

Stepping Off the Moving Walkway
Breaking Through Series Week 2
Acts 10
February 28, 2016

Welcome/intro/vision

Before jump in: baptism on Easter—super excited to be offering this. Please do let me know if you or your kid is ready for baptism, going to be a great celebration Easter Sunday!

If you're a guest with us, this is our second week in our Breaking Through series, looking at the New Testament book of Acts

In the beginning of the book of Acts Jesus a job to do:

“you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ***-Acts 1:8***

And in order to do this job and be on this mission it was going to require that they break through barriers that had separated people from God and from each other for centuries

whether it's race or class or men or women or location and where we live within that location

For 5,000 years of human history, there is not one culture, not one people who group

that has not had tremendous barriers between people along some of these fault lines

And these barriers have caused untold misery and destruction and pain for people in every culture ever

This is, quite frankly, one of the single greatest, constant, intractable problems for all humanity for all time

including here in our country

Here at Chatham Community Church, we're taking all sorts of new risks in this next season as a church

because we believe that we're participating in this same mission and assignment

And in order for us to BE Chatham Community Church—a church for the whole community and not just a subset of it,

we're going to have to break through some of the same kinds of barriers that the early church had to their mission

So together, what we're going to do in these next couple weeks is see if we can break through right here in our little community, in our little part of the world

To see if we can solve a problem that millions of people before us have been unable to solve. No big deal, right? You up for that?

If you missed last week, go on-line and watch or listen to the kick-off to this series, because last week we talked about this very first, mission-critical step to breaking through barriers

Which is listening—listening and not getting defensive, or edgy or blaming someone else or ignoring the problem altogether

is what the apostles do so well in the first internal challenge that the church faces, which just so happens to be along racial and ethnic lines

If we will not listen to people who are different from us, we will never, ever, ever break through the barriers that have afflicted human beings for centuries

And we talked last week about how the cross and empty tomb of Jesus brings a spiritual power to this problem that can actually bring healing, and empower us to listen even when our tendency might be to shut down and disengage.

This week, we're going to skip a bit in the story of Acts, but what happens in the part that we're skipping is very important so let me sum it up quickly.

Last week they chose 7 Greek guys to deal with the problem of Greek widows being overlooked in the food distribution—Opah!

One of those guys was Stephen, and he turns out to be not only good at organizing food distribution, he turns out to be a spectacular and gifted teacher

He ends up arrested by the religious authorities and at his trial we get the longest single recorded sermon in the whole book of Acts.

And at the end of his brilliance, here's what he gets for it: he gets dragged outside the city gates and he gets stoned to death.

Not a pleasant way to die!

And here's what Luke, the author of Acts, tells us about what happens next:

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.
-Acts 8:1

Now, if we've been paying attention, where did the words, Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria all appear in that order earlier in the book of Acts?

At the very beginning! This is exactly what Jesus has commanded his followers to do from the start!!

The church has been hanging out in Jerusalem and we don't know how long they've been there, but it's likely been a couple of years by this point

And two things are happening: 1. They're growing! The church has grown by leaps and bounds by all accounts in Acts

And 2. They're comfortable.

And when really good things are happening right where you are

AND when you're comfortable right where you are, where those good things are happening

How easy is it for you to get up and move from that place into mission? Not very.

And so this awful persecution, which results in Stephen's horrific death

and which results in a great many others being persecuted and likely others martyred in and around Jerusalem

Is actually used by God and redeemed by God to propel his church into the mission that he has called them into

And the first take-home this morning that some of us need to hear is this: ***not all set-backs are total losses.***

They're hard, difficult, painful, but not every set-back is a total loss; sometimes God is redeeming difficult stuff to work out his purposes in our lives

AND, secondly, ***sometimes crisis is required to move us into God's mission and purposes***

Sometimes the only way that God can get us to move from a place where we're maybe overly comfortable and into HIS mission and his purposes for us

Is to use a crisis to do so

So the people are scattered all throughout Judea and Samaria, the apostles stay in Jerusalem

But as drop into our passage for today, Peter is traveling around visiting various communities of Christians and encouraging and teaching and all that kind of good stuff

And in Acts 10, we get what is arguably the most important event for the mission of the church to move forward beyond the Jewish people.

Because it's easy it is for the early church, just like it is for all of us, to get comfortable with what's familiar

But in Acts 10, we get the birth of the mission to people who are not Jewish.

This passage is so important to understanding the dynamics around breaking through that here's what we're going to do

there's two key people here in this story, Peter, an key disciple of Jesus and the head of the early church
and a man named Cornelius who's an officer in the Roman army

This week, we're going to read through this story focusing on Peter and his role and what God's doing in him.

And next week we're going to read this story again and focus on Cornelius and what God's doing in him

God's doing a work in BOTH of these people in order to BREAK THROUGH barriers that have divided Jews and Gentiles for centuries, and we're going to learn from both sides what it takes to have a genuine breaking through experience

Acts 10, starting in verse 1, here's this great story:

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ² He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

³ One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" ⁴ Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

There's a whole lot of cities in these passages, so here's a quick look at a map to get everyone situated:

Jerusalem where this party started, Judea is the surrounding area, Samaria is a little further north and the Jews and the Samaritans really DON'T like each other, a long history of racial and religious differences and animosity

That's why when Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan, when he makes the Samaritan the good guy it's really shocking

So Cornelius is here in Caesarea and he gets touched by an angel and told to send for Peter who's down here in Joppa, staying with Simon the tanner

Since we're focusing on Peter here this week, a couple things about his location

First, obviously he's fairly far away from Jerusalem
again likely checking in on the various Christian communities that are springing up as Christians scatter all across the region

Secondly, he's staying with Simon the tanner. If you're a tanner, it means you handle and deal with dead animals. And it's most likely that his shop was right there in his house!

And if you're a good Jew, especially a good Jewish teacher, you're not supposed to be in a house where dead animals are strewn all about
this is an unclean house, or sometimes in the Bible you'll see the phrase ceremonially unclean

It just means that something that they consider to be unclean is happening in that place and they supposed to avoid it at all costs

How many of you who are married remember the first major holiday you spent with your in-laws family? It was weird, wasn't it? You felt a little displaced!

Maybe you wondered if you really wanted to spend the rest of your life doing holidays with these people!

Well Peter's staying there at this unclean place. And we're not exactly sure why, but for sure he's likely feeling that this is a little weird, he's a little displaced.

Finally, let's note the place where Peter is staying: he's staying in Joppa.

Sunday school kids, time to shine—if you grew up in Sunday school, you heard a great story about a prophet who ran away from God and Joppa was a part of it, do you remember?

Jonah!

If you don't know the story, here's how it goes:

Many, many many years before this story, Jonah was sent by God from Israel to speak to the people of Nineveh who were Israel's historical enemies and to call them to repentance, to call them to God

Jonah doesn't want to go to Nineveh, they're not Jews, they're the enemy, he hates them and so he runs to JOPPA to get on board a boat to run in the OPPOSITE direction of Nineveh!

THAT'S where Peter is staying when he's going to get this call from God to go to this ROMAN officer, the ENEMY of the Jews, a non-Jewish man named Cornelius to tell him God's message.

Oh, and Peter's original name before Jesus called him was Simon son of...JONAH!

So the place that was famous for the place where Jonah RAN AWAY from God's call on his life to be a missionary to the Gentiles

is the place where Peter, who's father was named Jonah, is going to get that exact same call & he's going to have to decide if he's going to do what Jonah did and run AWAY from that call

or if this is going to be the redemption of Jonah in the Biblical story

I believe WE have a parallel situation here in Chatham, North Carolina. I don't know all the super-specific details about what life was like here in Chatham a hundred years ago or so

But likely there were people 100 years ago who looked like most of us, who worshipped in churches on Sunday mornings and then brutally oppressed people the rest of the week

And this morning, right here, right now, we have a choice to make, just like Peter at Joppa

will we be a part of writing a new story, a redeemed story, in place of the old story that was here

That's the choice before us, just like it was before Peter.

Now what's going to happen is that Peter, much like Jonah, is going to go through a process where initially he's very resistant to this call

And we're going to track Peter's journey by these emphatic statements that punctuates his journey to embracing what God wants to do in him and through him

And if you're not familiar with Scripture, you might not know that Peter is famously emphatic!

So let's watch Peter's journey and track it by highlighting these emphatic statements that Peter's going to Peter's going to make that will punctuate this story

Let's pick up our story:

⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." 14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." [THERE'S PETER'S STARTING POINT! NO WAY I'M DOING SOMETHING LIKE THIS, GOD! THIS IS WHERE MOST OF US START WHEN GOD CALLS US TO CROSS A BARRIER.]

[Here we're seeing Peter bumping up against these food laws and dietary restrictions that were a part of the Old Testament commands to make the people of Israel a distinctive people—talk more in a minute]

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." 16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. [If you're not familiar with Peter, he's like a lot of us, it takes him 3 times to get the important things!]

17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ... 19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.

20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." 21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" [HERE'S PETER'S SECOND STATEMENT—HE'S MOVED FROM CLOSED OFF TO CAUTIOUSLY OPEN. AND GIVE PETER CREDIT, HE'S MOVED FROM CLOSED OFF TO AT LEAST OPEN IN JUST THE SPAN OF A FEW MINUTES!]

22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Last Sunday after we kicked off this series

someone came to me and told me briefly about how her parents had taught her some particular things along the lines of race

And they were generally Godly and wise people, but the things they taught her did not sit well with her—and when she asked why as a kid they just sort of said she would understand later

And she told me that as she got into her 20's and engaged her faith as an adult that she studied at the Scriptures and realized the things that she had been taught simply were not true, not faithful, and that she had to reject it.

She had to deliberately put aside what she had been taught growing up and embrace something new from the Lord that was more faithful, and more true

Peter here is not just having to sift through what his parents taught him, he's having to sift through thousands of years of what his people have believed and done

And he's having to look at some passages in the Scriptures that command Peter to NOT eat certain types of foods and decide what to do with them

One of the tricks of all of this was that these dietary commands were supposed to be part of a larger constellation of behaviors that were supposed to bear witness to the other nations about the greatness of their God

They didn't sacrifice their sons and daughters to their God. That was different. That was a better way to live than what the other nations and their gods demanded

Their corporate life was going to be 10-commandment distinctive:
they didn't lie to each other, didn't steal from each other, there was real justice and real care for the people who were poorer in their community
And there were food distinctives

All of this was supposed to be a way to intrigue and invite the other nations to come and see the better way of life under the God of the Scriptures than it was under the oppression of other false gods

ALL of this was supposed to be a way to bridge outsiders INTO the corporate life of Israel and the worship of their God!

But what did it turn into? Another barrier, another way to separate, more fault lines, more pride and self-determination and we're in and you're out

It's not just the Jews who fall prey to this, is it? Christians do this all the time.

Ever seen someone beat someone else up with the rules of the Scriptures? They use the good rules of the Bible to prop themselves up on a pedestal and give them a stick to beat someone else up with

Rather than use them as an invitation to meet the God of the universe by?

Some of you left church for a LONG time and stayed away from a long time because there always seemed to be an in-group who used the rules to keep everyone else out
and so eventually you sort of went along with them and agreed it was better for you to be out than to try to make your way in!

So here's what's happened with these dietary restrictions and the law in general that Peter is participating in because he grew up with these same rules

They're taking LEGITIMATE practices and put them to use in ways that builds more barriers between them and their neighbors that they're supposed to be a blessing to

This was happening in Peter's time with his culture, this happens to Christians in our culture, this happens with almost all people in every culture

We take legitimate practices and employ them in ways that contributes to the problems of division and barriers between us and other people
Sometimes without even realizing it!

Let's take a few examples: wanting your kids to have the best education possible is a great and very legitimate thing.

However, if our choices for education for our kids means that they're cut off and cut off as a family from people who are different from us, economically and/or racially, that's a problem.

The answer isn't necessarily to change what school your kids go to. That's a completely legitimate and good thing, wanting a great education for your kids is a great thing!

But it might mean that we're intentional then about finding other ways to make sure that we don't get totally insulated and isolated from people who are different from us!

We'll have to be deliberate then about finding other points of contact, other ways to break through the barriers between people that God has called us to break through

Let's look at the other end of the life-spectrum—retirement. Some of us have worked super-hard, saved up a ton of money, and now you can live wherever you want!

Totally legitimate! But just realize that all of us self-select to be with people who are like us

And if we're going to be a part of God's mission to bring restoration across all sorts of fault lines and across all these barriers that plague us
then we're going to have to find ways to move in different circles or connect in other ways

Last week we said that **listening was** the first critical step to breaking through barriers that have plagued humanity since the beginning of time.

If that's step one, then **this is step 2: be aware of our practices (even very legitimate ones) that reinforce barriers between us and other people—even accidentally**

Like we said earlier, every culture for 5,000 years of human history has had these barriers between people

And so these barriers have gotten so deeply woven into just about every culture that our whole system and all our structures get affected by it

division is woven into where people live and who gets to go to what school and what kinds of jobs go to which kinds of people

Which means that all of us are on these moving walkways—ever been on a moving walkway? You don't have to do anything, you just get on it and it takes you automatically in a specific direction

All of us are on these moving walkways in our culture that will, if we don't do anything intentional about it, will sort us out by all the usual divisive categories

We're all on these moving walkways, which means that we don't have to be actively hating or against ANYONE to end up participating in a system that will continue to reinforce our divisions and fault lines between people groups

And what it means is that if we are hearing the call of Jesus to be on his mission to break through the barriers between people groups

we're going to have to be INTENTIONAL about getting OFF this moving walkway SOMEWHERE, at some point, in some arena in our lives

And so another way for us to talk about our question is simply **“which moving walkways are you on and how is it reinforcing these barriers between you and other people?”**

And perhaps the follow-up question, which Peter is wrestling with right here, is **“where do you need to take intentional steps to get off at least one of your moving walkways and go in a different direction?”**

Let me tell you about the moving walk way that I'm on—in case you didn't notice, I'm a white religious guy.

Steve Tamayo, my wonderful colleague is half-Cuban and we regularly have conversations about how race and culture shape how we do things around here

Which are great conversations and I'm super-grateful for that.

Michelle Stith, our worship leader, is half Puerto Rican, we talk about how culture shapes our worship here regularly as well.

But outside of our own church environment, my easiest and most natural professional connections are nearly all white: local or far off

If I did nothing intentional at all, it would be very easy for me to get on the moving walk way of white religious professional and interact solely with other white religious professionals

About a year ago, I was introduced to an African-American pastor, Rev. Paul McAllister who serves at Pittsboro Church of God, which is a predominantly African-American church

We met at a coffee shop, introduced by a mutual friend, it's the only time I've ever seen him there

Over the course of several months we were very intentional about getting together, building a relationship—we kept looking for opportunities to connect in the midst of very busy schedules

One Sunday I was off here, I went there and worshipped with his community, he welcomed me warmly and invited me to pray a blessing at the end of the service, it was wonderful

I had a sense that I was participating in the kind of breaking through barriers that we're talking about here.

But over the past few months as we've been busy here and as he's been busy, we've been less intentional. I'm back on the moving walkway, so we haven't seen each other at all

The moving walk way that I'm on will keep me in primarily white religious guy circles for as long as I do absolutely nothing about it

THEREFORE, in order for me to participate in the breaking through experience I have to recognize that I'm on a moving walkway that he and I both inherited and find some ways of going in the opposite direction

There is hundreds of sad years of history that have divided the church along racial lines

and if I'm going to be an honest student of my church history I have to own that much of that division along racial lines happened more on account of people who looked much more like me than those who looked like Rev. McCallister

And so in order to have a genuine breakthrough experience I have to be able to recognize and name the various moving walkways that I'm on

Religious white guy isn't the only moving walk way that I'm on. There's also the neighborhood I live in, the extra-curriculars that we tend to do as a family—all of that puts me on a moving walkway that will separate me from others who are different from me

And so I have to name those and honestly, it's nearly impossible to get off of all of them, but in order to participate in God's breaking through assignment, I'm going to have to get off at least one or two of them and go the opposite direction.

Peter is on the Jewish teacher moving walkway. And left to his own devices, Peter will not just drift into hanging out with Gentiles

And so here with this vision, Peter's being called to step off the moving walkway that has over 2,000 years of momentum that would push him in a direction that has led to more barriers and obstacles

And God wants him to step off that way of thinking and move in a very different direction

Here's how the story unfolds from here:

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along.²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."²⁷ While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.

²⁸ He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

Now this is not exactly the best start for Peter—he essentially says to them, “Look, if it was up to me, I wouldn’t be here with you stinky people. But God said I had to come. So whaddya want??”

Peter, did not miss his calling as a politician, not going to win friends and influence people with this remark!

Here's how Cornelius responds to his rather rude houseguest:

³⁰ Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. [good of Cornelius to bring that part in—telling an apostle that you got a seal of approval from an angel is very helpful!]

32 Send to Joppa is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’ 33 So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

34 Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right...”

Do you remember any significant “aha’s” in your life?

I remember first time I thought I might like a girl in late elementary school. That was a weird aha!

Peter here has a major, memorable aha moment: ***“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right...”***

This goes against so much of how’s he’s conceptualized God and how his culture has conceptualized God for centuries, that it’s almost impossible to overstate what Peter says here.

He’s been called to take a step of faith that was displacing and difficult. He then SAYS something he never in a million years would have said apart from divine intervention

If you’ve thought of yourself as the chosen people for thousands of years, it’s hard to realize that you’re not chosen to be better than everyone else but rather to be a BLESSING to everyone else

It’s nearly impossible to then say what Peter says here. Unless God does something pretty radical to turn this whole thing on its head and to turn you on your head

So Peter here SAYS something that’s totally radical but at the end of the story, he DOES something that cements all of this

At this point in the story Peter starts to share the story of what Jesus has done, very similar to the presentation he’s given in other places in Acts

And here’s what happens:

44 ...While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Peter declares that God doesn't show favoritism, which was a radical thing for him to say.

But then God proves it to him without a doubt by pouring the same Spirit on these Gentiles that he had poured out on the Jewish believers earlier in Acts 2

And then Peter puts his money where his mouth is by declaring that these people should all be baptized, sealing the deal

And he will spend much of the rest of the book of Acts defending all of what he has done here to his fellow Jews who will all have to have the same conversion experience that Peter goes through here

[PETER'S JOURNEY OFF THE MOVING WALKWAY] He has gotten off the moving walk-way that would have kept him out of God's mission

and instead has moved in a radically different direction that has brought him right into the heart of God's mission

He's gone from **"Surely not, Lord!"** To **"I'm the one you're looking for."** To **"God told me, so I came"** to **"I now realize that God does not show favoritism"** to **"Baptize these people"**

And 2,000 years later, you and I are here worshipping this Jesus, knowing his grace and mercy and favor and forgiveness and love and power

And we're called to participate in this same mission—to break through barriers between people

We said last week that **step one was to listen**

Now step two is to **name the moving walkways that we're on** that if we stay on them will continue to participate and reinforce the divides between people

Again, there's a LOT of these: schools our kids go to, neighborhoods we live in, clubs and organizations we participate in

None of them are maybe intentionally racist or discriminating, everyone in theory is invited to participate or be a part of it

but the reality is that these barriers are so woven into our culture that we don't have to be actively trying to discriminate—our culture and our structures are these giant moving walkways that will do that for us

So we need to name as many of these as we can because they're all around us and we all participate in them

for 5,000 years, this is one of the single biggest, most difficult, most persistent issues that every people group all around the world has dealt with

Do you think North Carolina is somehow figured it out while the rest of the world hasn't?

I don't think so—this is a part of every culture, all peoples, and Jesus calls us to go in the opposite direction in order to fulfill his mission, so we've got to identify what moving walkways we're on

And we can't possibly get off of EVERY single one of them, but part 2 of the question for us is **are there one or more places where I'm being called to step off of a particular moving walkway in order to walk the opposite direction to break through a barrier for the sake of the mission Jesus has called me to?**

I get to meet most of the new people here at Chatham Community Church—after the service, I invite folks to come and say hi and I almost always ask them how they heard about us

Typically there are a couple of ways that people find out about us: a good chunk of people just find us on the internet, some come because of the mailers we send out
But a good percentage of the new people who come, come because they know someone who's here already, they were invited by one of us!

A couple of weeks ago, I hosted at my house a gathering for all the African-American families in our church. A few couldn't make it, but most of them came, we had a great conversation

Most of them are brand new in the past year—it was about 6 families or so. When I asked THEM to share how they ended up at Chatham Community Church, every single one of them said it was because they got a mailer.

Which is GREAT, good to know those mailers are worth the investment. But one thing that struck me about that was that NONE of them came because one of us invited them.

Why is that? Maybe it's because we're all on our different moving walkways—we're not actively doing anything wrong, but we don't have to be actively doing anything wrong to participate in a system that reinforces what Jesus says he came to remove.

And as a predominantly white church, if we're going to break through barriers, we're going to have to first be willing to listen and secondly eventually get off the moving walkways of our culture and make some deliberate different decisions, just like Peter did.

And just like Peter, for most of us it's a process that we initially face some internal uncertainty or unwillingness about

So we're offering 2 specific ways to at least put a pause on our moving walkways and start to see where we are and what we're doing

1. "Breaking Through" Going Deeper Discussion: 7:30 March 6th at the Chatham Mills Ministry space

Next Sunday, open discussion, question and answer, kicking around what does it mean to be a culture-crosser? What does it mean for us to be people who participate in a mission to reconcile and restore all things? For those of us who are white, what does it mean that white is a particular culture among many? How

That's next Sunday, 7:30, down at the Chatham Mills ministry space. Email me if you've got any questions

2. Poverty Awareness Day on March 12th.

We're co-sponsoring this with Chapel in the Pines and Bynum United Methodist church. It's run by an non-profit called Circles Chatham that does great work all across the county.

It's a 9-4 kind of a day, the morning session will be a seminar, the afternoon will be a poverty simulation experience.

I'm going to this, I want you to come with me. You can come just for half the day or the whole thing, lots more information in the bulletin and you have to register in advance

This week, can you name your moving walkways and then start to pray and ask the Lord if he'd call you to step off of one or two of them and call you to move very intentionally in a very different direction

That's the work it takes to be a part of this mission from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth and to the ends of Chatham County.