

Dream With Me

Isaiah 2

If you're new here my name is Ricky and I am one of the pastors here at the church and I am excited that we are kicking off our book of Isaiah study, last week, this week and so if you have a Bible we're going to be in the book of Isaiah. If you grab one of the pew Bibles in the back we're going to be on page 567 and I am using a pew Bible this morning because, I forgot my Bible. So thankfully we do have free Bibles available on the back if you need one like your pastor, so they are there for you.

Last week we talked about how the book of Isaiah, our series title for this book of Isaiah study is "Behold." We're going to stop and look and get a new perspective on who God is and what life means and what we should be doing, and we need that perspective. So Isaiah chapter 2 is going to give us a vision, a picture and in fact Isaiah 2 and the very end of Isaiah are remarkably similar. So in a way Isaiah both starts and ends with the same picture, its kind of the one of the things that holds the book together. So we're going to see this picture together, by God's grace, we're going to long for it together, and then we're going to see how to live in light of that this morning, so Isaiah chapter 2 verse 1. And this is one of those passages that I wish I had our friend Bill Russell's voice to boom this out, but I'm going to do my best. Alright Isaiah chapter 2. I want you to feel the weight of this thing okay, Isaiah chapter 2, verse 1.

[1] The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. [This is what he saw.] [2] It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, [3] and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. [4] He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD. This is God's word.

Father, we just pray that you will bless the preaching of your word today. Bless our hearing of the word today. Oh Lord, I especially pray that you would open our eyes that we may be able to see the mountain of the Lord and in beholding it, be transformed this morning. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Well we live in a cynical age, don't we? I've been reading some recent statistics that we, institution after institution in America trust has declined in them over the last fifty years. We don't trust the government, we don't trust medical doctors, we don't trust school districts, we don't trust economists, we don't trust weathermen, we don't trust any of them. We use technology

and it defines our lives but I just read a new study that we don't trust technology, we don't trust the technology, the people on the other end of it, the companies giving it to us. My favorite statistic I read was that pretty much everybody, a lot of people that are single are using dating apps but not of them trust the profiles that they read. They just assume people are lying by default. Probably understandably so. There are understandable reasons to be cynical in the world today which is why I was so intrigued recently when I saw a book that had come out by a man named John M. Perkins. Now John M. Perkins, if any of us have reason to be cynical, it would be this man. He was born on, he's an older man now, on a plantation. His mother starved to death feeding him and at 8 months someone basically took him in and continued to care for him. He was abandoned by his father, his brother was shot, his brother a WW2 veteran was shot by police after a misunderstanding. He was jailed, he was tortured for civil rights protesting. Which is why I found the title of his most recent book, which is probably going to be his last book, he is up there, it's called "Dream With Me." Okay, so I'm thinking, how does that guy write a book called "Dream With Me"? He says this in the introduction to the book that I thought was wonderful, he says this "I've always been a dreamer. It almost seems as if my life has gone back and forth between two worlds. The world that reflects reality around me and the world made by the dream I had of what life could be. When I was young, my dream was to get out of Mississippi and find a better life in California. After coming to know Jesus Christ and doing ministry in prisons with young men who looked like me and spoke the same broken English, I began to dream again. I dreamed of going back to my home state of Mississippi and sharing the love and joy of Jesus Christ that I had discovered in California. I have continued to seek, to live out that dream in my life. To fulfill the Great Commission but I hope the dream world I longed for now looks like the coming Kingdom of God."

John Perkins is a man who has been transformed, despite the darkness of his circumstances, despite the things done to him. If you read the book, despite his own hatred in response. He has been transformed and has been made a dreamer. But hopefully, I think by God's grace, a Gospel informed dreamer.

In Isaiah chapter 2 this morning the Lord is going to invite us to dream with him. We are going to see not a hope-filled, maybe that'll happen some day kind of dream, but a dream, a vision of what one day will be, and by God's grace we will be transformed by it. So two sections this morning: The Dream and then The Call. The Dream is in verses 1- 4 and The Call is in verse 5.

The Dream. It says [2] It shall come to pass in the latter days... Pause there just for a second. It doesn't say "it might come to pass", "hopefully it will come to pass", "maybe if things work out and we, we quote-unquote "win the next election, it'll come to pass". No, the Lord says it shall come to pass, this shall come to pass and in the latter days. Now what does that mean though? That's important right? When is the latter days?

As we see in Isaiah, as we will see in Isaiah, "the latter days" refer to the time of the Messiah, the age of the Messiah as it were. And in fact, when Jesus arrives he declares that He is inaugurating the last days, in these "last days". In fact Peter gets up and preaches his first

message basically is, “Hey, listen. In these “last days”. So Jesus and the disciples all saw that era beginning with Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, to be the beginning of the “last days” to be consummated and completed at Jesus’ second coming. Now, that means though when we read this passage in Isaiah, things get a little tricky. Okay does that mean these “last days” is that, did this all happen when Jesus came? Is it all happening now? Will it, is it going to happen someday? When is this? Isaiah 53 talking about the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus, that happened. It’s not going to happen again, it’s not going to keep happening, it happened. But yet there are other things that seem like that didn’t totally happen, maybe a little bit but not all of it. So what do we do with this? Well this is where I hope an illustration can help us.

A couple of summers ago my family took a road trip to Colorado. Now I’ve grown up around the Franklin Mountains but in my adult life, this was the first time I’ve been back up to Colorado, into the Rockies and one of the things that is notable about the Rockies is that you see the Rockies and it just looks like a bunch of mountains. So you’re driving straight into the mountains you just see a bunch, but some you realize as you keep driving, some of those mountains are closer than others, right? Now the mountain behind it might be the mountain right behind it or it might be several mountains behind it and just be a huge mountain that towers over the rest. You don’t know exactly, it’s hard to judge exactly okay where, what’s the distance here? And yet when you describe the picture of what you see it’s all accurate. That mountains there, that mountains there, that mountains there. It’s not always easy though to see the distance between them and that’s what we’re going to find in the book of Isaiah. Sometimes we see, as we drive into the mountains as it were, like oh, this has happened, this is fulfilled, the Lord has done this and sometimes we’ll look up ahead see that mountain is further off than we thought but it doesn’t mean it’s not there. It doesn’t mean it’s not there. So, what do we see in this vision? We see first of all, the mountains rising.

It says in these last days, the latter days “the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it,” Now this is so important for people in Isaiah’s day and it’s important for us. It seemed like in Isaiah’s day like the mountain quote, unquote of Jerusalem was a little mole hill. It was once great under Solomon and David and now it had declined, it was this little thing, oh don’t stub your foot on that, little tiny mountain over there. You got this big Assyrian Babaloynian powers rising. Perhaps God’s people looked at the promises that God had made about his people, about the mountain, about the purposes of God and thought this is never going to happen. Maybe they’d begun to grow cynical and so the Lord tells them no, look ahead, look to the mountain. My purpose has not been frustrated. In fact there will be a day where my purposes, my plan, my people will tower over everything else. That will happen. Now this is where we get into the already, not yet fulfillment of this passage. There is a part of this passage that has already been fulfilled.

We see already fulfilled in Jesus. We have the benefit of looking back on what Jesus has done. When Jesus came in John 2 among other places, he said that his body was the temple. That he was the temple, the place where the presence of God dwelt. That he was the house of the Lord.

And what do we see? When his life, death and especially his resurrection, we see that temple lifted high, right? Victorious over death, victorious over satan, victorious over all these evil powers. The Lord is glorified already and we also see that Jesus calls his church the body. Right, he is the temple, he is the body but he calls the church his temple, his body. In 1 Peter 2 the apostle Peter says that we like living stones are being built into a spiritual temple. So the Lord Jesus Christ is building himself a new temple on top of the mountain, and we are the living stones who are building that temple. And now while the church may not seem the greatest cultural force in the world well, just look at the track record and how the mountain has continued to rise over the centuries.

Jesus' followers went from 12 people, well from zero I should say, to 12. Then from 12 to 120, then from 120 to 3,000 and then from 3,000 to 10,000, from one city to a region, from one region to neighboring regions, from those regions out further into Asia and Africa to the heart of the Roman Empire and the church, these despots and dictators, came and went, and the Roman empire, the church rose. And what we see since then, is that the church has been lifted up over every other empire. It has endured, it has advanced, over the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Spanish and British Empire, the Nazi Empire, all of them are gone but the house of the Lord has been lifted up. That's what we see already church and yet, there's some of that that is not yet. One day the church will be perfected. One day every eye will see him. One day every living soul will stand for judgment. One day we will see the house of the Lord in fullness and power. We see some already, we see some not yet, we're still driving, that mountain is still a little bit up ahead, but we see it shall come to pass. The mountain rising, second we see the peoples uniting.

It says "and all the nations shall flow to it," [3] and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths" I love this picture because it's this picture of like, okay nothing, water does not flow uphill. I'm a creative writing major but I did get that, I did get that part, water does not flow uphill, but the nations are flowing uphill. The picture is like, they are just like, blink and they are like "Hey, come, let us go up to the mountain" It's like they just wake up and they're like "hey, lets go up there" and they're just getting drawn by the Lord, right? But it's not just, especially for the people of Israel, this would be so important, it's not just one people, it's not just their ethnic people, it's all nations, all peoples. This word nation carries more than the nuance of just a geopolitical state. A nation, a people, is a group bound by things like, common language, and history, and tradition, and culture, and either way, I think about this is all the different kinds of music. If your, if your group has its own music, it might be a nation. Right, it might be a people. If your church, I mean if your group is using bagpipes, and your group is using the sitar, and your group is using the banjo, all right I think that's kind of more or less in view here. And God's people, we see this God's house, on the mountain is full of people with diverse skin colors, diverse cultures, diverse languages, diverse backgrounds. Their differences, their ethnicity is not eradicated, it's not like, okay your ethnicity is gone now you're just going to all be "blp", like a new color, blue, we're all going to be blue. No, they remain the many peoples.

We see in Revelation, they still are acknowledged as being of every tribe, and people and nation but while they are different, they are singing the same song and drawn to the same place. This is always God's intent. When God called Abraham who didn't start out Jewish by the way, he started out as a random pagan, Middle Eastern guy, he says my purpose for you Abraham is that in you all the nations shall be blessed. This has always been the plan of the Lord and we see this already and not yet. We see already in the person of Jesus.

When Jesus is born, what do we see? The wise men, what are they doing there? These guys are not ethnically Jewish, right? They're probably, if they are, in some way, they're very mixed they're from another place there and yet, the Lord draws them to the birth of the king because He is their king too, right? And when we see Jesus ministering, he doesn't just minister to the Jewish people. He ministers to the Samaritans, the half-breeds, the hated people. He ministers to the Gentiles, to a demoniac. He ministers Romans, centurions, the people oppressing the Jewish people. He ministers to all of them and Ephesians 2 shows us that when Jesus died to reconcile us to God, he did something else too. We can stop there. Jesus died to reconcile us to God. Thank the Lord. Praise the Lord. We are good with that. But that's not all He did. He died to reconcile us to one another.

Ephesians 2:16 says, He died so that he might reconcile us both to God, in one body, his body, through the cross, there by killing the hostility. Killing the hostility not just between us and God, but between us and one another. In the story of John Perkins there's this memorable part of the memoir where he goes in, somehow they raised enough money to purchase a medical facility so that they can see people in the community in need. And the medical facility was segregated. So right down the middle of the building, was a wall and one side of the wall was a lot nicer than the other, and John Perkins said the first thing he did, and it was like wood panels and it was nice, it was nice wall. First thing they did, he did, when they got the deed, is he walked into that building with a sledgehammer and took out that wall, right? In this picture, in the house of the Lord, there are no walls brothers and sisters. There's not people on this side, and people on that side. They are together in the house of the Lord and Jesus Christ Himself swung the sledgehammer that removed the barrier between us. He died to reconcile us to God and to one another. His blood was shed for that. We see it already.

We see it in the church. We see that the commission Jesus gives his church is not to go and make disciples of his many ethnic Jewish people as you can find. He says go and make disciples of all nations. And then, after Jesus sends the gift of the Spirit, the spirit comes on his people, what happens? They speak in all kinds of languages. There's people, there's Jewish people living all over the world, they're thinking, "I didn't know they can speak that? Those people have never been more than 10 miles from their house. How do they know how to speak that?" Because the spirit of God is foreshadowing the purpose of God, which is to take the message of the gospel and through it the rule and reign of Jesus Christ, and the gathering of his people to all nations, to all nations.

Listen, and church, we as a church are still imperfect here. I grieve for the ways that we as the church of Jesus Christ, in this country, and in this place, and in our world, I grieve for the ways we are too easily divided from one another. But church, we are also seeing this. We are here in El Paso, Texas, halfway around the world from Jerusalem, because the Lord is drawing all peoples and all nations.

My friend Allen Dicharry, who is an elder at the church, in one of our sister churches in Midland, he was recently on a trip to Nepal. And people that you just think, man, I've never even dreamt that this was a real place. That there are people here. They have their own should language and customs and the Lord Jesus Christ is gathering people from that part of the world to Himself, to be part of the house of the Lord. Todd just got back from India and he didn't just go to one part of India, he went to like many different parts of India, different castes kinds of areas, different geographic culture areas, and in those areas the Lord Jesus Christ is drawing to himself people to be part of the house of the Lord. Listen, we got to get used to the idea that the people in heaven are not all going to look like us, or even like the same music as us, from an earthly perspective, but they will be united in the house of the Lord because of what God has done. We see it already but not yet church, but not yet, not yet. One day we will see the full glory of the house of the Lord on the mountain. You get this picture in Revelation chapter 7 where the best choir of all time is going to be assembled and by God's grace, church you and I will be there and we'll be sitting next to or standing next to brothers and sisters from India and Nepal. And it says that every tribe and tongue and language and people, there will be people from all of those places, they're singing one song to him who sits on the Lamb, and to Him who sits on the throne and the Lamb, be glory. Right, that's going to be the song we sing together. Already but not yet. But that's not it though. That's not it. Lets keep going. Here's what else we see, justice reigning.

It says, **For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. [4] He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples;** You get this picture that listen, everything's going to be just, everything's going to be fair, because it's under the rule and reign of Jesus Christ. Look, we, in our church, in our world today, we have some much injustice and I think it should grieve us. I think it should grieve us. I was listening to this podcast recently where this group of reporters came and the project was just to camp out in one courthouse, in one spot of average America, and just report, and just see what happens. They definitely saw good things, and people loving folks, and caring for folks, but listen, there's not a ton of great reasons you end up in the courthouse. Like nobody's swinging by, "Hey, just wanted to check in." No man, people are there because people have been robbed and shot and wronged and hurt. Their injustice is the reason that they are gathered and even among people with good intentions, there are, there's injustice that happens. There's a judge that rules on a case before he understands the facts of it. There's injustice that nobody comes forward to testify against somebody so that they can put somebody away. There's injustice everywhere and there's people actively doing evil, people getting away with things that they should not get away with. But church one day, out of Zion the law shall go forth and the Lord Himself will judge disputes between the peoples and we see this already, and we see some of this not yet.

Already, what we see when Jesus came was that He was the true standard of justice. He had no qualms about exposing people that seemed good to the outside viewer but inside their hearts were rotten. In front of Jesus nobody got away with anything and not only did He bring the integrity and justice of the Old Testament law, he brought the commands to mercy, and compassion, and love. And Jesus loved the vulnerable, loved those that were, Isaiah was talking about in Isaiah 1, that were the weak, and the fatherless and the widow, the people without a defender or an advocate, Jesus went to them. And then church, on the cross we see the justice of God. On the cross, Jesus Christ bore the consequences for the sins of his people. So that scripture says, God can be both just and the justifier. So that God could be just so that people don't get away with things. So that sin is punished, sin destroying family, destroying world-wrecking sin is punished but because of Christ, that justice fell on him instead of his people. And so that scripture says now that we can be justified, we can stand before the Lord without fear of right justice for our sins falling on us because they have fallen, that has fallen on Jesus. God both the just and the justifier and we see on the cross of Jesus Christ, justice shines out into the universe. It says both, no one gets away with anything and second, the Lord is merciful and gracious. Church, we see imperfectly, we see imperfectly that the church of Jesus Christ should be about the work of integrity and justice, as well as compassion and mercy.

It is grieving that over the centuries people used this book to justify things like slavery, and racism. But it is glorious that men like William Wilberforce and John Newton, driven by this book, that every single person made in the image of God is worth dignity, and value and protection. When we rightly apply this book, the result is integrity, upright behavior, compassion, and mercy. But true justice is not here. Final justice is not here yet church, not yet but one day, one day the Judge is going to bang his gavel and the peoples will assemble and no one will get away with anything. And justice will be seen from one end of the universe to the other. And although the Lord may tarry so that more may be gathered in, more people who are unjust may be justified through the blood of Jesus Christ, one day, no more, one day justice will come. That's what we see on the mountain. And last, I love this, peace enduring.

It says **they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore;** It's just this beautiful picture, it's just poetic. In the beginning, in the garden, the Lord said I'm going to give you the garden, you're going to tend and keep the garden. I want you to cultivate it, care for it, in other words, He handed humanity the tools of gardening, in a sense. But humanity in turning against God, choosing sin, and turning against one another and choosing hatred, very quickly turned those good instruments as it were into weapons of war and ever since then humanity has been in an arms race. One people group, one one nation, one crazy terrorist cell after the other, of trying to use the weapon, to try to figure out how to kill more people faster than the other side. That's been our world. Its like no good thing we discover comes without an edge that can kill a ton of people. But one day this picture is all those instruments of war are going to be turned back into instruments of gardening in a sense, right? Those artillery shells that have been spent are going to be filled up with flowers and tanks are going to be turned into playgrounds and none of us are going to need that stuff any more. It says not only, it's just so comprehensive,

they're not going to learn about war, they're not going to go to war, they're not going to stockpile for war, none of it, not any of it.

You know recently this last week, my son asked me a question that just killed me. He got this World War II kind of era plastic army men set. If you've have the joy of having a plastic army man set, you know what I'm talking about as they're so excited for him. Disturbed to discover there were Korean era jets in the World War II playset. Wanted to write an angry letter to the manufacturer but I took them out. He's not allowed to play with them anymore so, unless he's playing Korean War, so that, I was trying to serve him. So the playset is there and one of the things in the playset, I just thought I don't know if this is a wise idea, the playset manufacturers include the flags from World War II. So Ford, I'm trying to explain that like you know, like the Nazis, but not all Germans are Nazis, you know that kind of thing, its sticky and so we're talking about it, he's having a good time and he looks up at me and he goes, "So, but, the wars are over right?" You could just tell like in his face he just thought surely, surely this is in the past, surely that no one goes to war anymore dad. And it was like, I got a lump in my throat it was hard for me to describe to him, like figure out what to say in response to that. Like I want to tell him that his grandfather grew up doing nuclear bomb drills, hiding under a desk like that's going to help you. I don't want to tell him that when his Uncle Chris was in the military, he really, there were times when he really could have not come back from that. I don't want to tell him that in our church some of the kids he plays with their parents are going to, and have been to war. And there's just something in me that's like I wish I could protect him from that, I wish he didn't even ever know, but that's the reality. And yet something, war ravages our world, but something is growing in our world as well.

Alongside the hate, and war, there is something else growing. There is a part of this that is already here. In Jesus Christ, we see Jesus Christ we peace. In Jesus Christ we see that God at war with humanity does not send Jesus to wipe us out, without a chance, rightly and justly because of what we've done. Instead he sends Jesus to save us and to bring peace. Rather than simply destroying us and wiping us off the map, He sent his son to bring peace. The savior's first words to his disciples after they had abandoned him, as he went to the cross, with the wounds in his hands and feet and side, the first words he speaks to them are peace, peace. Jesus brings peace between us and God and through the church we see glimpses of peace advancing in the world around us. Church, we are so imperfect as the church of Jesus Christ, not us specifically, but as a whole, church is so imperfect, but it again, and again, surprisingly, counter-culturally, is a place so often where people can live at peace who normally would be at war. People who would hate one another find love for one another and learn to live at peace and one day this will happen in fullness. One day everybody who wears a uniform on Monday is going to have to find a different job, I'm sorry to disappoint you. One day if you're in med school, we will not need your services anymore because no one shows up at the ER with a gunshot wound. We long for that day. That's the vision of Isaiah chapter 2 but it ends with a call.

He lays that out, the Lord lays that out before us and then he says this, **O house of Jacob,** [He calls them, you're my people, right here, right now.] **O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in ^sthe**

light of the LORD. It's in view of what the Lord is doing in the world. It's in view of the sure future that we have that he calls his people to walk the path, in the light of the Lord. One commentator says this "The Church's future is secure. The only question is whether we choose to be part of that future through present obedience to the Lord of the Church." -Oswalt

In other words, the Lord is going to bring this about. It shall come to pass. The only question we have before us is, will we choose to walk in the light of the Lord, or not? Will we choose to follow the king and raise the banner of his kingdom in our world today, or will we turn aside? And that's what Isaiah's people were dealing with as we see that they're so tempted to turn aside. "Well maybe this person can protect us and give us peace. May this person, maybe if I ignore justice and take what I want, then things will be fine." No, the Lord is saying, no. In light of what is coming, follow, walk.

And I think there's three calls, I think from this to us today. The first is keep dreaming. Keep dreaming, church. We live in an age where we are naive about the wrong things and cynical about the wrong things, right? We're naive about things, like for example, we're like you know what, the Lord has given us this gift of sexuality and we can take it and I'm going to use it however I want. And nothing is going to go wrong. I remember I was talking to a brother from the church and he was counseling a guy who is not a Christian and the guy is just, saying like, you know, so what's the big deal about sleeping with somebody? And my friend who's you know who's trained in the medical field to some degree, he was like, well because your brain does all this stuff to forever link you to that person forever when that happens. And they're like ah, it can't be that bad, right? Like, you're just like no, you can't just use that and expect everything to be fine. But, then we get cynical about the wrong things too, right? Where somebody is like listen, in this community over here, these people grew up hating one another, these people grew up hating one another, they really hate each other, everything again, opposes one another based on their background, their culture, income, ethnicity, and skin color and there is no way that that is going to get fixed and we are to be the dreamers who look at that and say yeah, it can. I know what will fix that. They're like, "You're such a naive person. You think you're going to come in, with a message about a dead guy from a few thousand years ago and transform a community?" I'm not going to but I think He can. He's got a good track record over the last two thousand years. Keep dreaming, church. That, that is I think, one of the takeaways from this passage. Let us not be cynical about the world around us. Let us see with gospel eyes what he has done, is doing, and will do. The Lord Jesus Christ has with his life, death and resurrection has inaugurated the age of the Messiah, as it were. He has given us the power of the gospel. He has given us the power of the Spirit. And he has promised that one day this vision and dream will be seen by every eye. In the meantime then, we should have an unshakable confidence that God is up to something in the world around us. What would change church if you approached your Monday with an unshakeable sense of purpose that God is at work in the world around you, this is all going somewhere. That you have a sense of purpose and calling to everything you do. That's the first point. The second point is keep walking.

It says **come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.** Throughout Isaiah, we're going to see God call his people to live in his ways. And sometimes the way God calls us to lives seem crazy,

both to the people around us and to us. I can see that picture when God's people went to Jericho and the plan was you're going to march around the city and then magically the walls are going to fall down. Like some of the stuff that God called his people to do, is just nuts. Love your enemies, but they'll kill me. If somebody takes your coat, give them your windbreaker too." Like, you can't live like that, you can't do that!" And He's like well, it worked in Jericho, it worked here, I think it's going to keep working. We are to be those people that's willing, willing to do what God calls us to do, regardless whether it seems culturally crazy to us or the people around us. So that means we live this out. We live joyfully with all peoples.

John Perkins says this "Because reconciliation is so hard to live out on a consistent basis I fully believe, [Oh, this is so good] I fully believe [Here, I wish I was him, an older black man gone through that, imagine him saying this] I fully believe that it's one of the greatest displays of God's redemptive power. Our world is a flame with racial, tribal, and other kinds of tensions between groups of people. The very purpose of the Gospel is to reconcile human beings to God and to one another. So what I call for, what I believe the gospel calls for, is unity across ethnic and cultural barriers. Our unity, our reconciliation bears witness to the world of the surpassing love of God in Jesus Christ. We're to live this out, church. In light of the fact that the people in the choir next to us on the last day will not look like us, they may not start out speaking the same language as us, they may not even know the same instruments we use. We are to get used to loving and living with people very different from us. Now, some places that could be like theoretical. Like, should you meet somebody different from you and love them, and in El Paso this is our life, right? In our church, this is our life. Like we, we are, somebody told me, this is the strangest group of people I've seen in El Paso. Because they say the different places they go in the city, well that's for this kind of people and this is a different place for this kind of people, right? And the people that love to have their coffee at Good Coffee and the people that love to have their coffee at Hillside, or The District, they don't typically hangout, a lot. The Roscoe's people and the Krave people don't hang out all the time, right? And yet, church, look what the Lord has done. Look what the Lord has done for us. Now I'm not saying we're perfect, I'm not saying there's not need for growth, there's always room for growth, but we must commit to doggedly love and pursue people very different from us. I love that we sang a song in Spanish this morning. I love that. I love that when we got to the end and we declared it in Spanish, I know people that don't speak Spanish and they're like "Amen", right? You get it. It's funny, even Jon and I were talking about doing a pre-service music playlist that he kinda updates every time we do a new series a little bit. And so I was like maybe this series in Isaiah, maybe our preservice music can get a little more flavorful, we can get a few more flavors into the preimposed service mix. And he was like, "come on." And so Jon and I were like sending songs back and forth with one another and some of them, I won't say which genre, okay its country music, some of them he sent them to me and I was like, Oh Lord, I need a renewed mind to love this. I need a renewed heart, like, right, maybe it's not country music for you, maybe it's something else, but you're just like, Oh Lord, help me, make my heart believe that this is good.

And yet guys, and yet, we were meant to live with people with very different tastes in their food, and music and coming from different vantage points but being together in the house of the Lord.

We're meant to live that out. We're also meant to live out the reality of justice and peace in our world today. Look, in light of the fact that one day, every evil will be exposed and every vulnerable person will be defended, we should live justly and seek to promote justice. Now I told the first service this, when people start talking about justice in our world today, people get freaked out. They're like, I've heard people talk justice and they say crazy things. I'm not saying crazy things. The Bible is saying we should care about this and I'm trying to say we should care about what the Bible says we should care about. We should care about integrity and uprightness. Listen, it may be a day where you at your workplace are the only person that is not okay with something, with deceit, or lying or neglecting somebody but you say no, that's not okay with me. And it may cost you your job but that's, that's living out our identity as people of the house of the Lord.

There's a passage in the book with Dr. Perkins where he talks about how in Mississippi if you were black, you had to show up at the doctor's office first thing in the morning, before the other black people because what happened was the doctor would arrive and see all of the white patients and if he had time, he would see you at the end of the day. Listen, that might not be still occurring widely, but friends we all know how injustice can creep into our workplaces. We know where people get preferred over other people and we are to be the people of God who say, no. I don't care if it's going to cost me a raise, I'm not going to go along with that. And we're to be peacemakers, people who maybe to the world's standards are naive. People who are like yeah, I'm going to go try to reconcile with that guy and you're thinking that's not probably going to go well but is okay, I have the power of Jesus, I have the power of the Spirit, I'm going to give them the gospel and see what happens. Romans 12:18 says as far as is possible live at peace with everyone and that's so helpful because it's not always possible, but second, as far as is possible pushes us a lot further than we want to go, most of the time, right? Like, can I honestly say as far as is possible, I made an attempt? If you can't say that, then you gotta keep trying. We want to keep walking in the ways of the Lord and then keep inviting.

That's where I want to end. This verse 5, as we will see in Isaiah, is remarkable because it is an invitation from the Lord to a blatantly sinful people. These people, we're going to see in detail their dirty laundry, we're going to see their sins, we're going to see all of what the Lord sees exposed among them and yet, he looks at them. He sees everything about them, that's broken and sinful and wicked and he says come, come let us walk in light of the Lord. I am inviting you. You're not cut off from what I'm doing in the world, I want you to be part of this. And this church, and this, how much more do we see that this ministry of reconciliation has been given to the church. The ministry of telling people about what God has done to reconcile them to God and inviting them to be reconciled. To go to all nations and invite people to follow Jesus. And so often we think, listen, it's not going to work. That guy's never going to come to the Lord. It's never going to go well. Church, all of us are here because we were drawn uphill, by the Lord, to be part of his house. And so how much more faith should we have for the people around us that we invite, and invite, and invite knowing the Lord draws people uphill, even the most unlikely people.

I was talking to a friend of mine Justin this week who has a ministry to go out to the parks and give away Bibles and invite people to learn about Jesus and proclaim the gospel. And he said you know, most people assume that when I go out there, nobody wants to come hear what the Bible says but strangely enough, if I say “hey, I’m going to do, we’re going to do a short message about Christmas and Easter if you want to hear about that.” People are like “oh really, I celebrate Christmas and Easter.” Oh, well, do you know the whole story? “Like, well of course, sort of.” And they want to hear and he says it shouldn't be surprising but it is surprising! When I tell people yeah, if you go out and talk to people about Jesus, they want to hear about it. They’re like, that can’t be true. Like, it is! Isaiah 2 says the Lord draws people uphill.

Look, we want to be the people that invite the least likely people because we are the least likely people and we’ve been brought to the house of the Lord. So here’s what I want to encourage us to do as a church. I want us to be like John M. Perkins in this way, and you may, John Perkins has written a lot of books and you may disagree with this or that, about what’s the best way to restore community, uh, whatever. His last book he says, he wanted it to be about love in the face of hate, encouraging people toward Jesus. And look, I want us to be the people that are not naive to the brokenness of the world around us, but so rooted in a gospel and God-centered optimism, in light of what He’s done, what He is doing, where this is going, that we live radically different lives than the people around us. That’s what I want, that’s what I want to call us to. And I think that’s what the Lord would call us to, church. Dream with me. What would it be like if the Gospel of Jesus Christ came in power to the city of El Paso, to Fort Bliss, and to downtown, and to the west side, east side, north and south? What would it be like if the church of Jesus Christ displayed in such a radically, beautifully, countercultural way what it looks like to have your life transformed by Jesus? What would it be like where the Lord through our faithful small efforts to bring revival to the city of El Paso? So that from one end to the other, people may not like Jesus, people may not want to follow Jesus but they can’t ignore Jesus because there are people in the city so radically committed to living in the way of Jesus, and inviting them to meet Jesus, that they can’t ignore it. What could the Lord do? And to answer that question, all you have to do is look back over the last two thousand years of the church’s history. He’s done it. He’s doing it. He will do it. Lets pray.

Heavenly Father, Lord we want to be in a godly way, the dreamers of the world. We want to be people who don’t shy away from the brokenness of the world but move towards it with hope and in the power of the gospel. Lord, I pray right now, Lord I pray just for my own heart, any heart here that may have realized, as we look at your word that we are growing cynical. We’re thinking, ah, it’s never going to happen, that’ll never..., that cynicism that can kind of just creep in and Lord we confess that before you. Lord, we are standing, living, breathing testimonies of the fact that God saves sinners and transforms lives and I pray that would give us faith for all those around us. We ask this in His name. Amen.