

## Celebration Sunday Colossians 4:5-6

The grace of God is powerful. Much like strong seasoning, it only takes a little bit to influence an entire culture. A few faithful followers of Jesus can make a big impact on the world around them. How, then, can we make the most of every opportunity to reflect and share the good news of Jesus Christ?

### **What is Every Knee about:**

#### **Helping people find and follow Jesus**

- Not really about buildings or budgets – just tools to help us do what really matters
- What really matters = making disciples of Jesus
- The way the church makes disciples is through YOU
  - o not through programs... through people like you who reach others who don't yet know

**So what we want to talk about this morning: How can each of us use the opportunities we have this summer to help people find and follow Jesus?**

#### **I'll be honest: summer scares me!**

- 3 months with kids at home, no schedule, can't send them outside because it's so HOT
- ~ 100 degrees yesterday and it's just the first week of June

As a parent I am overwhelmed when I think about a whole summer stretching out in front of me

**So my goal: NOT to add *another* thing you have to do this summer when just trying to survive!**

#### **My goal: give you a word-picture to inspire you to redeem this stressful time for eternal good**

- You'll already be around your kids, neighbors, coworkers, family... a LOT
- How can you redeem that time and make it count for eternity?

**Here's the word-picture to inspire you... it's not mine, it's Paul's**

#### **Read Col 4:5-6**

#### **Paul challenges us to "make the most of every opportunity"**

- lit: "redeem the time"
- we know summer's going to be challenging, hot, and stressful
- but we can use this time for something that really matters – that really lasts

#### **How? By being SALT – there's your word-picture – be seasoning!**

- Think about how seasoning works in a dish – a little goes a long way
- My mom's chicken and dumplings – my favorite dish of hers
- Last ingredient: a few drops of Louisiana Hot Sauce – completely transforms it!
  - o Like chicken and dumplings are just carriers for the hot sauce
  - o Remarkable: think about the relative volume... almost zero yet flavors whole dish
- Paul uses that metaphor to inspire us to flavor the lives of others with the grace of Jesus
  - o Sadly for people living in Paul's day, they had not yet invented hot sauce
  - o Salt was one of the few things they had to flavor a dish
  - o But just like hot sauce – it only takes a little

- Even if you're only person in a group being gracious... you can still make huge difference
  - o A little grace goes a long way!
- So in all you do this summer, be salt
  - o season conversations and relationships with grace, hope, peace, truth
  - o you can make a difference in someone's life that lasts forever

### **E.g. Swim-team practice this week**

- I don't want to go there! I don't get to go in the pool! I'll sweat whole time!
- But this verse challenges me:
  - o instead of focusing on how much I hate the sun in Texas
  - o focus on how I can be salt to other parents braving the heat
- Pray on the way:
  - o "God, help me to have a good attitude and use this time to flavor someone's life with your grace. Please help me to be intentional and not just stare at my phone!"

### **Two practical steps to help us redeem the time this summer:**

#### **1) Memorize these verses with me**

- Memorization helps you internalize God's Word – takes it from your eyes to your heart
- Reminds and inspires you to be that flavor of grace to others

#### **2) Get equipped**

- "I'd love to be a flavoring of grace to others, but I don't know how. I don't feel ready."
- That's where we come in – we're here to help you be salt to others
- Chris McGuffy, our Outreach Pastor, is especially dedicated to equipping you to reach others
- I've asked Guff to walk you through opportunities to be equipped to help people find and follow Jesus in your neighborhood, your community, your nation, and your world.

### **EK has been all about expanding our opportunity to do what Guff just talked about**

- in more neighborhoods and in more cities in the US and around the world

### **I want to share with you how the EK initiative has gone so far. What are the results?**

- **If you recall, our primary goal was 100% engagement**
  - o Each of us, and all of us together, experiencing the joy of generously giving all that we have and all that we are to Jesus
  - o **Why we're most encouraged by this number: # first time givers = 800**
  - o 800 brothers and sisters who were previously not financially engaged in what God is doing through our church, but who now are engaged
- **Another exciting #: our JH & HS students committed \$58,400 to our EK initiative**
- **Among our adults who were already giving: many doubled or tripled their giving**
- **So what's the total #... that's what we all want to know?**
  - o In a normal 2-year period we would receive **\$11-12M** by the grace of God
  - o Through EK commitments, that **# has increased to \$22M** committed over next 2 years
  - o That's \$10M more than we would have expected over next 2 years
- **You may remember our monetary goal = \$32M**
  - o to completely pay off Creekside and begin new local, national, int'l plants
  - o \$22M puts us way down that path
  - o Practically speaking, we may not be able to pay off Creekside as quickly as we hoped
  - o But we do expect to pay it off quickly
  - o In fact, we have always paid off any borrowed money earlier than the banks expected
  - o Also, we will have to prioritize our church-planting goals – can't do all immediately

- The elders will be praying, thinking, and planning this year to discern what to do first
- Finally, remember, this is a two-year goal... we're just getting started
- We're still receiving commitment cards... particularly from former students
  - excited to hear what God is doing through Grace and want to be part
  - so we expect this number to keep growing
- **So those are the numbers... now for some stories!**
  - Here are interviews we captured back on Commitment Sunday
- After we watch the testimonies, we will take our offering
  - This is the beginning of our Every Knee giving which will continue over next 2 years
  - We will continue in worship during and after the offertory in celebration of all God has done and is going to do!