



# MULTIPLY

MIDPOINT OF THE GREATER STILL INITIATIVE  
SERIES DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

# GREATER *Still*

NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO FAR MORE  
ABUNDANTLY THAN ALL THAT WE ASK OR  
THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER AT WORK  
WITHIN US, TO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH  
AND IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL  
GENERATIONS, FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.

EPHESIANS 3:20 - 21

**THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:**

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**PASTOR  
MATT  
BROOKS**

In April 2022 we began a two-year **GREATER STILL** initiative.

Our Primary Goal has always been to have 100 percent of our people trusting Jesus with their generosity through **GREATER STILL**.

Many of you stepped up to that challenge, and we now have 340 commitments to the **GREATER STILL** initiative.

Our Secondary Goal was \$19 million over two years to support all that God has called us to do through ministry, missions, and in the future. At the start of this **GREATER STILL** initiative we received \$16.02 million in commitments and expected gifts! We are excited to share a glimpse of what God has done because of your generosity.

I love hearing stories of your personal **GREATER STILL** journey because that is the heart of this initiative.

I am so proud of the faith our church family has shown so far in **GREATER STILL**, and I am truly anticipating a joyous journey as we continue on this path together. God is doing and going to do great things in and through the people of FBCBA.

**YOU ARE LOVED!**



WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO  
**PRIMARY**  
**GOAL**

**100% ENGAGEMENT**

We challenge every person who calls FBCBA home to allow God to work in you & through you to do abundantly more than anything we could ask or imagine through your faith and in your generosity.

Each of us should examine where we are in our journey of generosity and simply take the next step God is calling

# WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO **SECONDARY** **GOAL**

## **\$8.48 MILLION** | **GREATER MINISTRY**

To reach BA & Beyond, we'll extend the reach of the Gospel through our ministry efforts, personnel support, and operations. This amount represents both 2022 and 2023 budget years.

## **\$1.52 MILLION** | **GREATER MISSIONS**

We support 40 missions partners both locally and internationally on five continents. We'll expand our efforts with new local ministry opportunities and send missionaries around the world to multiply disciples to follow Jesus.

## **\$9 MILLION** | **GREATER FUTURE**

The future of FBCBA is bright, and we desire to see God move in the next 20-25 years in an updated and renovated facility. Enhancements to our worship center, atrium/lobby, next generation spaces, and offices will better position us for the future. Bringing our entire ministry into one physical building will allow us to reach BA & Beyond with the Gospel.

**\$19 Million**  
*Over the next two years*



# WHAT GOD HAS DONE





**30** SALVATIONS at Vacation Bible School, Kids Camp, and Student Camp



**34** SALVATIONS during Colombia Missions Trip

**700** ATTEND Christmas on the Hill



**302** ATTEND CR 10th Anniversary

**35** BAPTISMS in 2022



**THOUSANDS** Attend Easter Weekend and Christmas Worship Events at FBCBA

# WHERE ARE WE GOING?

GREATER STILL includes three important areas of focus— Greater Ministry, Greater Missions, and Greater Future.

Greater Future aims to update and renovate our facility to maximize our mission to reach BA & Beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus.

Your initial commitment of \$16 million toward the two-year, \$19 million goal will provide two-thirds of total cost of the \$9 million Greater Future project plan (with \$10 million having been allocated to Greater Ministry and Greater Missions over two years).

After prayerful discernment and evaluation of construction plans and processes, we believe a phased approach for the Greater Future project will bring the best stewardship of resources that our giving represents.

Of the \$9 million allocated to Greater Future from the Greater Still goal of \$19 million, the budget for Phase 1 has been set at \$6 million. Since we are committed to being debt-free, we will not begin this phase until 70% of the funds are received.

The budget for Phase 2 will be \$3 million and would only commence once we reach 70% of this amount, following the completion of Phase 1. We prayerfully anticipate your faithful giving will allow us to accomplish Phase 2 sooner than later.



# PHASE 1

Phase 1 includes renovations to our Worship Center, expansion of the Atrium, and the relocation of the church offices from the portable building across the parking lot. Relocated classrooms is also part of this phase, with no loss in the total classroom count.



# PHASE 2

Phase 2 includes relocating our Student Ministry to the second floor of the Next Gen building. The first floor will be redesigned to accommodate a new Kids worship space and an expanded and updated lobby area for Next Gen ministries, including an indoor play structure.



**PLEASE NOTE:**  
The following images represent ideas and concepts for what a renovation project at FBCBA could look like. They do not represent completed plans or designs and are subject to change.





# WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?



## **NEW COMMITMENT:**

You recently joined our church family and are wondering, "What is the **GREATER STILL** initiative, and how do I become part of it?" **GREATER STILL** is for anyone who calls First Baptist Church Broken Arrow their church home. Our hope is that everyone at FBCBA will join together, catch the vision for God's desire to do far more than we could ask or think, and be part of our mission to reach BA and beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus. We invite you to consider making a 12-month generosity commitment to **GREATER STILL**.

## **FINISH STRONG:**

Others made a commitment one year ago and perhaps for some of us, this journey has been as difficult – or possibly more difficult – than we had envisioned. Maybe you went to a completely new level in your generosity and are still adjusting your life to your commitment. Maybe you have experienced job loss, job change, or unexpected financial expenses. Persevere to finish strong in the journey you began. We all stand together, encouraging one another. We know the Lord is faithful. He will provide, and we want to finish strong in our **GREATER STILL** commitments.

## **INCREASE:**

Some of us made our **GREATER STILL** commitment one year ago, and it is possible that we had an increase in faith or finances. Keeping that commitment has not been easy and has likely required a lot of sacrifice. However, you may be sensing the Lord stretching you to take an additional step of faith in your generosity. We challenge those of you to respond to His generosity by increasing your commitment. Generosity is not a one-time event; it is a journey. Consider asking yourself these questions: Am I still giving in a way that challenges me? Am I still trusting Him? Pray and ask yourself if He is inviting you into another step of faith with an increased commitment.

# GREATER *Still* GIFT CHART

As you pray and discern how God would ask you to give during this time, use this gift chart as a discipleship tool—let it be something that inspires and challenges you towards greater generosity for Christ's Kingdom as we seek to give it all for Him.

GIFTS NEEDED	TWO-YEAR GIFT LEVEL	ANNUAL GIFT	MONTHLY GIFT	GIFT LEVEL TOTAL
1	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 83,333	\$ 2,000,000
1	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 62,500	\$ 1,500,000
1	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 41,667	\$ 1,000,000
2	\$ 500,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 20,833	\$ 1,000,000
4	\$ 250,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 10,417	\$ 1,000,000
5	\$ 150,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 6,250	\$ 750,000
7	\$ 100,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 4,167	\$ 700,000
12	\$ 75,000	\$ 37,500	\$ 3,125	\$ 900,000
20	\$ 65,000	\$ 32,500	\$ 2,708	\$ 1,300,000
25	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 2,083	\$ 1,250,000
45	\$ 35,000	\$ 17,500	\$ 1,458	\$ 1,575,000
50	\$ 25,000	\$ 12,500	\$ 1,042	\$ 1,250,000
85	\$ 15,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 625	\$ 1,275,000
105	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 417	\$ 1,050,000
130	\$ 7,500	\$ 3,750	\$ 313	\$ 975,000
150	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,500	\$ 208	\$ 750,000
Many	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,250	\$ 104	\$ 725,000

Learn more about  
GREATER STILL at:

[FBCBA.org/greaterstill](http://FBCBA.org/greaterstill)

GREATER STILL  
TOTAL GIFT GOAL

**\$19 Million**  
*Over the next two years*



## I AM NEW TO GREATER STILL

I would like to make a 12-month commitment to the GREATER STILL generosity initiative in the amount of:

\$

*\*This includes your regular giving over the next 12 months as well as your expanded giving and stored resources.*

## I AM ALREADY COMMITTED TO GREATER STILL

My current Greater Still commitment is:

\$

At the midpoint of Greater Still, I would like to:

Confirm my commitment to finish strong

Increase my Greater Still commitment to:

\$

NAME

EMAIL

PHONE

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

# Journey of Generosity

**AN INITIAL GIVER** is someone who decides to give for the first time out of a response to God's Word about giving. This is someone who decides to give something and trust God and the leaders of the church with this gift.

**A CONSISTENT GIVER** is someone who decides to give something and to give it on a consistent basis to exercise the discipline of giving as a disciple of Jesus. Often, someone who decides to make their gift an online recurring gift will be someone who is learning the behavior of consistency. Non-online givers can be consistent givers as well of course; it just requires more discipline.

**AN INTENTIONAL GIVER** is someone who understands the pre-eminence of Christ and that He is before all things - that all things were created by Him, for Him, through Him, and to Him. This giver places such a significant priority on their giving that it drives their spending and their saving, as opposed to their spending and saving driving their giving.

**A SURRENDERED GIVER** is someone who recognizes the power of the Gospel and is surrendered to honoring God with 100% of their resources as a result. A surrendered giver is someone who gives in a way that changes them; in a way that reflects that the totality of their resources belongs to God. A surrendered giver isn't just concerned with what they ARE giving but is more concerned with what they're NOT giving and why. They seek to honor God with 100% of what He has given them, whether that means direct monetary giving or a God-honoring use of an existing resource.

**AN ETERNAL GIVER** is someone who thinks about the long-term effects of generosity rather than month-to-month generosity or even year-to-year. An eternal giver makes decisions in light of eternity for the long-term rather than earthly short-term. They think of what home they buy, what car they purchase, or how much savings they choose to keep all in relations to the impact of their generosity capacity. An eternal giver might be someone who has a lifetime giving goal which governs their larger-ticket decisions. Much like a surrendered giver makes a commitment that will govern his/her monthly and annual decisions, an eternal giver makes a lifetime or longer-term giving commitment that governs his/her larger-item purchases like homes, cars, and investments.

# KEY DATES

## *Commitment Sunday*

**FEBRUARY 26**

In every worship service, the FBCBA family will come forward with their generosity commitments to the Greater Still vision. Leading up to that day, seek God's will for how He wants to grow you and how He is leading you to participate—by committing to Greater Still for the first time, by committing to finish strong with your existing pledge, or by increasing your original commitment.

## *Reveal & Big Give Sunday*

**MARCH 19**

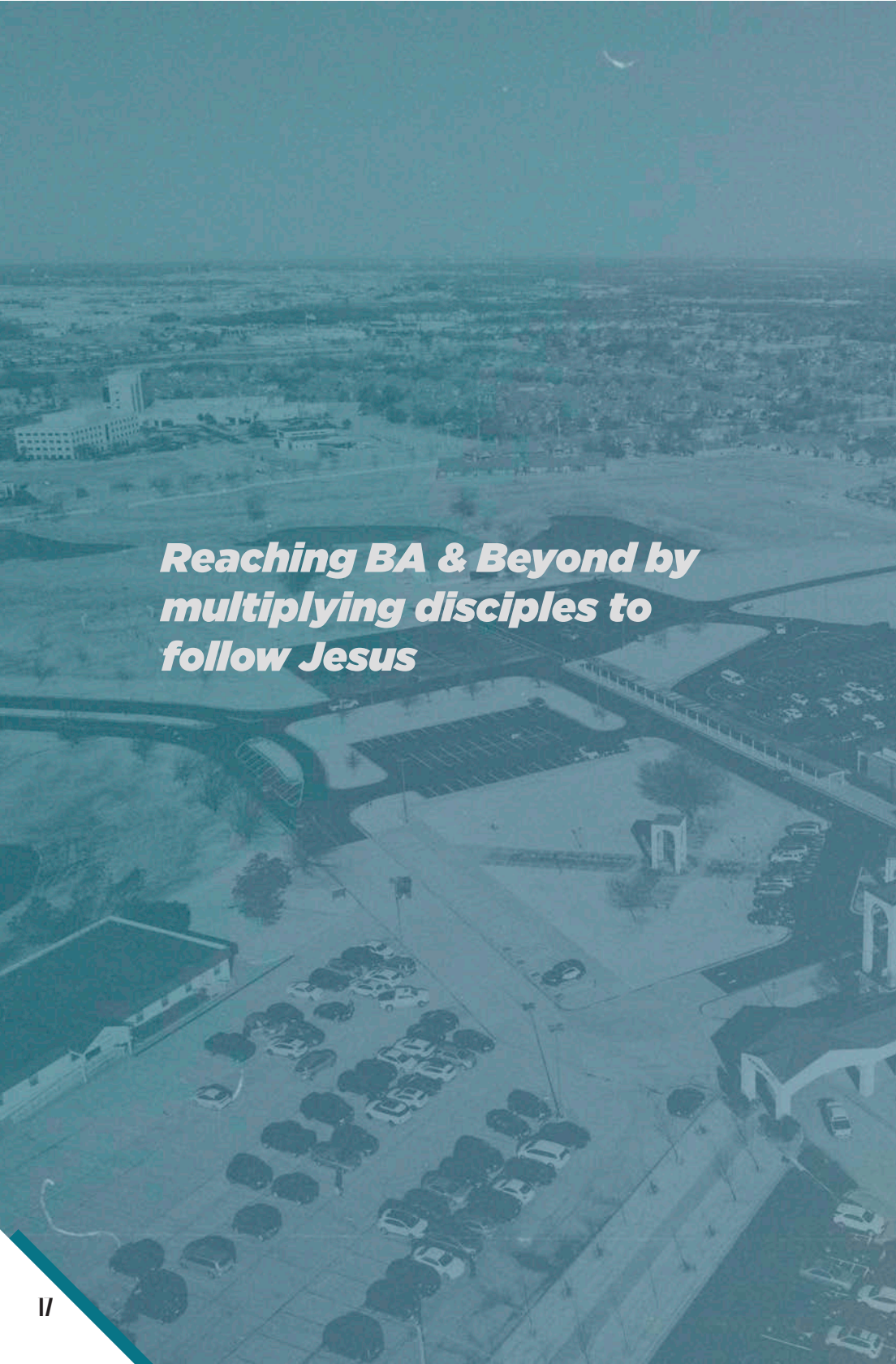
*Reveal and Big Give Sunday* is the day we will announce our new total in pledges and anticipated gifts!

This is also the day when we're challenging all of us to make the most significant gift possible toward our commitments. We're told that the sooner we can get started, the more confident we can be in preventing cost increases.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GREATER STILL

[FBCBA.ORG/GREATERSTILL](http://FBCBA.ORG/GREATERSTILL)





***Reaching BA & Beyond by  
multiplying disciples to  
follow Jesus***



# MULTIPLY

SERIES GUIDE

# GROUPS SESSION 1

## What We Set Out to Do (Isaiah 43:1-19)

Throughout our MULTIPLY sermon series, Pastor Matt will remind us of what we set out to do as a church when we launched our two-year GREATER STILL initiative—GREATER MINISTRY, GREATER MISSION, GREATER FUTURE. God desires to work in us and through us, as we seek to reach BA and beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus.

### OPENING DISCUSSION

In Ephesians 3:20-21, the apostle Paul gives us the following declaration:

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

1. What are some ways Ephesians 3:20-21 calls us to pray huge, God-sized prayers?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What prayers have you seen God answer in the last year?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How should God's answering prayers encourage us to continue praying?

### PASSAGE CONTEXT

God is faithful. That statement bears repeating: God is faithful. In the ups



and downs of life, God's faithfulness is something we can rely on. Isaiah was a prophet to the southern kingdom of the nation of Israel—Judah. While there are glimmers of hope throughout Isaiah, much of the book is focused on God disciplining His people for their repeated struggles with idolatry.

Isaiah 43 is called a “salvation oracle” in that God comforts His people. Above and beyond the discipline they experience through God's judgment, God will still be faithful to His people. Today, we consider some excerpts from Isaiah 43.

## **GOD'S PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE**

Isaiah 43:1-3

*But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.*

God comforted His people with the reminder of His presence. It was God who created Israel, redeemed Israel, called His people by name, and made them His special possession. As their Creator, God was just and right to discipline His people for their idolatry. But as their Redeemer, God had no intention of abandoning His people. God's judgment on His people was not meant to destroy them but to awaken their need for Him.

4. Why is it important to remember that God's discipline on our sins reminds us of His love for us? (cf. Heb 12:5-11)

Verse 2 lists a variety of challenges God's people would face. Remember that in Isaiah, the people were suffering because of their own sinful choices. Nevertheless, God's grace tempers even His discipline. God's people may turn from Him, but He refuses to turn from His people. The

sweetest, most assuring five words a person could ever hear are God saying, "I will be with you." No matter what we face in life, God will be with us.

The waters may be deep and the river strong, but God won't let us be swept away or completely overwhelmed. The fire may be hot and our discomfort intense, but God will not allow us to be consumed.

5. Why is it important for us as a church to regularly remind one another that God never leaves nor forsakes those who've trusted Christ in salvation? (Cf. John 10:27-30; Rom 8:31-38; Matthew 28:18-20)

## **GOD'S PURPOSE IN THE PROCESS**

Isaiah 43:8-13

*Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true. "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and I am God. Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?"*

The scene in these verses is a courtroom. God summons the nation of Israel (v8) and then all the rest of the nations (v9). In this scenario, God is both defendant and the judge.

God's people are pictured here in a sad state of affairs. Their idolatry and sinful rebellion have made them blind and deaf. The rhetorical question about who can foretell the future or replay the past has no answer but the Lord. God's case builds until He declares at the end of verse 13, "I am God." God alone is God. He alone is deity. It is He and He alone we must

worship. And because of who He is—because He who is worthy of our worship is also the one we ultimately sin against—He alone can save us from ourselves and the consequences of our sin. If deliverance comes, it will not be from humankind but from God alone.

Jesus quoted Isaiah 43:10 in Acts 1:8 when He said His disciples would be His witnesses. God takes the mission He'd repeatedly chosen to give to the nation of Israel and commissions New Testament believers to the same mission. By God's design, His people have always been His plan for His glory to be declared to the nations.

6. Why is it essential for believers today to remember that God's people are His plan for sharing Jesus with our neighbors and the nations? What happens when we fail to live out that God-given mission?

7. Our church's two-year GREATER STILL initiative encompasses everything we are seeking to do as a church to reach BA and beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus. We're seeking the Lord to do His greatest work ever in and through the people of FBCBA. We're praying for forward movement in the areas of GREATER MINISTRY, GREATER MISSIONS, and a GREATER FUTURE. Which of those three areas are you most excited about moving forward? Why?

8. Concerning reaching BA and beyond, how can our approach to an initiative like GREATER STILL help us live as witnesses of the Lord's work here in the Tulsa Metro Area?



## GOD'S PEOPLE SING HIS PRAISE

Isaiah 43:14-21

*Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I send to Babylon and bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice. I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.*

Because we are not the Israelites to whom the book of Isaiah was first written, it is hard for us to feel the relief and joy from God reminding His people that He is their LORD and Redeemer. The word LORD in all capital letters is the Hebrew word Yahweh, the personal name God first disclosed to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3. LORD is the promise-making, covenant-keeping, ever-faithful name of God. The title redeemer reminds us that our God is a rescuer. Whereas He would have been just to simply let His people be destroyed by the consequences of their sin, He is still their Redeemer. His people may stumble, but God's love never falters.

God's discipline and redemption reflect His faithfulness to keep His promises (Deut 30:1-10). Salvation is of the Lord. He is the only Savior, the only redeemer. Jeremiah could recount God's faithfulness in Lamentations in the midst of judgment because God as a loving Father was doing what He said He would do.

The idea that God ultimately sent the people into Babylonian captivity is a heavy thought. God's discipline of His people is always motivated by His love, but that doesn't remove the painful consequences of sin. The hope here in Isaiah 43 is that their discipline won't be forever. Their punishment will last a season, but that season will ultimately come to an end. The God who sent them into captivity is the same God who will lead them out again. God is preparing to do "a new thing." He will act to bring about their deliverance and restoration. There will be a "new" exodus!

A few chapters later, in Isaiah 55, we read these words in verses 8-9: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

9. As for God's people in the time of Isaiah, His plans don't always go just like we imagine them to go. As people, we tend to like predictable plans. As we move forward with GREATER STILL, what are some unexpected challenges we may face together? When surprising situations arise, how can we keep the right perspective to stay focused on seeking the Lord and His will?

10. Today's passage ends with God's people collectively praising the Lord. The language of "formed" reaches all the way back to the creation account in Genesis. As God made creation, so He has made His people. When you think about trusting God's plans, what hymns and/or praise songs come to mind for GREATER STILL times such as these?

# SERMON NOTES

Week 1 | What We Set Out to Do



# GROUPS SESSION 2

## What God Has Done (Exodus 33:12-23)

Throughout our MULTIPLY sermon series, Pastor Matt will remind us of what we set out to do as a church when we launched our two-year GREATER STILL initiative—GREATER MINISTRY, GREATER MISSION, GREATER FUTURE. God desires to work in us and through us, as we seek to reach BA and beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus.

### OPENING DISCUSSION

1. When people speak of giving God the glory, what are the first things that come to mind?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How would you answer if someone asked, “How have you seen God at work in and through FBCBA over the last few months?” (Think through the lenses of Ministry, Missions, and Future.)

### PASSAGE CONTEXT

During the lengthy time Moses was with the Lord on Mount Sinai receiving the Law, the Israelites waiting down below fell into idolatry. They pressed Moses’ brother Aaron into making a golden calf for them to worship as an idol. Once completed, the molten calf was presented to the people as “the gods” who’d brought them up out of Egypt.

When Moses returned, the sin of idolatry was severely judged. This incident creates a narrative tension on how God can allow His reputation to be tied to a people continually defined by their sinful behaviors. Exodus 33 begins with God declaring that He would not go any further with His people. In response, Moses went outside the camp and set up ~

special tent of meeting. Today's passage is part of the conversation that day between Moses and the Lord.

## **A REQUEST TO KNOW GOD'S WAYS**

Exodus 33:12-14

*Moses said to the LORD, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

Moses starts by asking God for help leading the people of Israel. God speaking to Moses as a "man speaks to a friend" (Exod 33:11) shows us the closeness of Moses' relationship with the Lord. Scholars point out that Moses' starting with "See" in verse 12 essentially says, "God, now see here...." Moses challenges the idea that God will change how He leads by no longer personally guiding His people. If God didn't go with Moses and the people, how could Moses be sure that he would have all the resources needed to complete the mission God had given?

Hudson Taylor was a 19th-century missionary to China. Though times on the mission field were often challenging, God used Taylor in mighty ways to multiply disciples among the people of China. Taylor said famously, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies." He was confident that as long as He was in God's will and going about God's work, the Lord would undoubtedly provide all the resources needed to see the work completed.

3. Why is Taylor's quote above a timely reminder for our church as we reach the halfway point of our two-year Greater Still initiative? How does this quote help us think biblically about how we steward our lives for God's glory in every area? (cf. Matt 6:25-33).

In verse 13, Moses asked specifically to know God's "ways." Moses didn't

just want to know God's ways, he wanted to know God Himself better. He desired to understand God better by knowing God more fully.

Twice in verse 13, we see the word "favor." He reflects on the fact that he and God have an intimate relationship fueled by God's grace. Moses reminds God of His grace beyond the man Moses to the whole nation of Israel. Verse 13 ends with Moses saying, "Consider too that this nation is your people." The Lord responds with the most reassuring words we can hear: "My presence will go with you." The phrasing in the Hebrews is literally, "My face will go with you"—a metaphor for God's close relationship with Moses.

4. The New Testament says every believer has the Holy Spirit-given ability to understand God's Word (cf. 1 Cor 2:14-16). What are some ways God speaks to us today through His Word? What role does biblical wisdom play in how God guides us?

For us today, we know we hear God through His Word. Our ability to navigate the opportunities and challenges of life are connected to our grasp of biblical truth. In a sense, God's guidance for our lives arrive as time in His Word makes us wise. God will never speak or guide us today in a way that is contradictory to His will as revealed in His Word.

## **A REQUEST TO HAVE GOD'S PRESENCE**

Exodus 33:15-17

*And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."*

Even though God had just agreed His presence would go with the people, Moses seems to seek some additional assurance. Some scholars have proposed the tension here is Moses wanting to make sure God



wouldn't just accompany him alone but go with His people as a whole. We see the emphasis in verse 15 on the Israelites being God's people. It was God's abiding presence with His people that made them distinct from all the other people on the planet.

Because of the death and resurrection of Christ, believers today don't need to stress about pleading for God's presence to stay with us. We don't need to fret as Moses did about whether we've "found favor with God." The New Testament makes clear that through a faith relationship with Jesus Christ, any sinner still separated from God can experience God's favor in His amazing grace.

Romans 3:23-24 says:

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...*

The end of verse 17—that Moses had found favor with God and that God knew His name—is only strengthened and intensified for the believer today because of Jesus.

5. How should the biblical assurance that our salvation is secure in Christ make us bolder than ever to see God's kingdom advanced and disciples multiplied?

6. Life is a journey of both mountaintops and valleys. What are some ways God has grown your faith through the things you've experienced so far in life? What are some ways your faith has grown by how you see God at work in and through FBCBA?

## **A REQUEST TO SEE GOD'S GLORY**

Exodus 33:18-23

*Moses said, "Please show me your glory." And he said, "I will make all*

*my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."*

As Moses became more and more assured, he asked to see God's "glory." It's like Moses saying, "Lord, all this sounds great, but will you put it in writing." The glory of God is the outward display or manifestation of His perfection in all His attributes. The Hebrew word translated glory means "weighty." In Scripture, the noun is used for a person's "weighty" reputation or honored status.

Moses asks God for a glimpse of His glory. In one sense, the request seems a bit audacious. Had Moses forgotten seeing God's glory in the burning bush? What about seeing God's glory as God delivered His people out of slavery in Egypt? Didn't Moses see God's glory daily in the visible cloud that led the Israelites day and night? Yes, Moses had seen God's glory in all those ways in the past, but he still sought some kind of visible assurance that God would indeed do all He promised to do.

7. Have you ever experienced a time when you needed God's reassurance and received it from Him? What happened? How did you know it was the Lord?

God agrees to have His "goodness" pass before Moses in revealing His glory. By this, God says, He will proclaim His "name." Because of God's glorious holiness, for Moses to see too much of His glory would result in Moses' certain death. God places Moses in a place where the rock of the mountain for protection and prepares to pass by.

In Exodus 34, God does indeed pass before Moses. God proclaims His goodness by confessing His name—His character in all its multifaceted perfection! Exodus 34:5-7 reads:

*The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and*

*proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.*

How does all that proclaim God's "goodness?" J. I. Packers explains it as follows in the book *Knowing God*: All of God's "particular perfections are mentioned here, and all that goes with them—God's truthfulness and trustworthiness, His unfailing justice and wisdom, His tenderness, forbearance and entire adequacy to all who penitently seek His help, His noble kindness...--these things together make up God's goodness in the overall sense of the sum of His revealed excellencies."

8. As we as a church seek to invest our lives in reaching BA and beyond to multiply disciples to follow Jesus, why is it essential for us to keep God's goodness front and center in our minds and hearts? How can an initiative like Greater Still "miss the mark" if we forget God's goodness to us and His mission to show His goodness and love to others?



# SERMON NOTES

Week 2 | What God has done

# GROUPS SESSION 3

## Where We are Going (James 2:18-26)

Throughout our MULTIPLY sermon series, Pastor Matt will remind us of what we set out to do as a church when we launched our two-year GREATER STILL initiative—GREATER MINISTRY, GREATER MISSION, GREATER FUTURE. God desires to work in us and through us, as we seek to reach BA and beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus.

### OPENING DISCUSSION

In the mid-80s, late Christian recording artist Rich Mullins released a song entitled Screen Door. Mullins had a gift for phrasing complex truths in memorable ways and setting them to music. Some of Mullins better-known songs include Awesome God, Step by Step, Creed, Sing Your Praise to the Lord, and so on.

Mullins' song Screen Door is a perfect set-up for looking at today's passage from James 2. Have a member of your Group read the lyrics of Screen Door aloud. (Feel free as well to have your class look at the lyrics and play a recording of the song.)

*It's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine  
Faith without works baby  
It just ain't happenin'  
One is your left hand one is your right  
It'll take two strong arms to hold on tight  
Some folks cut off their nose just to spite their face  
I think you need some works to show for your alleged faith*

*Well, there's a difference you know  
'Tween having faith and playing make-believe  
One will make you grow the other one just make you sleep  
Talk about it  
But I really think you oughtta take a leap off of the ship  
Before you claim to walk on water  
Faith without works is like a song you can't sing  
It's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine*

*Faith comes from God and every word that He breathes  
He lets you take it to your heart so you can give it hands and feet  
It's gotta be active if it's gonna be alive  
You gotta put it into practice  
Otherwise*

*It's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine  
Faith without works baby it just ain't happenin'  
One is your right hand one is your left  
It's your light your guide your life and your breath  
Faith without works is like a song you can't sing  
It's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine*

1. In what ways is Mullins' metaphor that faith without works is like a screen door on a submarine profoundly accurate? Can you think of a similar analogy that likewise describes the essential nature of works that align with our faith?

## **PASSAGE CONTEXT**

In many ways, today's passage functions as the main thesis of the whole book of James. The works of which James speaks in this passage are the real-life, mercy of God-driven actions that flow from Spirit-enabled obedience. In the previous passage, James speaks of what he calls "the royal law" of love. Everything in the book of James before this passage points forward to this. Everything after this passage points back to this.

Today's passage asks, "How can we know if our faith in Christ is genuine?" The Bible tells us that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. When we trust Christ in salvation, we can bank on God keeping His promises. But are there any other assurances? Any other evidence that our faith is genuine? James says, "Yes!"

## **A Question of Proof**

James 2:18-19

*But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*

In verse 18, James imagines someone to whom he is writing pushing back against what he is saying. “What’s the big deal?” the challenger asks. “What is wrong with some believers having faith while other believers have works?” In response, James invites them to look at his faith as evidenced by his works. The grammar of the original Greek in this verse contains the idea that James’ works are “emerging from” his faith. Here’s the point: The claim of having faith in Christ is empty where there are no resulting works of faith. When Jesus enters a person’s life, that life begins to change. Before we trust in Christ, God loves us just the way we are—but He loves us way too much to leave us the way we were! Living faith in Christ cannot be separated from a life lived for Christ.

2. Where do you think the idea originated that it’s no problem to separate how we live from what we believe? How can we best help people who are confused about the inseparable connection between the two?

3. Respond to the following statement: “When faith in Christ is your root, His likeness and passions will be your fruit.” (Cf. Gal 5:22-25).

In verse 19, James speaks into the lives of those who have Christian theology but lack the loving and merciful works of Christ in their actual lives. The declaration that God is “one” is accurate orthodox theology for Jews and Christians alike. It confesses that our faith embraces monotheism, mono meaning one, and theism meaning God. One God.

The importance of this confession that God is one goes all the way back to the time of Moses. Deuteronomy 6:4-5:



*“Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

These words of God through Moses are the beginning of what the Jewish people call The Shema.

For Jews, the Shema is the foundational affirmation of God’s singularity and kingship, which they recite in prayer daily. James affirms his readers for having good theology. They believed the right things—this is vital! But the Christian life is about more than head knowledge. It’s about life change. Don’t miss the end of verse 19: Demons know and believe the truth about God. But merely believing true things doesn’t save them. Mere intellectual faith alone can’t save anyone.

4. Respond to the following statement attributed to the early church father Maximus the Confessor (c.580-662): “Theology without practice is the theology of demons.”

The word orthodoxy refers to correct belief. The word orthopraxy refers to correct conduct. God is warning us through James that orthodoxy (correct belief) is DEAD without orthopraxy (correct conduct). Good works do not save us, but we are saved for good works. (cf. Eph 2:8-10)

### **Waking Up from Foolishness**

James 2:20

*Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?*

In verse 20, James bluntly dismisses the side questions he’s been considering and returns to his main point. He refers to his challenger as both “senseless” and foolish.” James essentially asks, “Are you willing to wake up to the fact that a non-working faith is worthless?”

5. Where does a person error whose knowledge of God moves forward while their following of God lags behind? In what sense is that way of living “foolish?” What are the dangers of such an approach to life? What from your own life has helped you keep the two connected?

## The Faith and Works of Abraham

James 2:21-24

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.*

In verses 21-24, James gives two examples of true faith demonstrated by obvious, outward actions. James cleverly—or perhaps mischievously—chooses extreme examples in the contrast between Abraham and Rahab, the prostitute.

The book of Genesis tells us how all of God's promises to Abraham were bound up in the life of Isaac. James 2:21 references God calling Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac in Genesis 22. Hebrews 11:19 says Abraham obeyed because he knew God could raise someone from the dead—if it came to that. James says that by this act of faith, Abraham was "justified by works" in offering his son Isaac on the altar.

In verse 22 and following, James makes additional conclusions about the faith of Abraham. James speaks of Abraham's faith and works being active together, in partnership with one another. Abraham's faith was a "working" faith, active faith. Faith was not something Abraham exercised just one time when he was saved. His faith was continually active with his faith.

Note that Abraham's faith not only did something to, or with, his works; his works also did something to his faith. The end of verse 22 tells us that it was by Abraham's works that his faith was made complete. The Greek verb translated "complete" means "to perfect or to bring to maturity." Just as a believer's faith is matured by the trials of life (cf. James 1), so is faith developed and brought to completion by a life of active faith expressed in obedience.

Today's passage is essential for understanding the relationship of faith and works in the book of James—and in our own lives. In many places in the New Testament, Paul makes clear that salvation comes through grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, and not by any good works we do (cf. Eph 2:8-10). Verse 21 is the part of this passage that appears to contradict Paul directly.

The apparent contradiction is this: Is justification by faith in Christ (as

Paul claims), or is justification by the works themselves (as James seems to say in this passage)? This is a big deal because to be justified means that a sinner has been made right with God! This speaks to the essence of salvation! “Are we saved by faith in Jesus or our own good works?” So what do we do with this supposed contradiction?

Here’s the solution to the quandary: When understood correctly, Paul and James aren’t contradictory but complementary. James is not disputing Paul, nor is Paul correcting James. In fact, remember that at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, it was James himself (Pastor of the Church at Jerusalem) who fully supported Paul’s preaching of salvation by grace alone through faith alone.

So why do Paul and James appear to contradict one another? It comes down to the fact that Paul and James used the same Greek word for justification (diakiaoo) but with two different shades of meaning. The quote in verse 23 about Abraham’s moment of salvation was from Genesis 15 when Abraham was declared right with God. But look again at the example of faith James used in verse 21. James referred to the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 as when Abraham was justified by works. The way James puts all this together shows he saw Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac as evidence of the salvation Abraham received in Genesis 15.

6. Based on the chart below, how would you help a bible skeptic understand that James and Paul are not contradictory on faith and works but complementary? Why is it essential to protect that truth that 1) faith in Christ comes prior to works and that 2) the faith that has saved is a faith that gets to work?

### PAUL AND JAMES ON JUSTIFICATION: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Paul says...	James says...
A person is “justified by faith apart from works” (Romans 3:28)	A person is “justified by works and not by faith alone” (James 2:24)
Used “justified” to mean pronounced righteous in God’s sight	Used “justified” to mean proved righteous by the actions of faith
Shows how an unbeliever becomes a Christian	Shows how a believer should live as a Christian
Emphasizes the Root of Salvation	Emphasizes the Fruit of Salvation
Paul pointed to <b>Genesis 15</b>	James pointed to <b>Genesis 22</b>

Chart adapted from Chuck Swindoll, *James, 1 & 2 Peter, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndall House Publishers, Inc.).

## It's Not Real Faith Without Deeds

James 2:25-26

*And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*

Verse 25 speaks of Rahab the prostitute from Joshua 2. Rahab is interesting because she wasn't Jewish, so she was not a member of God's people by bloodline, and she was a woman of ill repute. Joshua sent in two spies to check out the strength of the city of Jericho. When the King of Jericho learned of the spies' presence, he sent soldiers to arrest them. Rahab risked her own safety to keep the men safe. In return, Joshua spared her and her family when Jericho was destroyed. The story in Joshua 2 makes clear that Rahab's actions were fueled by her faith in the one true God of the Israelites. As it was with Abraham, her faith was evident by her works—the point which James emphasizes again in James 1:26.

7. What are some applications of what this passage teaches on faith and works to our shared FBCBA mission of reaching BA and beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus?

8. How might our faith expressed in works apply to our personal involvement in completing our church's two-year Greater Still initiative?



# SERMON NOTES

Week 3 | Where are we going?

# GROUPS SESSION 4

## What is Your Role? (Matthew 13:44-46)

Throughout our MULTIPLY sermon series, Pastor Matt will remind us of what we set out to do as a church when we launched our two-year GREATER STILL initiative—GREATER MINISTRY, GREATER MISSION, GREATER FUTURE. God desires to work in us and through us, as we seek to reach BA and beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus.

### OPENING DISCUSSION

1. What is your most precious, non-living possession? What makes that possession so valuable to you? Would it be as valuable to another owner as it is to you? Why or why not?

### PASSAGE CONTEXT

Matthew 13 is a series of parables told by Jesus. Today we look at two of them. Both parables we'll consider today speak to the value of knowing Christ and being "all in" as His followers. How we steward our lives here and now should make clear to all that Jesus is of the highest value to us.

Jesus' point in these two parables is easy to identify. Applying this point to our daily lives can be a much more complicated process. There are lots of discussion questions today. Don't rush through them. Give ample time and space for the Spirit to shape our surrender to Christ further than ever before!

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Matthew 13:44

*"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."*

The kingdom of heaven/God is referenced many times in the Gospels. God's kingdom is a multifaceted reality that takes on various meanings depending on the passage in which the term is used. At its broadest level, God's kingdom speaks of His sovereign rule as eternal God over all the universe. On a salvation level, God's kingdom speaks to God's work of salvation in the hearts of those who turn from sin and trust Christ in salvation. In this sense, we speak of Jesus' "Lordship" over our lives. In an end-times sense, the kingdom refers to the literal rule of Christ on earth involving the Scriptures' many promises to the nation of Israel. Today's passage refers to the kingdom of God and may have shades of all three meanings. Regardless, it speaks to the incomparable value of knowing Christ and completely surrendering to Him.

2. What are some things that come to your mind when you hear the phrase "kingdom of God?"

In verse 44, Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. At that time, things like safety deposit boxes didn't exist, so people often buried their possession in secret locations to keep their belongings safe. From time to time, the owner of the hidden treasure never returned to collect their belongings. In that case, it appears the finder was the keeper—especially if the finder owned the land on which the treasure was found.

As Jesus chooses to tell this parable, the man happens upon the treasure. He isn't looking for the treasure per se but finds it nonetheless. The man's response to finding the treasure? Joy! This man's joy over what he's found drives his next decision. He sells everything he has so that he can buy the field.

3. When was the first time you realized that a relationship with Christ is priceless? What were your initial reactions and responses to the supreme greatness of Jesus?

4. Why do many people—including some who know much about Jesus—never respond with the same joyous surrender as the man in the parable?

5. As we as a church seek to reach BA and beyond by multiplying disciples to follow Jesus, would you say it is an advantage or a disadvantage that we live in the so-called “Bible Belt?” (The assumption being many people in our community have at least heard something about Jesus.)

### **The Parable of the Priceless Pearl**

Matthew 13:45-46

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

This second parable in verses 45-46 is similar to the previous. In this case, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. That the man is a merchant implies this is a man with some wealth. He is a buyer and seller of things. No doubt, in his travels and transactions, he'd seem many pearls of varying worth. But this pearl was something special. It was of great value—so great that he liquidated all his assets just to buy it.

6. What are some things in our lives that are not eternal or glorious like Christ we sometimes place too much value on buying, having, and protecting? How can placing too much value on temporary things distract us from treasuring Jesus above all else?



7. In both parables, the finders surrender all they have for the surpassing value of being in a relationship with Christ. Has your own surrender to Jesus been similar or different? How so?

In Philippians 3, the apostle Paul speaks of all he'd "lost" to gain Christ. Read Philippians 3:3-11 below:

*For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

8. How was Paul's surrender to Jesus exactly Jesus' point in today's parables? Do you think Paul would say his "sacrifices" to surrender to Christ were worth it in the end? Yes or no? Why?

9. By way of clarification: Do you think this passage is saying we can “buy” our way into membership in the kingdom of God? Why or why not?

10. In light of today’s passage and our two-year Greater Still initiative, respond to the following quote from missionary Jim Elliot: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Agree or disagree? Apply that statement to how we steward our lives for the glory of Christ.

11. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “In one sense, salvation in Christ is a free gift, but in another sense, it costs us everything.” Agree or disagree? Why?

12. As we look forward to our second year of Greater Still—GREATER MINISTRY, GREATER MISSIONS, GREATER FUTURE—what are you most excited about?

# SERMON NOTES

Week 4 | What is your role?

