the end of the world as we know it. There will come a day when every nation is reached. Matthew 24:14. This "*gospel of the kingdom will be (preached) proclaimed*" in all nations "*and then the end will come.*" We want to see His face. Could it be in our day that we see His face? Let's live for that and let's die working for that!

## **The WIN...**

### **World-Impacting Disciple-Makers**

This is the WIN. Every member of this church—a World-Impacting Disciple-Making.

This is what I pray for every member of this church, that we would all, each of us, be men and women that you, right where you're sitting, member of The Church at Brook Hills, that you would multiply the gospel. Men and women who are multiplying the gospel by making disciples of all nations with their lives. I pray that every student, every single, every man, every woman, every senior adult in this church would multiply the gospel. In the process, we've become a church full of disciple-makers who really believe that by God's grace we can affect Birmingham and the nations for God's glory. That sounds idealistic to some. "Oh, thanks for the 'Change the World' speech but I think it's..."

So those who think it's idealistic, two thoughts. One: Biblical—God desires to bless His people so that His ways may be known on earth and His salvation among all nations. Second thought: there's an old adage. "Those who say it can't be done should get out of the way of those who are doing it."

So we come back to Psalm 67 and this is where... I just want you to see the beauty of the Psalm as we close out here. On one hand, this Psalm is a prayer. *"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations."*

Let's make this prayer constant on our lips. May the cry of the people of God called The Church at Brook Hills be this: "God bless us. God be gracious to us. Bless us with... As if we don't have enough, bless us with more so that your ways may be known on the earth and your salvation among all nations. For your glory in Birmingham and your glory to the ends of the earth. Bless us." This is what I pray almost every night over my two sons. I just put my hand on their head. *"May God be gracious to us (you) and bless us (you) and make his face to shine upon us (you), Selah that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations."*

Let's make this prayer constant on our lips. So this Psalm is a prayer, but it's also a purpose. And as a purpose, may it captivate our lives and our church. So as we pray this, we long for this. We realize this is what we were created and saved for—for the glory of God in all the world. We want to make the gospel known and God has gifted and put us in unique ways where that can happen. So many different ways! You're a teacher. You're a lawyer. You're an accountant. You're a student. You're a stay-at-home-mom. Purpose the same! The glory of Christ in Birmingham and to the ends of the earth! And nobody is sidelined in this picture. This is the purpose that drives all of us.

But it's not just a prayer and a purpose. You get to the end of this Psalm. Go back to verse six with me. After he says, *"the earth has yielded its increase,"* he says, *"God, our God shall bless us."* That's not a prayer. There's confidence there. "God shall bless us." And the psalmist knows that when He does, all the ends of the earth will fear Him. This Psalm is a promise. God is committed to blessing His people because God is committed to making His glory known among all peoples. So we pray this: Make this our purpose. And I know this sounds bold but we are assured of the blessing of God when our lives and this church is aligned with this purpose. So may this prayer—purpose—may it be a promise. And in us, may it illicit, risk-taking, life-giving, death-defying confidence in our King.

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