

Dismiss kids. Welcome guests (connect card)

- 1) Groups Celebrate! 181 total
- 2) NEXT TODAY 12:00-12:45
- 3) Covenant Class 9/22 @ 12:30-3:30p. Sign up in the lobby at the Connections Center!
- 4) Mobile Meal Market - partnership effort at City Hall on 9/28 between RHC, the City of Medford, the Malden Y, and the Greater Boston Food Bank on 9/28! Volunteer Opportunities (energy!) available from 9a-2p. Sign up for a portion of that time at the Connections Center in the lobby.

Introduction: Pg. 814.

“City Vision.”
Matthew 9:35-38

Today I want to talk to you about what it looks like to live with a vision for our City. Our starting point will not be a dozen stats about Boston or an extensive description of what makes Boston, Boston. We already know why this is the greatest city on the planet!

Our starting point is the heart of God! Our starting point begins with the question: What is Jesus' vision for our city?

I believe that answer is found in the Bible's most famous prayer:.

“Our **Father** in heaven, hallowed be your name. **Your kingdom come, your will be done, (on earth) in Boston as it is in heaven.**

Jesus' vision is for nothing less than heaven touching earth. The kingdom of God hitting the ground, changing our lives and our city in which

Isn't it amazing to consider: wherever God places you, wherever your feet touch the earth, God desires for the realities of heaven to be experienced right there?

This was the life of Jesus Christ. Whatever he did, wherever he went, the life heaven showed up and shined through it all!

That's why our city vision flows from Jesus kingdom vision.

We see this very clearly in **Matthew 9:35-38**

Jesus mission throughout the cities and villages of Galilee (in Northeastern Israel) show us three ways we can fulfill his vision our city.

Love the whole person, not part of them.
Serve by Seeing - AND
Point to the not yet, now!

1. Love the whole person, not part of them. (9:35)

What we see in Jesus: Word & Deed

- In verse 35, Matthew, one of Jesus' most unlikely disciples (tax collector), tells us Jesus made it his mission to systematically visit all the cities and villages in Galilee.
 - Josephus, a famous Jewish historian, tells us this would have included about 200 cities and villages scattered across an area stretching 40 miles wide (Lawrence to Quincy) and 70 miles long (half of the length of Massachusetts).
- One by one, as he visited city after city, village after village, his mission can be summarized with a two-fold description: WORDS & DEEDS.

Words:

- Jesus taught from the OT Scriptures in their synagogues, places of instruction and worship.
- Proclaiming: the gospel of the kingdom. "To proclaim" is to make a public announcement where many people can hear.
- But he didn't stop with words...

Deeds:

- Do the work of the kingdom - "healing every disease and every affliction."
- This was Jesus' pattern from the beginning of his public ministry.

Words and Deeds...

- "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt. 4:17)
- (4:23) "teaching...proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people."

Words of light. Deeds of light.

Do you see what's going on here?

- Jesus served us at our point deepest spiritual need with WORDS: God wants a relationship with you. Turn back to him!
- Jesus also cared for our physical, emotional, and relational needs with his ACTIONS.
- The gospel of the kingdom reveals a KING who cares for us in all of our brokenness. He offers holistic salvation for our holistic problems.
- In fact, Jesus often moved from the physical needs to spiritual needs.
 - Feed thousands. I am the Bread of Life
 - Sight to the Blind. I am the Light of the World.
 - Raised the dead. I am the Resurrection and the Life.

T: Jesus proclaimed the kingdom with words and embodied it in his actions. What about us?

What we see in Us: Word & Deed

The great danger is to bend toward one end of the spectrum while neglecting the other.

- Word people can drop truth bombs without considering the person.
 - For example, some evangelists I've hung with... walk up to someone and just start talking. I'm all about telling people about Jesus, anytime, anywhere, but let's treat people like people. :) Start with their name!
- Deed people can do 1000 great things but never give Jesus any credit!!
 - There are two problems with the quote attributed to Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel. Use words when necessary." - Assisi
 - 1) There is no evidence he said.
 - 2) It's not true. You can't preach without words.
- Words without Deeds is hypocrisy. Deeds without words is insincerity.
- We avoid being word people or deed people by being JESUS PEOPLE.

It's always WORDS & DEEDS, DEEDS & WORDS. There is no formulaic order. Here's why? Sometimes deeds validate our words. Sometimes, they pave the way.

T: Our city vision loves the whole person, not part of them. #2

2. Serve by seeing. (9:36)

The Compassion of Jesus - We see the compassion of Jesus in verse 36.

Jesus had a heart that felt others' pain, more than just fleeting emotion.

- To have compassion means to "suffer with" (Latin). Here, it literally means to be "moved in his guts," stirred down deep, moved at our emotional core.
- Compassion cuts deep enough to ignite action!
 - I love how often Jesus not only spent time with, but touched the broken, the neglected, the minority, the outcast, the lepers.
 - Jesus did not just wave at people - "Hey, God bless you. I'm praying for you." He served them. He got proximate. He ran toward the tension.

Jesus uses the imagery of a sheep, because sheep are defenseless and vulnerable animals.

- Look at these two words: harassed and helpless.
 - Harassed gives the picture of a sheep who has been attacked or wounded in the dangerous countryside.
 - Helpless means to be "cast down," lying on the ground without the ability to carry on.
- This is how you may feel today. Jesus cares. Come to him, today!
- Jesus is saying: we *all* need help.
- He is also saying, "I am your help. I am the Good Shepherd." Where your leaders have neglected you, I won't! I am the faithful shepherd promised in Ezekiel 34 (go check it for a deeper study).

Seeing - You say, "Tanner, I want to be moved. I want to serve." Serving begins with seeing.

When you see needs, do you respond with apathy or action?

Let this sink in...

- Over 57,750 people live in Medford.
- When you add the cities bordering Medford (Everett, Malden, Stoneham, Winchester, Arlington, and Somerville) that number rises to

332,850!!

- That doesn't include many of the cities where you live... Boston, Cambridge, Wakefield, Woburn, we could go on...
- Guess how many of those people need our compassion and mercy? 332,850! But not in the same way.
- Individuals are suffering from anxiety, sickness, loneliness, and addiction.
- People suffering from unemployment. I'm talking about the struggle to put food on the table, let alone pay rent.
- People new to America who need the mercy of an ESL class.
- Victims of abuse and racism are all around us.
- There are needs at a city-wide level that need our attention and action:
 - I hope you'll show up at the Mobile Food Market on the 29th.

- Maybe you'll enter Conversations on Affordable Housing.
- OR get involved like so many in our church by taking classes to explore being Foster Parents.
- OR volunteer with the Medford Youth Center to mentor or counsel kids who are seeing depression rates climb at historic levels.
- Opportunities abound. Just open your eyes where your feet touch the ground!! Oh God, give us eyes that see as you see.
- We can't do everything for everyone, but we can do something for someone.

Maybe God brought you to Boston or is keeping you in Boston, not because Boston is your ticket to a better life, because Boston is the place where you can make the lives of such a diverse people better!

T: And here's what I love... serving breaks down barriers. It's hard to hate - love. But it does something even more. When we love the whole person and serve by seeing, we...

3. Point to the not yet, NOW! (9:37-38)

Read 37-38

The Now & Not Yet Reality of the Kingdom

As we've seen, Jesus came to proclaim and embody the kingdom. Though his kingdom will come in its fullness when he returns to earth, it is already here.

- "The kingdom is at hand." (Matthew 4:17)
- This is "the year of the Lord's favor." (Lk 4:19).
- These are the last days, the age of the Spirit, when God is pouring out his presence and power on his sons and daughters (Acts 2:17)

As George Eldon Ladd, in his book *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, famously said: the kingdom of God is already, and not yet. It is NOW and NOT YET.

This summer God spoke to me (through prayer, Scripture, and the voice of his Spirit) a very convicting truth: so often I expect great things for what is to come way out there, but I fail to live with great expectation for today. The kingdom is NOW.

Then I read these word that hit me like a bolt of light:

Has the realization gripped you that the very life of heaven itself dwells within you here and now? Did you ever know that? I am afraid we live most of our life in terms of promise. . . . Our Gospel is a Gospel of glorious promise and hope. Yes, the best, the glorious best, is yet to be. And yet . . . **The future has already begun. The Age to Come has reached into This Age; the Kingdom of God has come unto you. The eternal life which belongs to tomorrow is here today. . . ., in part but in reality.**

This is what eternal life means. This is what it means to be saved. It means to go about every day in the present evil Age living the life of heaven. It means that every local fellowship of God's people who have shared this life should live together and worship and serve together as those who enjoy a foretaste of heaven here on earth. . . . This is the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The now of the kingdom moves us to action!

In verses 37 and 38, Jesus, in the midst of his kingdom work, speaks to the NOW of his kingdom.

"The harvest IS plentiful"

- People ready to move into the kingdom. Someone needs to show them the way.
- Far too many days of my life, I live like this says: “The harvest *might be* plentiful. The harvest, *gee, I hope it’s* plentiful. The harvest is plentiful *over there, God, where they are serving you (with more resources and a cooler pastor), but not where you’ve placed me.*”

Maybe the laborers are few, because we don’t really believe what he says.

- “The harvest IS plentiful!” “It IS!”
- **“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.” - Jesus (John 4:35)**

The truth of 37 demands the action of 38

- Therefore... (because of this, now do this...). PRAY for more people to hit the field: to love the whole person, to see and serve!
- “Pray earnestly.” Pray with conviction and passion! Pray with urgency. The word can be translated “beg.” (It’s okay to get loud when you pray). Why? The work and the manifestation of the kingdom is NOW. The time is NOW.
- And we pray with confidence, because no one is more interested in seeing people come into the kingdom, than God! He is the Lord of the Harvest.
- God is the GREAT SENDER. He has a mission for each one of us wherever he places us, be it here or distant lands! We can’t wait to send more people out to start new churches! It will happen. Get ready!

The now points to the not yet.

As he sends us to love people in his name, here is the powerful reality: All we do in the now points to the not yet.

- Every act of service in this city shows a better city is coming!
 - When we feed someone a meal, we point to a place where no one will hunger or thirst.
 - When we bandage a wound, or pray over someone and God heals them on the spot, we point to the coming kingdom of God where sickness is not welcomed!
 - When we love our neighbor, we tell the story of a better city where hate cannot be found.
- That’s why “signs and wonders” are called signs. No one stares at signs. Signs point beyond themselves to a greater reality. The signs and deeds of the kingdom show point us to the King and his kingdom, so that we’ll be in awe of him!
- Every good deed in the now says: You see this?! JUST WAIT.
 - No more sickness. No more sorrow. No more pain.
 - No more depression. No more death!
- The resurrection of Jesus proves it’s coming!

Conclusion:

The future has already begun. The Age to Come has reached into this Age. The kingdom of God has come, in part, but in reality.

We see a transformed Boston. We see a new New England. And NOW, we walk in his authority!

Where will you allow God to take you tomorrow in light of this city vision?

The harvest IS plentiful. The laborers are few. Let’s change that at Redemption Hill Church.

PRAY. (Music team come on Prayer)