

Engaging the World
Part 2
February 25, 2018

I **SLIDE** The Next Step

A) **Acts 2:42 (NIV)** ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

B) One message

- 1) Our lives do not consist of different stories
- 2) Instead, we each have one life story comprised of many episodes
- 3) God's message is the same
- 4) He does not give us a bunch of unrelated, random messages that we can pick and choose which to use
- 5) God has one message, comprised of many individual steps
- 6) **SLIDE 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (NJB)** ¹ Now when I [Paul] came to you, brothers, I did not come with any brilliance of oratory or wise argument to announce to you the mystery of God. ² I was resolved that the only knowledge I would have while I was with you was knowledge of Jesus, and of him as the crucified Christ.
- 7) That is THE message, THE truth
- 8) Recap
 - a) Elijah and Elisha
 - b) God is not finished with me or with any of us
 - c) Time to rebuild
 - d) World without restraint - our mission field
 - e) No more excuses - no one has an excuse for denying God and His word
 - f) Doing what ought not to be done - Romans 1 - what happens when we cast of restraint and ignore God
 - g) Get ready for the ride of our lives because it is our turn
 - h) New year, new mindset
- 9) These are not separate messages

- 10) They form one message that took us - at least me - from hiding in a cave, to strengthening and equipping us for the next step, to opening our eyes and giving us a new mindset to go into the world
- 11) God has been preparing us for this year of great challenges and great promise
- 12) This is why we should do our best to be present every Sunday

C) **SLIDE** The Next Step

- 1) **Psalm 119:105 (NIV)** ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.
- 2) I was asking God about the next step
- 3) I had a vague idea but nothing specific
- 4) Then several events happened this week that shed some light
- 5) Events
 - a) Shawn White and the flag
 - b) Canadian Olympic hockey player
 - c) German figure skater mocked for skating to Schindler's List
 - d) Duchess Kate at BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts)
 - e) School shooting and gun laws
 - f) New Jersey archbishop Cardinal Joseph Tobin
 - i) "Supposed to be airborne in 10 minutes. Nighty-night, baby. I love you."
 - ii) He said it was meant for his sister, who is younger
 - iii) **SLIDE** "I love my sister, but I would never say to her: "Nighty-night, baby," @joshuamercer

D) Revelation from the last tweet

- 1) I love my sister, but I would never say that to her
- 2) Joshua Mercer made himself the standard by which he measured the Cardinal
- 3) Because he would never say anything like that, Mercer felt justified in attacking the cardinal
- 4) Those who criticized Shawn White for stepping on the flag made themselves the standard

- 5) When I judged the Canadian hockey player for taking off her medal, I made myself the standard
- 6) The #MeToo movement made themselves the standard so when Princess Kate wore a different dress, women felt justified attacking another woman
- 7) Colleges establishing safe spaces make themselves the standard so that if anyone goes against their standards, the safe places are not safe from them
- 8) We are living in a time when people and movements are setting their own standards of right and wrong and expect others to adhere to those standards
- 9) Those who do not are attacked, ridiculed, and thrown away like trash
- 10) That led me to our next step

II Welcome to the World

A) **SLIDE** Birth Pangs

- 1) This is not an end-time message; this is a now-time message
- 2) Those examples made me think of Jesus' warnings and Paul's words that we would see a time when people would become lovers of themselves.
- 3) **2 Timothy 3:1-2 (NIV)** ¹ But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves....
- 4) That is what is happening
- 5) **SLIDE** When I love myself, I become the standard
- 6) If you do not measure up to my standards, then you do not love me, so I feel justified in trashing you
- 7) We need to understand these times not so we can sit in church and wait, but so we avoid these same traps
- 8) So we will know how to make THE way in the wilderness

B) **SLIDE** Why this message?

- 1) Because God's warnings are not for the world
- 2) They are for the church

- 3) **Amos 7:7-8 (NIV)** ⁷ This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸ And the LORD asked me, "What do you see, Amos?" "A plumb line," I replied. Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.
- 4) Jesus is that plumb line
- 5) Everything and everyone will be measured by that plumb line to see if it or they are true
- 6) When we replace that plumb line with our standards, the world gets out of whack
- 7) **SLIDE** House
- 8) **SLIDE** The danger lies in the truth that the church can fall prey to the same mistake
 - a) I did it when I first saw that hockey player
 - b) We do it when we believe our church is the standard instead of Jesus
 - c) Without realizing it, we make our spiritual walk the standard and judge others accordingly
 - i) We don't dress that way, so others shouldn't
 - ii) We don't sing those songs; therefore, no one else should
 - iii) My kids don't act that way, so other parents are wrong
 - d) Here is the truth: none of us can live up to each other's standards - nor should we try
 - e) Marriage
 - i) Ted & Betty - 50 years - write down what worked
 - ii) Gary and Donna - the same
 - iii) John and Rachael, Cody and Breanna, Michael and Lori, Doc and Alvera, etc.
 - iv) Every list will be different which means that no matter whom we choose to follow, someone else will judge us
- 9) This does not mean we do not hold each other accountable

10) However, when we correct one another - and we should; we must - we do so according to Jesus and His word, not according to our standards

C) **SLIDE Jude 1:17-19 (NIV)** ¹⁷ But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." ¹⁹ These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

III Baptism

A) Isaiah 42:9 and 43:18-19

II **SLIDE** Christ, the Son of the Living God

A) Isaiah

1) **Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)** ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

III **SLIDE** What we are called to do?

A) What does God call Isaiah and us to do at times like this?

B) **Isaiah 40:1-5 (NIV)** ¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

C) **SLIDE**

D) Christmas

E) **SLIDE Matthew 16:15-18 (NIV)** ¹⁵ "But what about you?" [Jesus] asked. "Who do you say I am?"

1) We answer this with our mouths and with our actions

2) Night in Bethlehem is one to tell others Who and what we believe

A) Isaiah 40

1) **Isaiah 40:1-5 (NIV)** ¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

- 2) **Isaiah 40:6-8 (NIV)** ⁶ A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."
- 3) **Isaiah 40:9-31 (NIV)** ⁹ You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.
- 4) ¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? ¹³ Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? ¹⁴ Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? ¹⁵ Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. ¹⁶ Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. ¹⁷ Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. ¹⁸ To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? ¹⁹ As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. ²⁰ A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple.

5) ²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? ²² He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³ He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ²⁵ "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. ²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"? ²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. ²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

6)

B) **SLIDE** Transition

- 1) The transition from one generation to another took seven years
- 2) During that time, Elijah continued to serve as God's prophet
- 3) During that time, Elisha learned from Elijah by observing and serving this man of God
- 4) **2 Kings 3:11 (NIV)** [When Israel was at war with Moab] ¹¹ ... Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that

we may inquire of the LORD through him?" An officer of the king of Israel answered, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah."

- 5) **SLIDE** Elisha was known as the one who poured water on the hands of Elijah
 - 6) Elisha was not embarrassed of that reputation; he embraced it
 - 7) It spoke of humility, love, servanthood, obedience
 - 8) **1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)** ³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
 - 9) Those seven years were not wasted; they were a time to wait upon the Lord
- C) **SLIDE Isaiah 40:31 (AMP)** But those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] / Will gain new strength *and* renew their power; / They will lift up their wings [and rise up close to God] like eagles [rising toward the sun]; / They will run and not become weary, / They will walk and not grow tired.
- 1) When we began this messages about Elijah and Elisha, I shared that, like Elijah, I had run to that cave
 - 2) I felt that my time was over and that I was alone
 - 3) The best course was for me to step aside
 - 4) My control had gotten in the way, and I needed to step aside so someone else could fix things
 - 5) Well, I was wrong
 - 6) However, I still find myself slipping into old mindsets
 - 7) We have been on these messages for six months
 - 8) It does not seem much has changed so I find myself wanting to help Jesus to make something happen
 - 9) I need to try more so you will not get discouraged
 - 10) When I update the church app, we have very little under the Events tab while other churches are doing one thing after another
 - 11) I feel we are falling behind, missing God
 - 12) Fortunately, I know that is the wrong attitude and approach

- 13) Six months to God is a blink of an eye
- 14) We are in that waiting upon the Lord stage so He can renew our strength and power
- 15) We are learning to walk, run, and fly like never before
- 16) God does not need our help; He needs our participation

STOP

II Meanwhile, while Elijah and Elisha are getting to know each other....

- A) **1 Kings 20:13-14 (NIV)** ¹³ Meanwhile a prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and announced, "This is what the LORD says: 'Do you see this vast army? I will give it into your hand today, and then you will know that I am the LORD.'" ¹⁴ "But who will do this?" asked Ahab. The prophet replied, "This is what the LORD says: 'The young officers of the provincial commanders will do it.'" "And who will start the battle?" he asked. The prophet answered, "You will."
- B) Despite Israel's disobedience and her leaders' hardness toward God, God does not abandon them. When Israel faced this enemy, God came to their aid, not because they deserved it but because He is faithful.
- C) God tells Ahab the young officers will fight. God may be using the young officers to show that they need God. Also, it shows that the generations had to learn to fight together. There was no room for competition when they faced an enemy.
- D) Also, despite Ahab and Jezebel's attempts to wipe out God's prophets, they were not successful. When the situation became difficult, they listened to God's prophet, and that brought them victory.
- E) Finally, we see a pattern whenever Israel met an enemy. God gave them instructions. Today, we want to separate our military from God. Today, we face numerous enemies that want to destroy us, and we have leaders who feel we do not need God. Thank God for His faithfulness.

- F) Despite all that Ahab has done against God, God still uses him. One would expect God to remove Ahab and put in a more righteous king. Yet, that is not God's plan. God will use Ahab, a man who has denied God, to fulfill His purpose.
- G) We should not be surprised at whom God chooses to use. He even chooses to use me.
- H) Because we do not see as God sees, it is difficult for us to know whom God will use.

I **SLIDE** Coalgate

A) Our small town

- 1) Jed and Jesse
- 2) Ridge and his wife
- 3) Tommy and Katie
- 4) Clayton and Tina
- 5) Rhett
- 6) Bridgette Delsigne
- 7) Brandon and Tonya Long
- 8) Major Brandon and Britton Young
- 9) **SLIDE** Makaela Barnes-Elkins