

Building Gospel-Centered Communities

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[0 : 00] We call the season of Lent, we're taking more time than usual to reflect on all that God has called us to be and to do in our lives.

And the fact that we need Jesus and we need the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill that calling. So we're thinking about that as individuals and we're also thinking about that as a community.

And so we're taking time this season over these weeks to reflect as a church on those two questions. Who are we and who is the Lord calling us to become in this neighborhood of Brooklyn in the city of Washington, D.C.?

And for those of you who have been a part of this church or other churches, you know that it's very important from time to time for us to come together as a church and to ask these questions, to reflect on those things.

If you're not a part of our church, if you're visiting, if you're not a Christian and this sounds maybe like it's not relevant for you, I do want to say actually I think this is a great opportunity for you to get a sense of what we're about and what kind of community this is and what we care about.

[1 : 09] And to decide whether or not this could be a community that would become your home.

And we really hope that it will. But I want to put the statement up here. This is the way that we would summarize who we are as a church and where we feel like God is calling us to go.

And this statement has come out of our leadership and a lot of prayer and reflection and conversations in our congregation. So I'll just read it to you. As a church, we seek the flourishing of Washington, D.C.

by building gospel-centered communities that practice generous hospitality, spiritual formation, and missionary faithfulness in every neighborhood. So this is how we would answer those questions.

And we want to make sure that we have clarity on this so that we can move forward together in the coming years as a community, move as one. And so we're breaking this down and looking at a different piece each week.

So two weeks ago, we looked at the first part, as a church, that's our identity. And then last week, we looked at the second sort of grouping of words, we seek the flourishing of Washington, D.C.

[2 : 11] That's our vision. That's what we hope to one day see become a reality here. As a part of our church's presence. So tonight, or I'm sorry, this morning, we're going to be focusing on this next phrase.

Building gospel-centered communities. And this is the phrase that we would really use to describe the mission of our church. What's the core strategy or the core thing that we devote ourselves to? Now, different churches define that differently. And for us, this is how we would define the core strategy that we pursue in our life together.

And the first thing I want to say about this, before we get into Scripture, is that this is not a new idea. That there's not a single thing that is innovative about this.

There's not a single thing that is creative about this. This is in no way, shape, or form a creation of anything that we have come up with. We articulate our mission this way because when we read Scripture, we see that this has been God's approach since the very beginning.

[3 : 14] That from the very beginning, God's way of interacting with and ultimately saving and restoring His world has been through communities.

Taking a community of people, setting them apart as His covenant community. And then using that community to bless the rest of the world. That's the way that God does what He does in the world.

And we see in the Old Testament that happens through Israel. But ultimately, they fall short in that role. And so Jesus comes, and in the New Testament, we see that this work continues through the church.

So this is God's mission in the world, to build gospel-centered communities throughout the world. And so our mission is to build gospel-centered communities throughout Washington, D.C. And so we're going to look at Acts 2, verses 36 to 47. David just read it a moment ago. And we see here Scripture that helps us understand what gospel-centered communities actually are.

[4 : 15] And so we're going to spend the most of our time looking at gospel-centered communities, what that actually means. And then a few minutes at the end, we'll just talk a little bit about the specifics of how we actually go about doing that here as a church.

So Acts 2, verses 36 to 47. Let's pray, and then we'll dive in. Our Heavenly Father, as we look at these words, we acknowledge that anything that is built with human hands, human wisdom, is sure to fall apart, is sure to fall short, is sure to one day fail.

That, Lord, we're here because we believe that you're doing something in the world, that you are here, present, at work in the world that you've made. Because you love it and because you want to restore it.

And, Lord, we want to be a part of that, a part of what you're doing. So we ask that all that we do here this morning, including these words, would be a faithful reflection of what you're doing and of who you are.

That you would bind us together and bind us to yourself, that we would be a part of your great mission in the world. We pray this in your Son's holy name. Amen. So Acts chapter 2, verses 36 to 47.

[5 : 27] What is a gospel-centered community? I want to start by saying this. All communities, all communities, are held together by at least two things.

You have to have some shared identity. And then you have to have some kind of or set of shared practices. Those are the things that define communities.

And this can be anything, right? So you can have hobby-centered community, right? You love to ride bikes, right? You're a cyclist. And you identify that way.

And you have friends who are cyclists. And on the weekends, you go on long cycling trips out into Virginia. So that may be one kind of community. You have job-centered communities, right?

You work in international development. And you have all these friends who also work in international development. And you go and you do international development things together. And so that's a kind of community, right?

[6 : 29] You can have a community that's based on where you live, right? A common kind of shared neighborhood. These are all platforms for community.

You can also have a life-stage-centered community. This may be one of the more common experiences we have, right? You have a group of single people without kids who love going out. And they have all of their – and they call everybody, let's go out. It's 9 p.m., but let's go out. And we're going to stay out super late. And all the people that say yes tend to be people who don't have kids.

And you go out and you have fun and you stay out until 3 o'clock in the morning. And it's great, right? And then if you're married and you're thinking about, well, if I leave and I have to get a babysitter, and that's \$100 before I even think about parking or food or anything like that, and then my kids are going to be screaming in my face at 6 a.m., and you're like, you know, I'm not going to go out.

99% of the time I don't want to go out. I want to stay in and watch Netflix and be asleep by 10, right? And so you have a natural segregating around these life stages.

[7 : 39] That's a life stage centered community, right? So communities are tied together by a common identity and then shared practices. But here's the thing. Things change, right?

Circumstances change. You love cycling, but then you get an injury and you're out. And your friends keep going on trips without you, and it's hard not to lose touch with them. Or you get sick of the field that you're working in and you change jobs, and you want to still keep going out with all the friends at your old job, but you have less and less to talk about, less and less in common, right?

And this happens a whole lot. You have people who they love going out, and they're single, and they don't have kids, and they do it all the time, and then they get married, and then they have kids, and then all of a sudden when everybody else is going out, they're exhausted, and they don't want to go out, and it's expensive.

And so naturally, as much as they want to keep everybody together and keep hanging out, naturally you begin to grow apart. And it's not because people don't care about each other. It's because the common platform of your community has shifted.

And so the principle that we see here is that the strength of any given community, the strength of any given community depends on what it's centered around.

[8 : 54] Is it an identity, and are there shared practices that remain, or are those things changeable? Do they change over time? So when we talk about a gospel-centered community, what we're saying is you have a community that while we may have common interests and similar jobs and similar life stages and all of those things, that the thing that actually ties our community together is none of those things.

The thing that ties our community together is the gospel, which means the good news of the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is an eternal, unchanging reality.

And that that is the center of our community. And the gospel gives us a shared identity, and it gives us shared practices. And that's what we see in Acts chapter 2.

This is right after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit has come, and Peter preaches this spirit-filled sermon, and there's this mass conversion. All of these people, their hearts are pierced, and they come to Christ.

And this is the beginning of the New Testament church. And we see this description of a gospel-centered community through identity and shared practices. And the first section really talks about a gospel-centered identity.

[10 : 17] I'll just read it to you, these verses here, verses 36 through 38. Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

That's the end of the Apostle Peter's sermon. Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. So the first thing we see is that a gospel-centered community is made up of people who share this gospel identity.

In other words, they are people who have had their hearts pierced by the gospel, and they have repented, and they have been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.

And through that baptism, they've become a part of the church body. And really, the focus here is on the word repent, because the core of Jesus' teaching, which is summarized in Mark 1.15, is this.

[11 : 22] Jesus came and he preached. This was the core, main idea of his sermons. Repent and believe in me. Repent and believe in me.

That's what Jesus preached. And I think often we hear the word repent, and we have lots of connotations. And so the thing I want you to see is that repenting is about a lot more than just being sorry that you lost your temper or cussed or masturbated last night.

It's a much bigger phrase. That the word repentance actually shows up outside of the Bible. And one of the great examples of the use of this word comes from the first century.

There were some Jews who were planning a revolt. The Jews were under Roman occupation. They hated it. And so a group of Jews, they were planning a violent military uprising, a revolution.

And there was a man named Josephus, and Josephus knew, he just looked at this situation, and he knew that this plan was hopeless, that this approach to revolution would only end in slaughter and death and failure.

[12 : 24] And he had a different plan for revolution. He agreed that there needed to be a revolution, but he had a different plan for bringing it about. So Josephus goes to the brigand, the leader of this kind of planned revolt, and he sits down with him, and he tries to convince him, abandon your strategy.

Abandon your plan for revolution. It's not going to work. It's going to fail. There's no way that it will succeed. And I want you to come, and I want you to join my revolution and what I'm doing.

And do you know the words that he literally uses? Repent and believe in me. The exact same words that Jesus uses. And this helps us understand more what Jesus actually means when he preaches this message.

Because what he means is so much bigger than what we normally think. That the gospel is Jesus' plan for revolution. The gospel is Jesus looking at the world, seeing everything that's wrong with it,

sin and death and corruption and oppression and poverty and disease and all of these things, and realizing there needs to be a revolution.

But it's the revolution that he's bringing about through his death and resurrection. And so when Jesus says repent, he's saying abandon your plan. Abandon your whole life project that you're doing apart from God.

[13:46] However good you think you are, whatever difference you think you're making, ultimately you are doomed. Ultimately this path leads to destruction. It's a dead end. He says so repent.

Leave all of that behind. Which means don't just stop doing the bad stuff, but stop thinking that by doing good apart from God, you can somehow be saved or somehow bring about everything that this world needs.

He says abandon your plan for revolution. Become a part of my plan for revolution. So repenting means abandoning our whole life plan and becoming a part of what Jesus is doing.

It means believing that his death pays for our sin. It means that believing his righteousness makes up for everything we lack in righteousness. So this is telling us that our shared identity, our shared identity, is that we're sinners who have been saved by grace.

Our shared identity is that we are people who looked at our plan and looked at God's plan in Jesus and we scrapped our plan and we said I want to be a part of this.

[14:54] And we've joined in through our baptism to all that God is doing through Jesus. And so because of this common identity, our community looks very unique.

So if you come into a gospel-centered community and you're actively committing sin, envy or greed or slander or gossip or sexual immorality or any of the things that the Bible lists, a gospel-centered community is going to say that's not Jesus' way.

Abandon your life apart from God. Repent and come and follow Jesus. Right? That's what we'll say because that's our identity. But also if you come into a gospel-centered community and you're self-righteous and you're virtue signaling on social media and you're letting everybody know how moral and upright you are and how much you care and uniquely understand these issues more than anybody else and because of that, you're righteous.

Right? A gospel-centered community is going to say, no. That's not Jesus' way. Abandon your plan. Repent and come and follow Jesus.

Right? So a gospel-centered community is going to constantly be pulling us out of our own agendas, out of our own plans, out of our own strategies and into what God is doing through Jesus.

[16:19] That's what we're about. Right? So in a gospel-centered community, that's incredibly liberating because we no longer here have to pretend like we do outside of this community.

You know, you go to your job, you meet people at parties, and you meet people up, and you put the persona out there. You know? You put your best stuff out there, and you try to convince people that you're this amazing person.

And we just get to take that off here because that's not our shared identity. Our shared identity is that we're sinners saved by grace. So just by you being here is an admission of guilt.

You didn't know that. I assume the worst about people. The absolute worst. Because I know myself. I know the truth about myself.

I know that you have no idea how bad I am. And so I assume the same is true of you. So here's the gospel. Most of the time, you're a horrible person.

[17:14] You're a horrible person. But that's okay because I am too. And here's the good news. Jesus loves us more than we can possibly fathom. And we love each other.

And you're horrible, and I'm horrible, but I'm crazy about you, and we're in this together. And this is what a gospel-centered community is like. No lies, no personas. Honesty.

It feels really good, right? So this is our shared identity. We're people who have abandoned our agendas and our personas, and we've joined the Jesus revolution. And of course, this means that we have common practices.

We have common things that we do together, and those practices reinforce this gospel-centered identity. And you see those in the next section of the book of Acts, in verse 42 to 47.

It says this. I'll just read this first line. Verse 42, And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

[18:13] So you see this language tells us that they're regularly coming together to hear God's word, to be in fellowship with one another, to break bread through the Eucharist, through

celebrating the Lord's Supper, and then to pray together, right?

And this is why we get together every week. This is why we come together every week. The church has been doing it since the very first worship service in Acts chapter 2.

The church has been doing what we're doing right now. And a lot of the language and the prayers that we use here come from the first and second century. So some of what they're doing there is very literally what we're doing here.

Right? So we gather together, and of all the reasons that we gather, the primary one is to worship God and to glorify God. But do you know what's also happening here? We go out into the world and we forget who we are.

You know, everybody tries to tell you who you are. You know, your friends try to tell you who you are. Your family, your parents try to tell you who you are. Right? The people who work over you try to tell you who you are.

[19 : 16] The people who work under you try to tell you who you are. And everybody tries to tell you who you are. And only God can tell you who you are. And God uses us to remind one another, this is who you really are.

You're not that fake person out there. This is who you really are. This is who you are in Christ. And when we come together every Sunday, we are being reconstituted, regrounded in that core identity. Oh, this is who I am in Jesus Christ. So we're coming together as they did for the apostles' teaching and the fellowship and the breaking of bread and the prayers.

So we see gospel-centered worship is a huge practice that a gospel-centered community engages in. And then as we move on in the passage, we see that a gospel-centered community is generous. You have gospel-centered generosity. Starting in verse 34, it says, And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

[20 : 20] This is not some kind of Christian socialism. This is example after example after example of generosity. And it's gospel-centered generosity. How do we know?

Because the next line tells us, And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts. Gospel-centered generosity is generosity that's motivated not by guilt or shame or obligation.

It's motivated by gratitude. Because the gospel is all about God's generosity to us. God looking at us, looking at our hopelessness. and His Son being willing to give His life to give us everything that we need.

Right? It's generosity. And so when you really begin to understand the generosity that we receive from God, it inspires generosity. Because it fills you with gratitude. Thank you.

I did not deserve this. Thank you so much. And you begin to think about how can I do the same in other people's lives, right? That's gospel-centered generosity. And in fact, we see that happens first and foremost among the people in the church.

[21 : 34] Right? It's a generosity that's meant for everybody. But the example we're given here is this is how generous they were to one another. So they're giving of everything that they have to the community for the sake of the whole.

They see themselves as inextricably linked to the welfare of the whole. And so this is why, as Christians, we think about giving. This is why we give to the church.

Right? It's not like a non-profit where it's just part of our charitable contribution. We do this because it's a core aspect of what it means to be a recipient of the generosity of the gospel. To see ourselves as having a common identity.

Right? We give as a way of acknowledging God has entrusted this to me. I'm a steward of it. And I'm meant to use it in a way that blesses the whole, not just myself. Right?

And so Christians talk about tithing. And tithing is as a kind of an Old Testament principle. You know, giving 10% of the first fruits and it's an agricultural principle primarily. And we see that as kind of a principle.

[22 : 34] But really, I encourage people not to be legalistic about tithing. It's not about a hard and fast 10%. The principle that we see here and the underlying principle is that we are recipients of radical, sacrificial generosity.

And so as a response to that, we practice radical, sacrificial generosity. sacrificial generosity.

Right? And so we, a part of our membership covenant is that members make a covenant to give

sacrificially to the church body.

We encourage all of our regular attenders and people who call this church their home to give sacrificially to the church body, to the needs of the community. Right? And yet, if you're not a Christian or you're not a part of this church, we would say, no, please don't give.

Because the reason that we give is a direct response to the generosity of the gospel. It flows out of that. So if you don't believe the gospel, you don't have a reason to give. Right?

So we don't want you to do that because it's an outward and empty gesture that doesn't align with something that's inward and real and true in your heart. So this is how we think about gospel-centered generosity.

[23 : 39] Right? And then the third thing that we see beginning in verse 47 is this community is not just worshipping together. They're not just generous and thankful, but we see gospel-centered evangelism.

verse 47 describes them as, quote, praising God and having favor with all the people. And it says, the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

It's interesting. American evangelical Christianity has, over the last more than a century, century and a half, really come to focus on individual faith and individual evangelism.

I think about myself going and talking with my friend Bob and saying, I would like for you to consider the claims of Christ. And that's okay. There's a place for that. But what we see here is something kind of different.

We see actually an evangelistic community. Evangelistic simply, basically meaning a community that sort of emanates and embodies the gospel and invites people in to experience it.

[24 : 40] And that's what we see here. So this is an open, welcoming community, and as people are coming into this community, they have a public, visible presence and people are, who are those people?

They seem really happy and nice and I'm going to go see what they're doing. And they're really doing a good job of taking care of each other and they seem very real and they're not fake nice. They're genuine and they're authentic and they seem to be the kind of people who can handle my alcoholism and my addiction and the abuse that I've experienced and all of these things that I don't feel like I can talk about.

This seems like the kind of place where I can just really be honest about those things and they're coming into this community and they're experiencing life and wonder and generosity and they're being embraced and they're being loved before people even know their story.

They're being, you know, people that seem glad to see them and they say, man, what is this? What's causing this?

the gospel is always best as the answer to a question. What is the explanation for this? What I'm tasting in this community? That's the kind of evangelism you see here.

[25 : 46] People are coming into this community, they're having these experiences and they're falling head over heels in love. So this is what we mean when we talk about gospel-centered communities. Just to kind of step out of the big picture, we're talking about people who share a common identity, a gospel-centered identity and that we have these common practices like worship, like generosity, like evangelism as a community, right?

And that last piece, evangelism, really makes sense because if you think about it, when you love something, when you see a great movie or hear a great song, you naturally want to share it with other people. When you experience the gospel in community, you naturally want to share that with other people.

You've got to check this out. This is incredible. I've never seen anything like this. It's amazing. I've been longing for this. That's how evangelism is meant to happen. Right?

So this is why we want to build these kinds of communities all through D.C. We don't just want to build one central big church. We want to spread these communities out. We want every neighborhood in D.C. to have an opportunity.

We want to take this to people. Not expecting people to drive all the way across town to come here. We want to take this experience and get it out as far as we can to maximize the chance that people have a shot at experiencing the gospel in community.

[27 : 01] That's what we're about. So I just want to say a couple of words before we end on how we go about doing this as a church. Kind of what are the nuts and bolts? And the first thing is this.

In our own church, Church of the Advent, we gather together on Sundays. And this is the first and foremost where it all begins. The goal of our gathering right now is to experience the gospel in community. We hear it.

We see it. We even eat it. But then outside of these gatherings, we also have what are called core groups. That's our fancy, innovative word for small groups.

And the reason that we call them core groups is because we want to remind people again and again and again that they are a core community. That the core of your Christian life is to have people around you who really know you.

So Jesus had the three, and then he had the twelve, and then he had the multitudes, the seventy. And we think in similar ways. So we encourage people outside of Sunday have some community that's a part of this church of people who really know you, of people who are really involved and invested in your life.

[28 : 04] A core group, right? So that's what a core group is. And so we encourage everybody to be a part of Sunday worship and core groups. The second thing we do, as I've already alluded to, is we plant churches.

Right? So we see we see a couple of things. We see these precedents in Acts. You know, it says in verse 46, day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes.

And then it goes on. And what we see there is this rhythm of they're getting all together and then they're also meeting in smaller groups in their homes. So, church, Sunday, and then core groups. But then if you look back in Acts chapter 1, verse 8, Jesus says to them, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

So what does that tell us? It tells us that it's not enough for us to have a really good church here and to have our small groups and to have that rhythm and that's enough. That we have been commissioned by Jesus to see this become a reality everywhere.

To the ends of the earth. And so that's exactly what the apostles do. They start in Jerusalem, right? And then Judea and then Samaria and then they keep going and they keep going and what are they doing?

[29 : 16] The entire central thrust of their mission is church planting. And so they begin and the apostle Paul goes on multiple missionary journeys to plant churches, right? He tells Titus and others appoint elders over these churches, organize them into churches and they will then plant other churches and that's what we see.

So a core aspect of our mission is to plant churches, right? To build gospel-centered churches everywhere we can. And so we've been a part of a lot of church planting efforts over the years. We just recently sent Brian and Casey Wandel up to Buffalo and we're supporting them to plant a church in Buffalo. You may not know that right now we are financially and prayerfully supporting missionaries who are doing church planting work in the Persian Gulf region.

And we're not able to tell you more specifically what city they're in but I can tell you they may be the only right now active missionary presence in the city. That's very exciting, right? We're right now beginning to move towards supporting church planting in Crozet outside of Charlottesville, Virginia. But we want to see more churches planted in D.C. And so we're hoping that in this coming season of our life together we will celebrate more church plants, right? And then lastly that brings me to Brooklyn.

[30 : 29] The greatest thing I think that we have right now to celebrate is Brooklyn. And with Brooklyn we are exploring and what we're seeing is a really exciting opportunity to approach church planting in a way that's different in some ways from what we've done in the past.

Because in the past we've planted stand-alone churches but over the almost nine or ten years that we've been a community here we've recognized that church planting in D.C. is incredibly expensive. Frankly, it just costs a lot of money.

And space is incredibly hard to find. Advent Columbia Heights has in eight years been in four different worship spaces. We've just been forced to move that many times, right?

And there's never really any guarantee of how long we're going to be in a given place, right? And so from the very beginning because of the cost and the instability we've wanted to find ways to collaborate.

How can we be more collaborative? How can we be better stewards of the resources that God has given us? And so when we saw this opportunity in Brooklyn you have these two neighborhoods

Columbia Heights and Brooklyn that are less than three miles apart.

[31 : 30] You have a large community between those neighborhoods of people who really know each other and really love each other. And then you have this kind of high population density in a highly populated area. We said, hey, this is a real opportunity to explore a long-term connection between two church communities where they can really find ways to maximize their stewardship and make the best use of their resources.

And so our vision for Brooklyn is that it functions as a church in many ways what we would call a parish community. And the word parish is an Anglican word but we love this word because parish conveys the idea that a church takes spiritual responsibility for its neighborhood.

And we think that's a beautiful idea. And so we want to build that into our sense of identity as a community. We want Brooklyn here. We're celebrating Brooklyn but we really the challenge in Brooklyn is to take spiritual responsibility over these neighborhoods that are represented by this church.

Right? That we want to think of ourselves as being here for the sake of these neighborhoods. To become deeply invested. To develop ways of serving and meeting needs in this neighborhood.

Right? To be a home for any who want to be a part of what God is doing here.

And then we want to see the same reality continue to happen in Columbia Heights. And we want to see what it's like to function as one church with two distinct different unique parish communities that share key resources and staff and finances in ways that more enable us to focus on mission rather than reinventing the wheel again and again and again.

[32 : 59] And we're excited about all of the things that this allows us to do in terms of leadership development and raising up future pastors and creating a kind of launch pad for future church plants. And so I think that it's going to be exciting to see what happens.

But in all of these ways what I want to come back to is that all of this gospel centered community talk is so important to us and here's the thing that I kind of want to leave you with.

Because the gospel is meant to be experienced in community. It only makes sense in the context of community. Not as an abstract idea. Not as an answer to a theology question.

Not as a Sunday school discussion topic. But when it's actually lived out. So here's the challenge for everybody here. If you're here and you're not a Christian and you're just kind of checking this out or a friend consoled you into coming we're so glad that you're here.

And I just want to invite you to taste and see. Hang around. Check out a small group. Keep coming here. Get a sense of what life is like in a community.

[34 : 03] Not a perfect community. Right? Remember we're sinners. But we're sinners who are saved by grace who seek to experience the truth of that together. So come and taste and see if there isn't something here that you've been longing for.

And if you are a Christian and I know I've said this before if Advent is your home then I invite you to pour yourself in. To invest fully in this community.

It will change your life. Give yourself to what God is doing here. Allow God to use you to meet needs and to hold hands that only you can hold. We need you.

We want you to be a part of what we're doing. And we do all this with a hopeful expectation that God is going to do far more than we can ever ask or imagine. It's in his name that we say these words and now we pray.

Father we do ask that you would make this a true living reality for us Lord. That your gospel is you entering in forming a community and then using that community through the power and the presence of your son Jesus and the Holy Spirit to bless the world.

[35 : 12] We pray that that would be true of us. That one day we would look back and see all that you have done through us Lord. We thank you for that. We thank you for your presence here. And we pray your blessing as we move forward together.

In your son's name. Amen.