

Sanctuary City

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1/2 JM Workshops:** we have **6**, **not only experts** in their fields, **but** each have a **passion** for what they do, to spend **the weekend with us**.
1. Also, full **bio's** and **descriptions** our on **both Web/App**. (2 services w/us)
- B. **Slide3 Missions Prayer:** Please join us for our monthly Missions Prayer meeting **next Sun**, Jan.28th at 6:30 PM in Agape Room. **Join us as we pray for our field workers**.
- C. **Slide4 Fellowship:** You'll find on our home page of our **website** a section dedicated to Fellowship: *featuring our vision for fellowship at CM and what we are hoping for, as well as highlighting all the Opportunities for fellowship at CM.*
1. We are hoping everyone will look for **who they** can **build Christ-like connection with**. Fellowship is a responsibility and blessing for us **all**. **Keep checking back for these special events**.
- D. **Slide5 Prayer:** *God is our **refuge** and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

II. Intro: Sanctuary City

- A. **As a child, Ask:** where did you run to to hide where you knew you would be safe?
1. **My forts:** built many of them. From tree forts **to** underground tunnel system.
- B. Brian Wilson and Gary Usher of *the Beach Boys* wrote the song, "*In My Room*".
1. There's a world where I can go and tell my secrets to. **In my room** (2x).
In this world I lock out all my worries and my fears. **In my room** (2x)
- C. **Sanctuary City** - well, not like our sanctuary cities today. (a **sanctuary city** limits or denies its cooperation with the national government in enforcing immigration law). **Not what I mean here. But they were cities in which you could find *sanctuary*.**
1. Sanctuary = *a place of refuge or safety*. I hope you feel that here.

III. Slide6 **CITIES OF REFUGE (1-9) Read all.**

- A. (1) **Then the Lord spoke to Joshua.** Don't ever say God is not speaking *unless your Bible is closed*. Remember this, if you open it, **God is speaking!** Put your name in vs.1.
- B. (6) A built-in statute of limitations, when the present high priest died. **A kind of "Ollie, Ollie, Oxen free"**.
- C. **Slide7a Map:** 6 Levitical cities established as places of protection. Easy to get to. . Roads kept up. No place in the land was more than 30 miles.
- D. **Slide7b** The bible differentiates between **premeditated murder** (*ratsach*) and **accidental homicide** (*nakah*).
- E. **Homicide:** Intentional (murder) vs. Unintentional/accidental Homicide. (Or involuntary manslaughter). *Murder* is condemned, **but** *killing* is sometimes justified.
- F. **The 6th comm doesn't say** thou shall not **kill**, **but** thou shall not **murder** (lo ratsach).
- Slide7c 3 Exceptions** to the 6th commandment: **Accidental homicide** (accident). **Justifiable homicide** (self-defense, law enforcement or military in the line of duty). **Capital Punishment** (Gen.9:6).
- G. **Slide8a** Surrounding cultures in that day never considered **Intent** in homicide cases.
- H. **Capital punishment** appears harsh. **But** it's because **God values human life** above all things. The death penalty was invoked, **not** out of *indifference* for human life, **but** because each human life is **of tremendous value**.
- Wherever you personally land on the death penalty debate, please know **Slide8b this principle** ... **"People matter to God!"**
- I. **In some cultures** there were stiffer crimes related to **possessions**, **than** crimes against **Slide8c human beings**. **In the code of Hammurabi** (Mesop/Babylon, basalt stele (7' 4 1/2" tall) **"If one committed murder he could pay it back with \$."** (so, **the rich** literally got away with murder).
- The code of Hammurabi** is the longest and best-organised legal text from the ancient Near East, the best-preserved law, from king Hammurabi.

J. **Slide8d** One can argue against the death penalty today by saying, *I agree with the **principal** but I don't like the **process** in a fallen world.*

1. So there are times where we should **disagree** with the death penalty, **because of process, not because of principle.**

K. In that day, the nation had **no police force to investigate crimes & prosecute criminals**, so the innocent had to be protected from angry family members who might want to take justice into their own hands.

1. **Story:** Almost night fall, driving with Billy Ros in mountain area above Bacold, PI, where our driver ran over a chicken. Bill yelled, "Drive, Drive!" Locals would have *Bolo'd* us! (machete)

L. **Slide9** God is our Refuge: (in many psalms)

1. Ps.9:9 nlt *The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a **refuge** in times of trouble.*
2. Ps.46:1,2 *God is our **refuge** and strength, a very present help in trouble.*
3. Ps.91:1,2 *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My **refuge** and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."*
 - a) God is a place where we can all flee into.

M. **Slide10a** The Avengers - **no, not** the Marvel Comics: *Captain Marvel, Captain America, Iron Man, Thor, Black Panther, Scarlet Witch, and Vision.*

1. **This is the Gael, the avenger of blood** (3,5,9) - The **next of kin** to the slain person was obliged to take up arms against him & put him to death.
 - a) The victim's family members **could** legitimately avenge this shedding of innocent blood (Num 35:19).
2. **We have an avenger that is after us. Ask:** name our enemies: *The law, the devil, our flesh, the world system.*

N. Slide10b Jn.2:16 John lists these 3 avengers who are after you: [vs.15 *do not love the world* ... defined as ...]

1. **Lust of the Flesh** - The cravings of sinful man. Wrongful desires of our sinful nature. (The world's temptations start deep within us).
2. **Lust of the eyes** - The wrongful desires that are *inspired* through our vision. (The world tempts us by its physical attraction. *Its ways appear good, but its beauty has no substance*)
3. **Pride of life** - lit. *pride in possessions*. Counterfeit holiness. Lack of humility. (The boasting of what you have and do).
 - a) Slide10c Max Lucado explained these 3 as: *The desire to **enjoy** things. The desire to **achieve** things. The desire to **get** things.*
 - b) Griffith Thomas explained these 3 as: *The desire of **having**. The desire of **seeing**. The desire of **being**.*
4. *The Christian is not ruined by living in the world, but by the world living in him!*

IV. Slide11a **JESUS IS OUR CITY OF REFUGE** *The Big Idea*

- A. Heb.6:18b-20 *we who have fled for **refuge** might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. 19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*
- B. Slide11b Our Refuge in Christ is *in contrast to & far better than* the Refuge of the Manslayer.
1. **He Comes To Us**. It is true that the sinner must come to Christ (Mt.11:28-30 *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*). It is also true that Christ 1st comes to us (Lk.19:10 *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost*). [the elders of the city did not go seeking for people to help].

- a) No avenger following the track of *past sin*, can hurt the soul that shelters in Him.
2. Slide11c Our High Priest will never die. In Jesus we have **eternal life**. Since our High Priest will never die, **therefore** we are saved eternally.
3. Slide11d When we come to Christ as our refuge there is no trial to determine our guilt. We know we are **guilty**. We're not showing up to knock on the gates of heaven to plead our case of *innocence*.
4. Slide11e We don't stand at the door and wait; we entered the open door.
- a) Jn.10:9 *I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.*
- b) The manslayer had to stay inside the city, **we** may go in and out and find pasture ... which is the other half of that vs. Jn.10:9 *I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.*
- C. Slide12a These 6 cities of refuge are beautiful **types** of Christ:
1. They were **Appointed** by God. (an act of **grace**, for all men are sinners & deserve to die)
 2. Slide12b They were **Announced** to the world. (named in Joshua 20:7,8 they could never be changed)
 - a) As there were **many other more prominent cities**, **but** none could shelter the sinner. **So** there are **many religions** **but** there is only 1 way of **salvation** as announced in Gods Word.
 3. Slide12c They were **Accessible** to all. (arranged so that no tribe was too far from the place of safety)
 - a) *Tradition tells us:* **the priest** made sure the **roads** were in **good repair**. That regular **landmarks** were put up **to guide** the fleeing person. The **gates** of the cities were **never closed!**
 - b) What a picture of Christ, *The way to the city is **clear!!!***

4. Slide12d They were **Adequate** to meet the need. (as long as the slayer remained in the city, he was safe)

D. Note it says *Flee!* - Such a person could not afford to delay.

1. Same for lost sinners today. **Don't delay! Run to Jesus your city of refuge!**

E. Heb.6:13-20 msg When God made his promise to Abraham, he backed it to the hilt, putting his own reputation on the line. He said, "I promise that I'll bless you with everything I have - bless and bless and bless!" Abraham stuck it out and got everything that had been promised to him. When people make promises, they guarantee them by appeal to some authority above them so that if there is any question that they'll make good on the promise, the authority will back them up. When God wanted to guarantee his promises, he gave his word, a rock-solid guarantee - God can't break his word. And because his word cannot change, the promise is likewise unchangeable. We who have **run for our very lives to God, have every reason to grab the promised hope with both hands and never let go.** It's an unbreakable spiritual lifeline, reaching past all appearances right to the very presence of God where Jesus, running on ahead of us, has taken up his permanent post as high priest for us, in the order of Melchizedek.

1. **Run to Jesus your city of refuge!**

F. Keywords: refuge, cities, flee.