

**Promised Land I**  
***Who God Loves***  
**November 11, 2012**

**PRELUDE – “How Deep the Father’s Love”**

**Worship Songs – “Great God Who Saves”  
/ “Beautiful the Blood”**

**Feature – “The Sunshine Song”**

Good morning everyone!

I asked our band to do that song because not only is it just cool, it also gets to the heart of ...

- Why we’re doing what we’re doing in this remodel;
- Why we’re going to do a three-

month season of Grand Opening beginning Christmas Eve and running through Easter Sunday;

- And, more importantly, why we exist as a church in the first place.

You see, in so many ways this world is a wonderful place. In so many ways, the glory of God is still reflected in human creativity and potential for good. But, in just as many ways, this world is *not* a wonderful place. We live under a curse that brings disappointment, disease, destruction and eventually death. Even those who appear to “have it all” (in terms of their financial standard of living) eventually fall victim to that curse.

Because this is true, many people in

this world long for a reason to hope. Many people long to know that in spite of all the trials and tribulations, there is a light and there is goodness that will prevail in the end.

Years ago, God, who is the source of that goodness and light, decided to call together a people who would be the evidence of that goodness and light; a people whose experience with God (and whose inner confidence because of their experience with God) would give hope to the rest of the world; a people to whom those who are longing for hope would be able to say, as the song said:

Somehow the sun keeps shining  
upon you while I struggle to get

mine.

Somehow, in spite of the clouds,  
you've got a paradise inside.

So send out your ray of sunshine.<sup>i</sup>

That "people" was the nation of Israel.

In the beginning, they were just a handful of families who had been invited to move to Egypt where there was food during a time of great famine. But over the years, that little clan grew until four centuries later there were at least 2M men, women and children living alongside the 4M or so native Egyptians. This made the Egyptian leaders afraid of being overrun by foreigners, so they made the Israelites their slaves.

But, God, the Bible says, heard their cries for freedom and remembered the promise He had made hundreds of years before to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (who was also called "Israel" and had been among those who moved to Egypt):

"I will make you into a great nation. I will be your God and you will be my people. I bless you and through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed. You will know me and through you all the world will know that there is a God who loves and cares; a God who will one day set all things to rights."

So, God raised up a leader by the name of Moses. And Moses, with God's

power working through him in miraculous ways, led the people out of Egypt, into the wilderness, and onwards to Canaan – the land described as “flowing with milk and honey” that He had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob years before.

Sadly, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, that original group failed to trust God. As they neared the Promised Land, God told Moses to send 12 spies – one leader from each tribe – to scope it out. When they returned, the people were so discouraged by the report of “giants living in the land” that they decided to overthrow Moses and choose a new leader who would take them back to Egypt!

**But God intervened and put a stop to that. He declared:**

*“In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more... Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb and Joshua.”*

*Numbers 14:28-30 (NIV)*

(God made an exception for them because they were the two spies who believed that, in spite of the obstacles, with God’s help they would be victorious).

And that’s what happened. The nation of Israel wandered the desert until all of

the adults who were part of the original exodus, except for Joshua and Caleb, had died off.

Fast forward 38 years ... Once again, the nation is gathered just to the east of the Jordan River and ready to cross over and enter the Promised Land. But this time *Joshua is the leader*. Not only is everyone from the first generation gone, Moses is gone, too.

So, Joshua sends word to all the people that in three days they will cross the Jordan. In the meantime, however, he decides to once again send spies into the land, specifically into the city of Jericho which is the first city that must be conquered. But this time, instead of sending 12 he sends only two. (The



Bible doesn't say, but I'm guessing he picked men from *his* tribe and *Caleb's* tribe in hopes of avoiding what had happened before).

But it's what happens while the spies are in Jericho that I want to focus on for a few minutes because it's quite amazing, especially when you remember what God has told the Israelites they are to do to the people who are living in the land of Canaan.

**Deuteronomy 7 records God saying**

...

*When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations*

*... and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally.*

*Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Deuteronomy 7:1-3 (NIV)*

Now, we moderns, when we read this, have a hard time with this kind of thing but that's because we don't understand what was going on in those nations that would warrant such an action. We get a better picture of that when the command ...

**... is repeated again in Deuteronomy  
20:**

*In the cities of the nations  
the Lord your God is  
giving you as an  
inheritance, do not leave  
alive anything that  
breathes. Completely  
destroy them — the  
Hittites, Amorites,  
Canaanites, Perizzites,  
Hivites and Jebusites — as  
the Lord your God has  
commanded you.*

**And here's the reason:**

*Otherwise, they will teach  
you to follow all the  
detestable things they do  
in worshiping their gods ...  
Deuteronomy 20:16-*

And, again, that's hard for us to understand, because we are the beneficiaries of three millennia of Judeo-Christian moral influence (though it is fading in the Western world), we cannot imagine what it would be like for a people and a nation to be totally, utterly corrupted from top to bottom; to have what is morally and relationally and spiritually detestable in every way to not only be accepted but also to be encouraged in the name of "the gods."

But that's what the Israelites were walking into – a cultural system and its people who were so far gone that there was nothing redeemable about it or them. So, God said there was no other

option other than to wipe them out.

## **Rahab & The Spies**

Now, with that in mind, what happens in Jericho during the visit of the spies is simply amazing.

**The Bible tells us in Joshua chapter 3 that ...**

*They went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there. Joshua 2:1 (NIV)*

Now, the Bible doesn't say why they chose to stay at Rahab's house. Given what's about to transpire, I think it's safe to assume they were not there as "clients" (if you know what I mean).

Most commentators suggest that, given her profession, Rahab would have been a good source of information about what was going on in the town. In addition, the Bible tells us that her home was actually built into the wall of the city which would have facilitated the escape of the spies once their mission was complete.

It's also possible that Rahab may have seen them, and given that she knew the males in the town, she figured out who they were and what they were doing and sought them out. Based on what she tells them (which we'll read in just a few minutes), I think there might be something to that.

In any case, for whatever reason, the two spies stay at her house. And given how shall I say, her “popularity” among the men of Jericho, the word soon gets around that there are some “new customers” at Rahab’s house. And given that all of Jericho is aware that 2M Israelites are camped on the other side of the Jordan (a mere six miles to the east), it doesn’t take long for word to get back to the king: “some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.”

So, the Bible says the King of Jericho sends soldiers to Rahab who demand: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.”

Rahab admits “yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.”

And that’s what the soldiers did. (Apparently, they knew her well and considered her to be dependable).

However, the spies had not left.

**Instead, the Bible tells us that ...**

*She had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.*

*Joshua 2:6 (NIV)*



And later that evening, the Bible says that she went up on the roof and said to them:

*"I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.*

*Joshua 2:9 (NIV)*

**She continued:**

*"We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom*

*you completely destroyed.  
Joshua 2:10 (NIV)*

*When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below." Joshua 2:11 (NIV)*

*"Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death." Joshua*

2:12-13 (NIV)

*"Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land." Joshua 2:14 (NIV)*

And that's what happened. She kept her word and they kept theirs. Fast forward a couple of weeks and, as the Israelites are conquering Jericho ...

*Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her."*

*So the young men who had done the spying went in and ... brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. Joshua 6:22-23 (NIV)*

... where they would be safe from the battle.

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Now, I have to tell you that I absolutely love this story and, in fact, since I planned this series several months ago this is the part that I have been looking forward to teaching the most. And I think maybe that's because in this story I see great application to us individually and as a church, but also because in

many ways this story directly contradicts what most people believe about who matters to God; who God is interested in saving; and who God loves.

So, I want to talk to you about those things for a few minutes. I want to make two observations about the story and then draw two lessons from it – one for us as individuals and one for us as a church.

## **Two Observations**

Here's the first observation – and I think it's pretty obvious.

**Observation 1. Within an “irredeemable culture” there are**

***individuals who are open to God  
(and, often, they are the last people  
you would expect to be open).***

Rahab certainly fits that description. A prostitute is not exactly the kind of person you would expect to be open to God – but she was.

Some commentators think that's because she knew what was about to happen. She knew who the Israelites were. She had heard the stories of their deliverance from Egypt. She had probably even heard what God had told them about not sparing anyone in the land of Canaan. She knew they were going to be wiped out and, so, she asked for mercy ... and received it.

And that's very interesting in light of

what God had told the Israelites: “show no mercy.” It kind of seems like a contradiction ... if that’s all the data you have to go on. However, we also know that God says ...

*“As surely as I live,  
declares the Sovereign  
Lord, I take no pleasure in  
the death of the wicked,  
but rather that they turn  
from their ways and live.  
Turn! Turn from your evil  
ways!”           Ezekiel 33:11  
(NIV)*

God had severely judged the Canaanites, but He took no pleasure in doing so and would take no pleasure in seeing them destroyed. And His heart, therefore, was open to any one of them

who would have responded as Rahab did. (This is one of the great paradoxes of God: that He utterly condemns and yet is utterly willing to save those who turn to Him).

When the story of the Israelites was being told in Jericho everyone heard it. Most people scoffed "it's just a fable; a rumor" but some believed it was true. They believed that the Red Sea really had parted and that the Israelites really had been led by a cloud and by a pillar of fire. Yet none of those who believed that story gave credence to the idea that the power behind those acts – the God of Israel – was THE God; the ONE TRUE God; THE ONLY GOD; God of Heaven and Earth. None of them came to the conclusion that they should



therefore reject their gods, their culture and their lifestyle and become His subjects.

None, that is, but Rahab. Though she was completely undeserving and among the last of people you would expect to be open to God, she (along with her family) was saved because of her faith.

*Even within an irredeemable culture, there are individuals who are open to God.*

And I think that's something a lot of us would do well to remember especially in light of the recent presidential election.

Many conservative evangelical Christians were especially interested in the outcome because many conservative evangelical Christians see our nation going more and more the way of the Canaanites. In the past 40 years, there has been a dramatic shift away from the Judeo-Christian values on which this country was founded ...

- To the point where even the idea that we ever *had* such values is routinely scoffed at;
- To the point where parents are influenced more by episodes of Modern Family than the Bible.
- To the point where we now have a President and many legislators who, among other things, are

willing to define marriage in a way that totally rejects what God has revealed; and who are unwilling to speak up in defense of the most defenseless of all humanity – the unborn – in cases where there *hasn't* been a rape or when the mother's life *isn't* in danger.

There's been a dramatic shift over the years but there was great hope among many conservative evangelicals in this last election that maybe it would be reversed; that the party which typically represents "traditional values" would be voted into power. It wasn't. The majority of people in this country – a slim majority but a majority just the same – *freely chose to support leaders who will continue down that same path*

*in the future.* And that's discouraging.

What's even more discouraging – at least, for many conservative evangelicals – is that most pundits are saying that for conservatives in this country to get elected in the future, they will have to let go of those traditional values. And most likely, that's what they will do.

And that reality hit a lot of conservative evangelicals Tuesday evening. And they despaired because what happened to the Canaanites (and many other nations throughout history) is proof that cultures cannot wholesale continue to reject and ignore God and expect to survive. God will not be mocked, the scripture says. Eventually,

you *will* reap what you have sown. And if we continue down this path, that's going to happen to the United States – which is why so many tears were shed Tuesday evening among conservative evangelicals.

And I can understand that emotion because I am a conservative evangelical Christian (in case you haven't figured it out). However, and I'm almost hesitant to say this because I fear it will be taken the wrong way: *I'm kind of glad the "traditional values" party lost.* (And I say that from a purely religious point of view. Economically, I'm not glad because – well, that's another subject entirely).

But from a "religious" point of view, I'm

kind of glad the conservatives lost because too many Christians have put their faith (and energy) into a top-down approach that is focused on changing political leadership *instead of looking for the individual Rahabs among us who are open to God*. And, I'm hopeful that the outcome of the election and what pundits are saying about the future will be discouraging enough that Christians will stop looking to the ballot box to change the culture and instead begin to listen to God's call to love people, and through that love lead them to Christ.

This week, after it was over, I read of millionaires, some of whom put upwards of \$50M into the Republican PACs, who are now wondering if they

wasted their money. There's a lot of debate about that ... but as I read it I thought, "what would happen if those people would instead financially invest in local churches who love God and love people and offer the Good News of Christ that brings about change from the bottom up?"

Heck – forget about the millionaires. What would happen if regular people like you and me did that?

I'll tell you what might happen. Every week, I get an email from Bill Hybels who is pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. (It's not personal, I mean, I'm not best buds with Bill or anything like that – I'm just on his e-news subscription list). Let me read

you a portion of what he wrote this week. It blew my mind.

Thanks for your prayers for our recent meetings with the Chinese Government. We made significant progress toward the day when we can legally hold Global Leadership Summits all across China. We have been respectful for how the Chinese prefer doing business through trusted friends and we now have many Chinese officials who have been to Willow several times. They are beginning to feel more like family than mere governmental workers.<sup>ii</sup>

Are you kidding me? How did that happen? How did a pastor and



volunteer leaders from a primarily white conservative evangelical church in Chicago garner such influence with the Chinese government?

It happened because *Chinese* Christians, who live in one of the most repressive and irredeemable cultures ever, have had no other option but to focus on looking for the Rahabs. And, as a result, not only has Christianity blown up and exploded in numbers in their country, *it has become winsome in that culture* to the point where now many Chinese officials themselves are open to Christ.

*Even within an irredeemable culture, there are individuals who are open to God.* That's the first observation and I

spent a lot of time on it so this next one will be very brief.

## **2. The story of Rahab is a “mission accomplished” moment for Israel.**

Other than learning that all the people of Jericho were scared to death, the spies didn't discover anything of value in terms of military intelligence. In fact, four chapters later, we see that the Lord had already determined the battle plan!

So what was their purpose in going to Jericho? It seems like they might have been sent just to hear Rahab's confession of faith in The One True God, save her from destruction, and give her a place among the Lord's people. I mean, God knew her heart.

He knew that she was open to Him, and so God arranged for her to be included among His people ... which, you'll remember, was their purpose all along. God was going to give them that land and bless them so that the rest of the world could be blessed through them.

And that's what happened to Rahab. From that time on, the Bible says she lived with the Israelites. She married – get this – an Israelite, a man from the tribe of Judah named Salmon, and the two of them had a son whom they named Boaz. Boaz then married a gentile from Moab named Ruth and they had a son named Obed ... who had a son named Jesse ... who had a son named David who became King of Israel.<sup>iii</sup>

And 26 generations later, two distant cousins who were both descendants of King David (and therefore of Rahab and Salmon) married and became the earthly parents of Jesus of Nazareth ... which is why, when you read the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, you'll find Rahab – a Canaanite prostitute – listed there.<sup>iv</sup> Her inclusion into Jesus' family tree reminds us that from the beginning God's purpose was to bring faith and salvation to all the nations. That is awesome.

## **Two Lessons**

So, those are the two observations I wanted to make:

- Within an “irredeemable culture” there are individuals who are open to God (and, often, they are the last people you would expect).
- The story of Rahab represents a “mission accomplished” moment for Israel.

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So how does this apply to those of us who believe in and belong to Christ? What lessons can we learn from this? How can we be successful at the mission Jesus has given us – who are now the people of God – to represent Him to the world?

**Lesson 1. On an individual level, we need to be confident that at least**

**some people around us are open to God.**

That sounds rather simplistic, but I think a lot of us operate under the assumption that we are completely surrounded by people who have thought it all through and have made a conscious decision to reject God, to reject Jesus, and to reject the church.

That may be true, but it kind of flies in the face of logic. After all, God went to the great trouble of sending two guys into enemy territory in Jericho because of just one woman – the last woman you'd expect – who was open to Him. So, if God did that, why would He waste you? Why would God waste me? Why would he put you and me in among

people who have no openness whatsoever to Jesus? It makes no sense.

See, a lot of times the problem isn't that the "open" people aren't there. It's that we don't see them. And we don't see them because we don't really believe what Jesus once told the religious leaders of his day.

*"Truly I tell you, the tax collectors (government officials) and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you." Matthew 21:31 (NIV)*

A lot of times, we put people in a box instead of seeing the possibilities.

This week I read an interesting blog post that referred to Malcolm Gladwell's book *The Tipping Point*.<sup>v</sup> Gladwell says a key element of change is a person who is a "connector."

- Connectors find everyone fascinating and want others to meet these fascinating people. Often as a result of the connections they make, partnerships or teams are formed that change the course of technology or music or sports or culture.
- A connector sees things in you that you don't even see in yourself. They see possibility, and while most of



us are busily choosing whom we would like to know, and rejecting the people who don't look right, "connectors" like them all.

The point of the post was that every follower of Christ should be a Connector. We should find everyone interesting and be enthused about people, and see everyone as unique and created in God's image. We should "see possibility."

**So, I have a challenge for you (and for myself).**

Four weeks from today, on Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup>, we are going to rededicate this facility by writing the names of our possibility people on

the floor of this room. The carpet will be up by then and the floor will be bare waiting for the new carpet to be installed.

And between now and then, I want you to ask God to reveal who around you might be open to a personal invitation from you to our Grand Opening. I guarantee you *someone is*. It might be the person you least expect, but someone is. So keep your eyes open over the next four weeks.

Of course, if we do this and we identify people around us and we invite them to NHCC and the Grand Opening, we have to hope that what they find makes them feel welcome, right?

And that leads to the second lesson I see from this story:

**Lesson 2. As a congregation we need to be intentional about practicing “hospitality to strangers.”**

After Rahab was spared, she wasn't treated as a second-class citizen. She was welcomed into the family of Israel and treated just like everyone else.

That's because one of the major (but lesser-known) tenets of the Mosaic Law had to do with how strangers and foreigners would be treated by the Israelites. Again and again, we read statements like this one:

*You must show love to*

*foreigners, for you  
yourselves were once  
foreigners in the land of  
Egypt. Deuteronomy  
10:19 (NIV)*

*The foreigners residing  
among you must be  
treated as your native-  
born. Love them as  
yourself, for you were  
foreigners in Egypt. I am  
the Lord your God.  
Leviticus 19:34 (NIV)*

Then, of course, the scripture we read  
last week:

*When you harvest the  
grapes in your vineyard,  
do not go over the vines  
again.*

*Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.*

*Deuteronomy 24:20-22 (NIV)*

I think this is fascinating. God was telling the Israelites to expect that others would be interested in joining them and to be prepared to treat them well.

## **About Hospitality**

And that same principle applies to us as we go into this season of Grand Opening. We want the people we

personally invite (as well as the people who hear about us through the various kinds of marketing) to feel like we were expecting them; to feel like we were wanting them to come and hang out with us.

So how does that happen? How do we communicate that kind of thing directly and indirectly? As I was thinking about how to explain it, I came across a video that shows how *not* to do it. Let's watch.

<End Slide Set 1 >

**Video – “SVU: The Interrogation” (2.5 mins)**

<End Slide Set 2 >

I just thought we'd throw that in there for a bit of comic relief since this

message has been rather heavy at some points.

But I do want to talk just for a few minutes about this with all seriousness. If you were to ask the average church member, "Do you think your church is friendly and welcoming to new people?" most would say "yes." But, in reality, a lot of churches are not. In fact, in some cases, newcomers would say they feel kind of like the guy in that video!

Part of the disconnect comes from not understanding what *hospitality is* in a church setting and *who is responsible* for it. Hospitality is not just a few people (the ushers and greeters as wonderful as they are) being friendly and saying

“hi” to everyone (though it does include that). It’s not just shaking hands with people sitting near us when Nathan tells us to do so (though it does include that, too). It’s not just having coffee available (though it does include that, too).

**Hospitality in a church setting means creating a total environment in which people feel safe, valued and cared for.**

A couple months ago our staff was studying this issue and we learned that surveys of people who attend a church for the very first time reveal that the number one thing they talk about afterwards is the *bathrooms and (if they have children) the nursery!* It was more important than the music, more



important than the message.

Why? Because those two things say a lot about the value the church puts on making people feel safe, valued and cared for.

And I know some of us are tempted to think “that’s just silly – what matters most is the message. People ought to come for that and not worry about whether or not the bathrooms are nice or the children’s and youth programs are well-staffed and well-led.”

And I suppose at the most fundamental level, that’s true. In the end, it does come down to hearing and responding to the message. But I also think that attitude reveals something about us: *it*

*reveals that we have forgotten what it's like to be a newcomer ourselves. Every time God commanded the Israelites to be hospitable he followed it with "remember what it was like when you were the outsider." And some of us need to do that: to remember what it was like before we became an "insider."*

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Now, I know that at this point some of us are thinking, "OK, Rick, this is all well and good, but what does it have to do with me? I mean, if you and the staff want to make sure that people feel safe, valued and cared for, I'm not opposed. Have at it. Go for it."

And that brings me to the other

disconnect I mentioned a few minutes ago: *who is responsible for creating the environment.*

As our staff studied this topic, we were fascinated to learn that every employee at Walt Disney World – no matter what their role – gets more training in hospitality than in any other area. It's not just the people working at the turnstiles who are responsible for it. It's not just the managers who are responsible for it. Every person – down to the janitors – is trained and expected to assist in creating an environment in which people feel safe, valued and cared for.

In fact, according to Disney, *that* – not their incredible creativity - is the secret

of their success: *everyone takes responsibility.*

And the same thing is true in the church setting.

**The quality of hospitality in a church setting is directly correlated to the number of “insiders” who take responsibility for it.**

When it's seen as just the responsibility of the staff and the ushers and greeters, the quality is low. When everyone owns it together, quality is high.

And we can own it in different ways.

Some of us can help to create the environment by volunteering to work with our children.

Some of us who are extroverts can help create it by just saying “hi” and talking to people we don’t know. We’re good at that; we live for that.

All of us, just by showing up on a cold, rainy Sunday morning instead of sleeping are actually helping to create an environment for new people that’s so much more motivating than an empty room. Thank you for being here this morning.

And the list could go on and on so, I’ll stop.

**Instead, I’ll give you another challenge.**

Three weeks from today on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, I'm going to share the platform with several of our ministry leaders so that they can explain what needs to be done in their particular area of ministry so that we can create an environment of hospitality suitable for a group of 200 to 300 more people.

Between now and then, start praying, asking God to show you that day – if you're not already playing a part - what your part needs to be; where you could serve from January thru June?

## **Conclusion**

Friends, we have a great God and a great church and a great opportunity

just around the corner. Even in what is fast becoming an “irredeemable culture” many people in this world long for a reason to hope. Many people long to know that in spite of all the trials and tribulations of the curse, there is a light and there is goodness that will prevail in the end. And you and I know the answer. We know the Savior who is the answer.

So, let’s take advantage of the opportunity we have. Let’s keep our eyes open over the next month or so as to who we might invite. And let’s be open to how we might serve in creating an environment of hospitality that makes people feel like they matter not only to us, but to God.

Would you pray with me?

God, I thank you so much for the example you give us in the people of Israel. I thank you that you've invited us in to be part of your people through Christ. I pray that you would help us to see this opportunity and to seize it - the people who are around us and the way we can serve. God, give us a vision.

Some of us are disillusioned because we've been reaching out to people and some people aren't interested and we think there is no one. God, change our hearts. There is always someone who is open to you.

God, I pray that you would be



glorified as we reach out to our community and we invite people to come along and experience what we have. And we are so thankful for that. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## **Feature – “The Freedom Song”**

### Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Paraphrased from *The Sunshine Song* by Jason Mraz

<sup>ii</sup> From Bill Hybels e-news 11/9/12

<sup>iii</sup> See Ruth 4:13-22

<sup>iv</sup> Matt 1:5

<sup>v</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/b8yrkfr>