

- Celebrate baptisms...
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**“Jesus our Banner”
Isaiah 11:1-12**

Story from Multiply Workshop...

- This past Monday & Tuesday - 22 churches from across Greater Boston gathered for a Multiplying Churches Workshop.
- We dreamed together, worked through case studies, and collaborated with the ultimate goal of drafting intentional plan to start other churches.
- There were two powerful moments I will not soon forget.
 - The first: “does anyone have a word?” We prayed... pastors confessing fear and battling ego and allowing barriers to stand in the way of the mission.
 - Then, as our time ended Tuesday: 60 leaders gathered around a map of Boston asking God to do the amazing before our eyes.

A move of God is in our midst, but we’re just getting started. We’re only in second gear. Let me explain...

In 2005, there were just 2 churches in our Send Boston network: Hope Fellowship in Cambridge & Grace Church in Avon.

Map of Boston 2005

Fast forward to 2019, as wave after wave of church planters and planting teams have come into the city, we have seen that number swell to over 70!

Map of Boston 2018

70! You are in the middle of a move. But here’s the question I really want you to wrestle with: will you be part of it? Will you help us move from 2nd to 3rd to 4th to 5th gear? 5th /6th gear is going to be Third Great Awakening.

By the year 2030, we want to see another 230 churches planted for a total of 300 churches.

Map of Boston 2030...

When that happens, on the year of Boston’s 400th birthday, we are going to throw the biggest kingdom party this city has ever seen! The Garden might be too small. I’m serious!

Not many people in the history of the world have been part of a major move of God, but this is our moment. The opportunity is here. Today, I want to invite you to...

TP: Join the movement of Jesus our Banner.

God woke me up at 4:11 on Wednesday morning and whispered in my ear: “Preach the Banner.”

This idea was sparked by a conversation I had with Bryan Shippey on Tuesday morning, who planted Banner Hill Church in Framingham, one year ago today... “Happy Birthday Banner Hill!”

We discover this idea of Jesus being our Banner in...

Isaiah 11:1-12 (text displayed)

1. Identity.

Isaiah 11 provides a vision of hope, pointing us to God's Messiah, the one who would set up God's kingdom here on earth.

Verse 1 says he would come from the stump of Jesse.

- Who was Jesse's son? David, Israel's greatest King.
- What did God tell David in 2 Samuel 7? Through you, I will send my own Son, the very Son of God. He "will build a house for my name and I will establish his throne forever."
- Verse 2 describes how Jesus will be full of God's Spirit. 7 characteristics of divine empowerment (the Hebrew number of completion) reveal he is completely equipped to be the King, not of a nation, but all nations!) [[Somebody get excited here this morning.]]

In verse 10, the vision culminates with Jesus standing as a signal for all peoples...

- The word "signal" can be translated "banner." A banner is a flag. It communicates more than colors and symbols.
- Inherent to a banner is the reality of identity. Let me show you....

Brazilian flag...

This is the Brazilian flag (Green: lush forests and fields; Yellow: rich in gold; Stars = 27 states; Motto). It represents the people of South America's largest country. They are beautiful people (outside & in). :) They flow that Portuguese like poetry. P.

Now, what happened for the Brazilian people in our church when they saw this flag? Their hearts swelled. They leaned in. "That flag represents my people, my heritage. It's part of who I am."

Flags identify us. Our identity is how we are known; it speaks to who we are.

For everyone who raises the banner of Jesus over their lives, their identity is now found IN HIM.

- He defines us! We are who he says we are.
- And he has not hidden us feelings about us!
 - Chosen & Adopted.
 - Forgiven & Free.
 - Rescued & Redeemed.

T: Jesus is our Identity. He is our Banner. Banners not only identify us. They unite us.

2. Unity.

We see this in verses 10, 11, & 12.

- Verse 10: Jesus is the signal. He has an attractive power. Nations come to him for counsel.
- Verse 11 says God will extend his hand to bring his people from all over the earth. And...
- Verse 12: says God will raise a signal (a banner), and the nations will come from the four corners of the earth!

And when people come from this nation and that nation and that nation and that nation, what happens? That's right! They become one.

RUN TO HIM

God is still extending his hand, calling people from all over this city, all over New England, all over the world! He is saying: "Run to my Son! Stop running away from him, and run to him! Life is found in him! He is everything your heart has desired! He's better! Better than cars and houses and money and sex and power and prestige and degrees. Ultimate satisfaction is only found in him."

Have you run to him? Have you said: Jesus is MY Banner. (See Exodus 17:15)

Maybe you're hesitant.

- Perhaps that is because you've raised other banners over your head that say: "DEFEATED" "FORGOTTEN" "REJECTED"
- Or maybe other people have raised banners over you that say: "UNLOVABLE," "NOT ENOUGH"
- But Jesus raises a banner over our heads that says: "LOVED" (Song of Songs 2:4)
- Run to Him! Experience a love, & joy, & peace you've never known!

T: When we run to him, we discover he is running toward the masses.

RUN TO THEM

- Banners are rallying points! That's why flags were used in battle. When the banner moves, everyone moves.
- This gets to the heart of movement dynamics.
- To follow Jesus IS to follow him into his mission. To run to him is to run with him!!
- His heart bleeds for more and more people to know him!! I'm talking about your friends, neighbors & coworkers. Who has God placed before you?
- "The harvest IS plentiful, but the laborers ARE few."

As more and more of us rally to him to run with him, the movement of RHC will get stronger and stronger! Mission has a sneaky way of building unity.

I'm so pumped up about Jesus being our banner that I went online and spent \$47 dollars on a JESUS flag

Pic of JESUS FLAG

(If not that 2-day ship for an extra \$111, it would be here right now!!)

T: There's one more encouragement I want you to see. Not only do banners identify us and unify us, banners provide a statement of...

3. Victory.

Throughout history, it has been the custom of armies to hoist flags after conquering their enemy.

{ITA: Have you ever seen the Arc de Triomphe in Paris?}

Jesus is our victory! Look at these words one more time to see what he brings...

Isaiah 11:1-12 (text displayed)

1-9: This is coming! Sweeping Justice. Complete Harmony. No more war. No more pain. This is Coming!

10: says the land will be a glorious resting place!

11-12: He brings us back home!

Because Jesus is our victory, we walk victorious. He leads us in everyday triumph. A Christian who walking in fear, cowering back, or anticipating defeat lives contrary to the banner flying over our head!

I believe the two greatest barriers to people joining the movement of Jesus are these:

#1) Unbelief...

- A lack of faith. A failure to believe God is who he says he is.
- A failure to really believe divine power lives within us by the Spirit.
- Would you pray: "O God, enlarge my vision. Help my unbelief. Cut through my skeptical heart. Make me new again."?
- Here's the second...

#2) Unwillingness to Sacrifice...

- Tim Keller says: "There is no more practical index of whether your church has movement dynamics than examining whether you have a culture of sacrifice. If the top leaders of the church are the only ones making all the sacrifices, then you don't have a movement culture."
- Would you pray: "God, my yes is on the table. Whatever you ask me to do: I'm in! Pray. Talk about Jesus. Be part of the next church RHC sends out: I'm in."

Here is the amazing, if not shocking, news about the victory of Jesus.

- He won the victory through defeat. God lifted up the banner of his Son on a Roman cross, crucified unjustly at the hands of evil men.
- But in that moment, John 12:32 says: **"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." (John 12:32)**
- He took the defeat, so you could have his victory. He was lifted up, so we would not be cast down.

Jesus is our Identity. Jesus is our Unity. Jesus is our Victory! Jesus is our Banner!

Conclusion:

I love Psalm 20:5: **"May we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners!" (Psalm 20:5)**

It's happening all over Boston. People are lifting high the name of Jesus and getting more excited about him than the seventh Super Bowl banner coming to Gillette Stadium!

This is our time. This is our moment. Join the movement of Jesus our Banner.

"Jesus our Banner"

Isaiah 11:1-12

INVITE TO SALVATION & MOVEMENT....

I want to lead us in a time of PRAYER. If you bow your head and close your eyes, to focus in on how God is speaking to you.

What banner do you need to lower, so that the name of Jesus can be seen above everything? Do you need to lower the banner of unbelief? Do you need to take down the word: "insecurity"? Is the word "Comfort" flying over your head? Take it down.

Maybe if you've never run to Christ to receive life and joy and ultimate satisfaction, you, like these people who shared their story today and displayed their commitment in baptism, need to say for the first time: Jesus is my identity, he is my victory. He is my banner!

Who would say for the first time: "I am running to him today."? I am lifting the flag of Jesus over my life!
(Would you raise your hand? I want to pray for you.)

Who would say, I'm taking down some other flags, so that I can join the movement of Jesus with everything I've got?

PRAY