



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

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Our Vision for Northview

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

Many of you know the name Steve Jobs, he is the late founder of Apple Computer, in the early 1980s is really when Apple kind of took off, their famous ad on TV, you might have seen it, those of us who lived through it certainly remember it. It was 1984, and the ad was about a woman who was an olympian, throwing a big sledgehammer through an IBM screen, it was awesome. The company really began to blossom in those days, and the founder, Steve Jobs, was really great at vision casting and creating new products, and dreaming about what could be, but his skills did not lie in the area of people management, and so there was a really challenge that he had at that time that he could recognize. When they needed a CEO they needed someone who would come in and actually take over the company so it would free him up to go and do the things he was good at. He had identified at a time a guy named Jon Scully, Scully was the president and CEO of PepsiCo. So Pepsi owns, obviously, Pepsi drinks, but also Taco Bell and KFC and all that kind of stuff, PepsiCo. When he identified Scully, he went and visited him, right? Headhunted him, and Jobs met with him the first time and said, "Would you take this job at Apple Computer and run our company? It's a fledgeling but the potential is great." Scully's response was, "Apple what? Like, are you kidding me? I've got a really good job right now, I get paid really well, the Lord has," he didn't say the Lord, sorry, that was me, he said that he had been really blessed in his work at that time, and there's no way that he would give up all that he had been given to go off and take a risk like this at Apple Computer. Well, Jobs went away, but people who knew Steve Jobs also knew that he was very persistent, so he came back to Scully and he came back to Scully, and each time he was kind of rebuffed. Until finally one night, he had dinner with Jon Scully and as the story goes, they went to an office where they were overlooking the city, and Jobs came to Scully and stood next to him at the window. And they sat down near there and this is the way that Scully says that it went:

"He looked up at me [Steve Jobs] and just stared at me with the stare that only Steve Jobs has and he said, 'Do you want to sell sugar water for the rest of your life or do you want to come with me and change the world?' And I just gulped because I knew I would wonder for the rest of my life what I would have missed."

It's a very famous story that's written about in all sorts of business books, this was like the turning point, apparently, in Apple Computer. It's a sad story that Scully and Jobs didn't get along later. But ultimately, it really does demonstrate the power of an idea, doesn't it? You ever have an idea like that where it just grabs a hold of you, and you can picture a world where that idea comes to fruition and



the world where it doesn't come to fruition pales in comparison? It's like a world of sugar water in compared to one where the world is changed for the better. It's the power of an idea. If you talk to church planters, you'll hear lots of those kinds of ideas. I like spending time with church planters, I speak at conferences time to time where they're there, trying to encourage them. And I love going to those conferences because during lunchtime or dinner you get to sit around the table and talk to the planters, and they will share their story about how it is that they came to plant a church in Calgary or Saskatoon or wherever. And a lot of times, they're not from those places. It's not like they looked down the street and said, "Oh, I'm going to plant a church just near where I'm from." A lot of times their stories are crazy, like, "Hey, where are you from?"

"I'm from Vancouver Island."

"Really? Where are you planting a church?"

"In Regina."

"What? Like, how did that happen?"

"Well, okay, it's crazy, right? So we're on a road trip and we're going through Regina and all of a sudden we stop, we're having a meal and I'm looking around, and I just sense this burden in my heart for all of the people in Tim Hortons and I'm crying in Tim Hortons." And you're like, "What? You were doing what?" He goes, "I know, it's crazy! And I go back to Victoria where I'm from and all I can think about is Regina. Like who does that? And then all I can think about is, what would happen if we planted a church there and reached out to that particular people group, and then God would bring another circumstance my way, and then..." The power of an idea, man.

You ever have one? Where it won't let you go. A friend in Bellingham, he planted a church down there, and I remember going with him to the building that they were going to rent. It was actually an old church that had been either purchased for condo development or something, but it was still existing as a church, and they needed to lease it for a little while. And he stood outside, it was decrepit, right? It was a gross building, but he stood outside and said, "Jeff, can you just see it?" I said, "I'm seeing it." [Laughter] And he's like, "No no no, don't look at what it is, look at what it could be. And across the street is the Planned Parenthood, and we could reach out to the women going in there, and to the people who are there, and we canvas the neighbourhood here, there's no one who's a Christian anywhere near here. Up the street there's a church that used to exist that is now a Karate Dojo man. Can you imagine if we put a church in this location and reached out to these people?" And he was just getting giddy, and he was standing there just kind of shaking. And I was like, woah. It's the power of an idea.

I tell you all that because I have an idea. [Laughter] It's not my idea, it's God's idea. I'm a little bit embarrassed to tell you that I'm only bringing it up...I've been here at Northview for 12 years, 10 years as the lead pastor, and I'm embarrassed that I haven't brought it to you before. But you know, in ministry, sometimes you get so focused on putting out the fires in front of you and sorting these sorts of things out that you don't always lift your eyes to the horizon. Well, in the last little while we've lifted our eyes to the horizon and this is what we've seen. So this idea I've shared with elders and pastors and ministry leaders, and now I want to share it with you. And it is an idea that just might change the world. So, here's what I want to do. I want to give you three biblical propositions. I want to show you that the idea is not mine, it's actually God's, and then I want to show you two practical implications,



because it's not an idea that sits out there in the abyss. It's one that actually has huge implications for a church like ours. Three biblical propositions, two practical implications.

[Three Biblical Propositions]

Here's my three propositions. Here's statements from the Bible that I think are true, and then I'm going to show you from where in Scripture I get them. Here's the first one: the mission of the church is to make disciples by baptizing them and teaching them to obey all Christ commanded them. The mission of the church is to make disciples by baptizing them and teaching them to obey all Christ commanded them. Listen, I'm always really surprised when it is that people ask questions in pastors' meetings or in churches, and they sit around and say, "Okay, what is it that we as a church are going to do?" As if they've got to recreate the wheel here. Jesus actually gave his marching orders. Can you imagine, just the other day my son was watching, when I say watching, he was playing his video game. And if you have sons who have video games, you know that they get locked in on that video game. And I had to leave and go buy some gas south of the border so I didn't have to take a second mortgage on my house to get the gas, [laughter] and I said to him, "Listen Micah, what I need you to do," you know, talking to him while he's playing the game, "I need you to look after your sister. She's outside right now, she's at some point probably going to come inside, she needs to have some food, she'll come in and say, probably, words like, 'I'm hungry.' That is meaning that you need to get up and go get the food. You understand?"

"Uh huh. Uh huh. Uh huh." So at that point you're like, you don't understand. So you stand in front, "Wait, what are you doing?"

"Listen to me very closely. I have orders for you. While I'm gone, I'm going to go away and I'm going to come back. In the meantime, what I need for you to do is to look after your sister. You need to know exactly where she is at all times, when she comes in and asks for food, give her the food. Do you understand?"

"Yeah Dad. Get out of the way." You know? Okay. Now, my fear as I left the house was that if you had asked him, if you were able to come into my house and ask my son at that particular time, if you had asked him, "What is it you're supposed to do?" He would say, "I don't know." [Laughter] That was my fear. I think I called him later. "Are you looking after your sister?" The problem of course, is the fear is real in his case, and it's the case, honestly, with lots of churches. We think that Jesus has not given us a command or marching orders. He has given them to us. Matthew 28:18,

"Then Jesus came to them and said, [It's the end of Matthew's gospel here, right? The final words, according to Matthew, from the Lord Jesus.] 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

Now in English, you don't really get the clarity that the original language, Greek, gives you in this passage. What this passage has, is it has one command, one imperative, okay? There is a main verb. You guys remember English class? This is going to be so awesome. The next two minutes of your life is going to be English. Okay, the main verb here is "make disciples." So, when Jesus gives them a



command, this is it. Make disciples. You can put a big exclamation point at the end of it. “So all authority on heaven and earth have been given to me, make disciples!” How, Jesus? Like, how do we do that? Now, he gives his answer through three dependent verbs. Excited about that? They’re called participles. Okay? You do it by going, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son...and “teaching them to obey all that I commanded you.” So look, it’s a really clear direction. The role of the church, while Jesus is gone, awaiting his return, is to make disciples. How? We go, because they’re not going to come to your door. <Knocks> “Hey, I’m here to be a disciple.” That’s not going to happen. So you’ve got to go, you proclaim the gospel to them, some of them will believe, when they believe you baptize them, but your mission is not done at that point. You teach them, then, to “obey all that I commanded you,” and you gather them, ultimately, in a church, where that happens, and then, what you do, you make them go, so you baptize some more, then you teach them to “obey all that I commanded you,” so that some will go, see how this works?

Most of us are freaked out by this, to be honest with you. We lift our eyes to the horizon and see the mission of God, but isn’t it great? You see the last phrase that he gives you there? Matthew 28:20,

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

“I’m not leaving you alone. I’m going to give you my Spirit, and he’s going to be with you everywhere you go. I, who have authority over all things, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, so you go, you do this mission, and I’m going to be right there with you, at every turn. So if you freak out on the corner because you’re like, ‘Oh, God’s not with me,’ no. I’m with you. Whatever you do in this mission, I’m there.” It’s the same words, in fact, that are used in the book of Joshua, when God tells Joshua, “Okay, so now time for you to go take the land,” he said, “but be strong and courageous Joshua, don’t be afraid. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Right, and in the same way, when we go, God is there with us. In other words, there’s a guarantee here, that God is going to accomplish this mission. This is what he’s doing in the world. The mission of the church is to make disciples, by baptizing them and teaching them to obey Christ commanded them.

Number two: disciple making necessarily happens in the context of the local church. So that disciple making that I just described, that necessarily happens in the context of the local church. As you go through the rest of the Scriptures, what you find is there is no such thing as a churchless Christian. “Oh, I can be a believer in Jesus and go to the pub and hang out with my friends and stuff.” No, if you want biblical support for that kind of life, you will not find it anywhere. Every Christian in the Bible who comes to faith in Jesus is then plugged in to a local church. If there is not a local church there, God builds one through his apostles. The early church go this, they understood this, and so you get some early church fathers making really provocative statements, like this. Tertullian, one of the church fathers: “You cannot have God as your Father if you do not have the church as your mother.” In other words, don’t come to me and tell me that there is such a thing as a churchless believer. There is no such thing as a churchless believer. Not for long, anyway. It’s not just supposed to be you and God, it’s supposed to be you and God and a whole bunch of other people. So what you find in the book of Acts, quite honestly, which is kind of the record of the early church and how this mission started going forward, Jesus gives this commission, and then the way it’s lived out in the book of Acts, you get the



apostle Paul going out and he's reaching, or Peter going out, and he reaches people, and when the people come to faith in Jesus, they get plugged together in a community. Here's a great description of one of those. Acts 2:42-47,

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

You do see this love being shown between these people as is evidenced by the sharing of their stuff. They love each other and are committed so much to each other that that's what they do is they see a need and they say, "I can meet that need," so the sale of this, "I'm going to give my money to you," for Luke who's writing the book of Acts, that's his sure sign that you love your brothers and sisters, your willingness to share. Your time, your energy, everything.

So what you find in Acts, then, is you get the missionaries going out, they reach people, establish a church that reaches out to its community, and then they go on to another place, and so the design of God in reaching the world is essentially this way: so there's a church in a particular location, and people are won to faith in Christ and disciplined there, and then they go and they reach their local community, just naturally. Some of the people from that church, though, are going to go over to another place, and they're going to reach people in another city, and then that city is going to have a church that people are disciples, and they're reaching out to their local community, and one of those people is going to come over to this other spot, and they're going to reach out to their local community, and before you know it, church after church after church is planted as a missionary engine in it's particular locale. So disciples are made through the multiplication of healthy local churches. That's God's plan.

My third proposition: to whom much is given much is required. One of my favourite passages in the New Testament is this one, it's in Matthew 25. It's a description from the lips of Jesus of what it is that you disciples ought to be doing between the time of my leaving you and coming back. Right, I'm leaving my Spirit in the middle, but what should you be doing between those times? So, in other words, as we await the return of Christ, what is it that we ought to be on about, and what should our posture be regarding the mission he's given us? Matthew 25:14-30,

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. [Who's wealth? His wealth, right? Okay.] To one he gave five bags of gold, [I don't know, roughly five million dollars, in those days that would probably buy a small country. So it was a lot of money.] to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. [So, the master determines the amount that each one has. Some of them have more, and some of them have less, that's fine. Then he went on his journey. [Who's money did he



hand? Who's money? You guys, come on now, who's money? Yeah, the master's money. I know this is hard for those of us in the west to get. It's the master's money, it's been loaned, given over to steward.] The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money."

Now you need to understand that in those days, doubling your money is not as easy as, I don't know, buying a piece of property in Walnut Grove. It doesn't just happen over a couple of years. Woo, alright! It happens as a result, in those days, of deliberate, aggressive effort. Creativity, risk taking, a constantly motivated pushing forward attitude, to double the money. Which is probably why the guy with the one talent is sitting there thinking to himself, man, I'm watching this five bag of gold guy and the two bag of gold guy and I'm thinking to myself, that's a lot of work! And do you know what's on TV? I've got to binge-watch that show. So, I'm just going to take that bag of gold, and I'm going to put it back here, and I'll just dig a hole, put it in the ground, and then, you know. That way when the master returns, he gets exactly what he had, and I can just go watch the shows.

"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"

You do notice, of course, that they are identical commendations, yes? What you do not get is the master, having commended the guy with five bags of gold, turning to the guy with two saying, "Oh, you only got two more? Well, that guy's got five, so." The expectation with the two bags is to double the two bags. The expectation with the five bags is to double the five bags.

"Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, [Here's the deal.] 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. [You're resourceful.] So I was afraid [So if there's anyone to blame around here, it's probably you for being so hard, and not creating a safe space for me. [Laughter] See, this guy is the first millennial, right here. I'm just kidding. 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed, so I was afraid.] and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' [It's a little dusty, right? So, here you go, you can count it. There's none that's missing.] His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have [at least] received it back



with interest. ‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

There’s so many things that you could learn here, but let me point out two really big ones. Number one: it’s the master’s money used for his purposes. Amen? You can imagine if you came to the church this week, sometimes I ride my bike to the church and I don’t have lunch, and I said to you, “Oh, I’ve got 20 dollars, here’s 20 dollars out of my wallet, can you please go get me some lunch? I love Donair’s. So you can go get me Donair’s.”

“Oh, cool man, thanks, yeah, I’ll make sure to do that.” So you go off, and you come back, and in your hand is a bag of candy. 20 dollars worth. And I’m like, “What did you...why do you have a bag, where’s the Donair?”

“What Donair?”

“The one I asked you to get. That was the thing, I made an order. Donair, I gave you 20 dollars, my money, so that you could use it for the purpose that I gave it to you for.”

“Oh, I just thought that I could use it for whatever I want. And I love candy.”

“You stupid...” Right because people who don’t use the things they’ve been given for the purposes for which they’ve been given are silly. It’s nonsense. And yet, how many Christians live this way? You do realize that everything, all the time, all the ability, all the privilege, all of *everything*, is yours because God gave it to you, and he expects a return. How much? Double. Right? But how am I going to do that? Uh, risk taking, creativity, with the money that he’s got, seeking his interests, not yours, figuring out how it is that you can multiply what it is that you’ve been given for his ends. Right? That’s the second piece of this, and probably the most important one. This whole thing requires proactivity. I wanted to use the word aggression, but you guys are Canadian. [Laughter] It’s proactive, right? Walking with a forward tilt.

And there’s ways you can miss that. I mean, the errors you can make here are obviously to go and take what he’s given you and bury it in the ground, but you can also make that error by underestimating what you’ve been given, right? Like, you’re not going to double that money if you think you’ve only been given a little bit, you think that you’re a one bag of gold person, when you’re actually a five bagger. You’re going to say, “Look, I made another one,” and God’s going to be like, “I gave you five.”

“Oh, but I was trying to be humble.”

“Well, you were disobedient.” Sometimes we hide behind our humility. “Oh, compared to Bill Gates, I don’t have very much.” Right, compared to Bill Gates, nobody does. But what do you have? To whom much is given, much is required. So, how much do you guys think Northview has? Look, I know the passage is about individuals and their standing before God, but surely, surely we can apply it to churches, right? We have to give an account for our time here as members of this church, what is Northview, are we a one bagger? To whom much is given, much is required.



[Two Implications]

So here's my big point, my "therefore." Our mission is to make disciples through the proactive multiplication of healthy churches. I think that that's God's plan for his church. Our mission is to make disciples through the proactive multiplication of healthy churches. So here's two quick implications as we finish this, alright? Number one: if we want to be proactively multiplying healthy churches in the model that we ourselves are a healthy church, then we really do need to focus a little bit on how healthy our church is and how healthy the disciples are that we're making. And I'll be honest with you, in the last little while, one of the things that we've been thinking about a lot is, what kinds of disciples are we making at Northview? Most of your spiritual input, for most of you, comes in what we're doing right now. It's on Sundays, you might listen to a podcast, you might come to a community group, and we want you to be involved in all of those things, in fact the goal of our church is to have this be kind of the front window and then you get involved in all those other things, but for most people, this is where they get the chief spiritual input for their week.

So this is the chief disciple making time for you. So what kinds of disciples are we making, based upon the things that we do in our Sunday services? And our attitude recently has been, oh, I don't know if they're as healthy as we want. Why? Because our services are really short. Have you noticed that? Like honestly, sometimes I feel like I'm putting you through a factory. Come in, sing 2 songs, I preach at you 40 minutes, sing 2 songs, get out. [Laughter] Go live the way Jesus wants ya. So, if I were to say, okay in 10 years, 15 years of that kind of ministry, I'm going to tell you that what we're going to do is create a lot of people with some really big heads, and their hearts are going to be kind of withered. Our goal, as a church, is to touch your affections. The goal of Jesus is to touch your affections. So it's not just, yeah, I think right things about God, but I *feel* the feelings in line with those things. And the way you do that is through the arts and through community life, and these are things we just don't have time to do. And so look, one of the things we're going to do this summer is we're going to go back to two services on Sunday mornings, they're going to be a little bit longer, 9:00. 11:00, and we're going to carry that through the fall. It's going to be packed. And because that's the case, and because we just have too many people in our church to do that kind of ministry, we as an elder board are talking about buildings and that sort of thing, if you're interested in that we have a congregational meeting that's happening in June. So, we'll let you know more about that. We want to make Northview as healthy as possibly can.

But the big piece of this is not that. The big piece of this is, we also want to multiply healthy churches both locally and globally. Like it's our business to make sure that the church is renewed in Canada and around the world. So how are we going to do that? Well the traditional way that you renew a church is that you find a pastor who can go in a lead that renewal. A well rounded kind of person that can go in and bring that church some kind of renewal. So we train pastors here. Do you know, I have meetings from time to time with people who are looking for pastors, because we do some training, and they'll say, "Do you have anybody who can come in and interview for our pastoral ministry role?" And I'll say, "Sure, we do, send me the list of qualifications." Okay? And it usually takes about a half hour to download that document of the list, and then after the time you read it at the end, you say to them,



“So, you’re looking for the Lord Jesus then, yes?” [Laughter] Right? In some cases, I don’t even think he would qualify. But yet, you love their heart, because they’re saying if we got Jesus here, it would all go well. Right, if you just get a pastor in, this church can be renewed, and our community reached and people would grow in grace, and yes, the pastor is huge, and we want to provide those kinds of pastors. It’s why we’re committing time, money, and effort to our Immerse training program, offer a Master of Divinity program through our local church, going to churn out three, four students every year, try to do this.

But that’s not the only way it happens. The other way it happens is that you actually renew those churches by planting new ones or replanting old ones. You do realize that we’ve done that we’ve done that replanting thing a couple of times, and it’s been amazing. Like today in Mission, there are about 450 people who are meeting. You do know that that’s like three times the largest church in Mission. Because we took over a church up there and the Lord has used Ezra to lead it in a remarkable way. There are people in the First Nations community being reached with the gospel because of that church. Tricity Church we planted in September of this year. At their Easter services this year, 600 people came. Every weekend there’s about 350 people there, it’s one of the largest churches in the tricities. And it’s nine months old. They’re talking, Mike Glezos, the campus pastor, is like, “Jeff, what are we going to do? We have too many people.” I don’t know man, let’s do another. And another, and another, and another, because this is what God wants.

So look, let’s put some numbers on it. Five local churches in ten years, (see I wanted to say ten in ten years, but some of the pastors and elders said, “Back off the cliff Jeff.” [Laughter]) but let’s say at least five local in ten years, and globally let’s say ten in ten years, let’s say twenty. At least ten in ten years. You okay? Here’s the problem, it costs a lot of money. It’s going to cost a lot of money. Who’s money? To whom much is given much is required. So I don’t know, you guys want to just keep drinking sugar water the rest of your lives or do you want to change the world? [Laughter]

Lynn Anderson is the name of a pastor who wrote a book years ago, and in it he shared this story, he said,

“About 350 years ago a shipload of travelers landed on the northeast coast of America. The first year they established a town site. The next year they elected a town government. The third year the town government planned to build a road five miles westward into the wilderness... In the fourth year the people tried to impeach their town government because they thought it was a waste of public funds to build a road five miles westward into a wilderness. Who needed to go there anyway?... Here were people who had the vision to see three thousand miles across an ocean, overcoming great hardships to get there. But in just a few years they weren’t able to see even five miles out of town.”

Man, I wish I had time to recount to you what God has done in the 40 years of Northview Community Church’s history. The thousands of people who have been baptized, the missionaries that have been sent, the impact for the kingdom that God has made through this local church. We’ve come a long, long way. You know what would be the saddest thing? Is if we sat here and thought, yeah but who



needs to go there anyway? So I don't know, what do you say, let's build a road? See what the Lord will do. Let me pray for us,

Lord, I'm so thankful. I'm embarrassed, Father, that this is only being brought out now, and as our church Lord, I honestly feel like we should be about this, and we have quietly been about this for a while, I don't know if I've used the language of proactive about it though. And I pray, Father, that you would empower us to double your money, we want to, as a church, hear your commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servants." So I pray, Father, that you would make it a reality among us. I know that there are obstacles in the way for all of these things, it's easy to stand up and talk about it, it's very difficult to do it. But I pray, Father, that by the power of your Spirit, you would move your people, so that in 20 years time, there is a gospel renewal happening in this country, and around the world Father. And may we play our small part in it. Be glorified Father, that's what we want. Your glory. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.