

A City-Wide Movement of the Gospel

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[0 : 0 0] So our new vision statement starts by saying that we and our family of church plants that we've planted over the past 10 years Seek a citywide movement of the gospel So that'll be our focus a little bit this morning and across the next few weeks But it's certainly not our source. So no vision statement is the source from which we teach or preach It's not our authority not at all, but it's written only because we we look across the Bible and see God calling us Towards that mission and so a citywide movement of the gospel is nothing more for us here than revival language We seek revival we long for it We ask God for it a movement of the gospel in our city and so We're simply saying in that that we hope We pray that God would offer to this city the good news the pronouncement of what Jesus Christ has done that it's good news Not good advice and we long to see God work We think that there are about two percent of Edinburgh that our gospel believing followers of Jesus That's about 20,000 people in the metro population of one million people in the city of Edinburgh plus students and

We long we seek we pray right now for a citywide movement of the gospel Where two percent in our time and ministry and our generation becomes ten percent? And two percent to ten percent would be an extra eighty thousand Gospel believing people in the city of Edinburgh and so these are the kind of things we long for we pray for and this is what our vision statement Is all about if you've read much on church history in Scotland and our city God has done this before And so we're coming in this series to simply say Lord do it again We ask that God would do it again and so what is a movement of the gospel?

What is a movement of the gospel? Let me give you a specific way to talk about it a movement of the gospel is an intensification intensification of the ordinary work of the Holy Spirit through the ordinary ways the Holy Spirit loves to work the preaching of Jesus Christ and the witness to Jesus out in the city they're talking to people about the gospel and Sharing the vision that the light of Christ through compassionate deeds of mercy so it's an intensification of the normal work of The Holy Spirit that's a movement of the gospel and it's you see it. You know that it's happening When nominal Christians are converted people who have often set maybe in church for years and years and not yet believed The truth about Jesus nominal Christians are converted Sleepy Christians are reawakened awakened The community outside the church is evangelized and from that there's a plethora of Perichurch ministries and good works compassionate deeds of mercy that rise up from that

That's when you see a movement of the gospel. That's how people have typically defined a revival a gospel revival across the city And so Martin Lloyd-Jones the great preacher in London in the 20th century He says there is no subject of greater importance than revival It should be the theme of our prayers the theme of our teachings the cry of our hearts and he says I'm an 18th century man and a Revival a movement of the gospel is when God first comes down into the life of the church and does these things and Then uses the church as an instrument in the city. He sends us out into the city to do this work And it's all by the power of the Holy Spirit And so we get this from places like Matthew 28 The the final thing Jesus told us as you're going out into Edinburgh make disciples baptizing teaching them everything Jesus commanded Then in Acts chapter 1 Jesus says you will all be my witnesses and Jerusalem and then to Judea and to Samaria and to the ends of the earth and Edinburgh is our little end of the earth that

God has given us and then in Acts 2 the Holy Spirit comes down and thousands of people in the city of Jerusalem Were cut to the heart and they came to Christ and became members of the church and we see this call for a citywide movement This request that we make to God today all across the Bible And so all we want to do today for a few minutes Because we'll be talking about this throughout throughout the next couple of months and looking at the different elements that we've got written here on these cards All we want to do today is ask from the scripture What do we need most to seek a citywide movement of the gospel? What do we need most here today?

[4 : 31] Christians to reach this task seek this task pursue this task and we learn about that many places in the Bible But one of them is Luke 1941 the passage that for read from for us just a moment ago Thomas Guthrie you might not know his name But you have walked by his face many times if you go to church here more than once Thomas Guthrie is the statue. He is Right at the front door when you walk in St. Columbus. He was our founding pastor 1845 April this coming Easter will be a hundred and eighty years of St. Columbus history And Thomas Guthrie in 1858 preached from right there three sermons on Luke 1941 and He translated that text Jesus beheld the city and he wept and Like the period if you've read the Puritans at all if you've read people like Charles Spurgeon One of the things you know is that in the old older world They would take one verse and they would ring it dry

You know, they would take one verse and they would get every drop they could out of it for weeks And I know you're thankful maybe that I'm not gonna do that but Thomas did that for three weeks. He he rung this verse dry Luke 1941 and one of the things he said And that those sermons have been printed in a book called the city it sends and sorrows He he said that his ultimate prayer to this this community in 1858 was he said I pray that you will take up the heart of Christ for Edinburgh and here we are again 170 60 years later and it's the same cry. It's the same longing and so let's think just about that today What do we need most?

To seek a citywide movement of the gospel we need to take up the heart of Christ for Edinburgh that Christ's heart would become our heart For this great city and so let's see that what we're gonna see that in three ways Jesus Christ beheld the city Jesus Christ wept for the city and then let's ask how can we?

How can we? So first Jesus we see here beheld the city. He looked at it What did what did Jesus see when he looked out at the city here in Luke 19?

Most of you probably even if you're a tourist today, you've maybe been on Caughton Hill or Arthur's seat or on the Castle Mounds or one of the seven hills of Edinburgh and you've You've seen the city you've beheld the city You've looked at it and it's glory its majesty its beauty all the people scurrying about and Jesus saw the same thing is happening. He's coming down the backside of the Mount of Olives here we we saw that in just the previous passage to this one and He sees the city you can get a pretty good view of Jerusalem from there so he sees the panorama and He he he begins to weep What is he seeing and if you back up if you have a Bible just a couple verses to verse 38 39 40 As he's coming down the backside of the Mount of Olives The disciples as Jesus enters Jerusalem. They say blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord so they pronounce that Jesus is the king coming into the city of David and

[7 : 53] The Pharisees in verse 39 rebuke Jesus and say are you going to tell your followers not to say things like that and They they think this is blasphemy what they've said about Jesus as he comes down from the Mount of Olives and then in verse 40 Jesus says if they don't say it then the stones are gonna cry out and say it the rocks are gonna say it So he says if people aren't here to shout Hosanna here comes the king into the city of David the rocks and the trees will start to sing it and It's at that moment that we say that it's the text then turns and says Jesus looked at the city and he wept what was he looking at and He was certainly seeing the panorama like you're standing on the top of Colton Hill and seeing the greatness of Edinburgh He saw the greatness of Jerusalem But one of the things in context there is he's looking straight into the heart of the city of Jerusalem And he sees a sampling of that heart through his interaction with the Pharisees who are saying

What the disciples have just said about you is blasphemy and they say how can how can you let your followers say? Blessed is the king who's coming into the city of David in the name of the Lord and JC Ryle he when he's writing on this passage he comments like this. He said Jesus knew the character of the city. It's inhabitants very well Their cruelty their self righteousness their stubbornness their obstinate Prejudice against the truth their proud heart was not hidden from him He knew only too well what they were gonna do to him a few days from then Jesus looked out of the city and he saw the heart More than the panorama and he wept for it He knew he knew it was in the hearts of the people of the city and in verse verse 42 We read it. We learned a little bit more specifically of what that is. It says they do not know what would make for peace So he knew that there were all sorts of people in Jerusalem at the time and in Edinburgh in 2024 that are walking and looking for peace in the midst of the holiness peace in the midst of turmoil peace in the midst of

Meaning that they have yet to find and Jesus is there the king standing in front of them And he says they don't know what makes for peace They refuse to look and in ryle comments. He says they won't look at the evidence. They won't look at the God Who's standing right in from their faces. We didn't read Down to verse 43 and 44, but he goes on to say it goes on to say they did not know the one who had visited them They did not know the time of their visitation. They didn't know who was standing right in front of them now Cities across the Bible often have this reputation Cities in the modern world often have this reputation and the reputation is that the rocks will cry out that Jesus Christ is God before most of the people will The reputation is that many people come to the city from Maybe a rural setting to sometimes lose their faith That's been the reputation of the city throughout human history And so Thomas Guthrie in 1858 when he was teaching on this passage. He said

Great cities many have found to be great curses That has been well more many Let me say that again It has been well more many an honest country lad and many an Unsuspecting young woman with hopes of higher wages and opportunities of fortune many a foot That once lightly pressed upon the heather Or bush the dewy grass that wearily trodden in darkness and guilt and sin upon these city pavements Now that's old 19th century English, but what did he say he said many a young man once Tramped across the heather in the Highlands and many an unsuspecting young woman Thinking that they would come to the city and find their fortune and instead he says they came and lost their faith and so many often Times it has been that this has been the reputation of the great world cities that people come to be pulled away from worship of the living God and that makes some sense because when you you know When you pack a lot of people into a smaller space, what do you expect?

I know that if you've grown up in a rural setting and a suburban setting and a village setting and a hamlet You'll know that there's a lot of messiness in towns a lot of messiness and sin and suburbs a lot of sin in villages there is and When you bring all those sinners into smaller spaces It just means that you get a lot more of the same a lot more sin densely packed into fewer square meters Now let me ask you when you were Walking through the city streets during the fringe Did you feel like as the pavements got more and more crowded that the fruits of the spirit were coming more out of your heart or less?

[12 : 48] Right when you pack so many people so many centers into such a small space you find that temptation tends to increase that that Being moved away from God tends to increase quite often throughout human history and that you know, this is the case in the Bible so in the Bible the Bible starts off with a very negative view of cities and And Kane the very first city was built by Kane and that did not go well and lamek one of his sons it got worse and worse all the way to Babel in the scattering of the nations from the group the first great world city the Tower of Babel and remember Sodom and Gomorrah and Nineveh and so many other places that the Bible doesn't have a positive view of cities at the beginning and It seems to have the theme that it's the place where faith comes to die Where the rocks will cry out before the people will that Jesus Christ is King like that our God that the Christian God is the real God and Let me just say what did Jesus do as?

He looked upon a city that largely rejected him and would reject him just a few days later. What did he do? He wept he cried and so secondly Jesus wept for the city and we don't have to take very long on this to see the point But when you've got this higher density of people higher volumes of humans sin So many people in Jerusalem in the first century in Edinburgh in our time rejecting the claims of Christianity Jesus looked out and he wept and why and it is because His heart that the heart of Jesus Christ is so big and So wide that he longs for the entire city to come to him He loves every single person in this city and in the city of Jerusalem in the first century and he he longs for all of them to come to him Now I think our natural instinct Is to think that when Jesus looks out at a city looks out at a space and he sees so many people rejecting him

So many people living lives that are far apart from God When he looks out a city like Edinburgh and he sees the French posters Have you seen the French posters? He looks out you the instinct that we have is that he looks out in disappointment with a frowny face and Instead when you come to a passage like this, what do you see is that?

The these are tears of longing and compassion That instead of looking out in disappointment he looks down and he weeps because he says I want these people to come to me I Want them to find I want them to find hope I want them to find what makes for peace he says and We read this all across the Gospels Matthew 23 I long to gather you children of Jerusalem Like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings He talks about himself in this maternal image of gathering the people of the city like a mother hen under his wings and Matthew 11 what does he say come to me come to me all you who are weary and you're burdened and I want to give you rest I want to offer you rest and so you see all across the Gospels and in this moment this lamb like tenderness For people who are looking for hope and peace and haven't yet found it We are too you know we Jesus what's quite often in the Gospels and we are too stoic for that for him, you know, we're too stoic

Do we look out at this city and have the compassion of Christ? Lamb like tenderness for the people who are looking for hope and peace What do we learn when we can move to the final thing?

[16 : 35] Well, I think we learned simply this that Jesus Christ loves Edinburgh much more than we do He loves Edinburgh much more than I do and boy that that's good news That is isn't that good news. He loves Edinburgh much more than I love it love this great city and Who you know think about who came to him in the Gospels? Who did he move towards?

And you read across the Gospels and you see he moved towards the physically impaired the disabled He moved towards the sick. He moved towards the materially poor He moved towards prostitutes the sexually scandalous in his day He moved towards tax collectors who were friendless men of treachery. He moved towards tax collectors who were also short Which is good. Isn't that good news?

Like Zacchaeus he He moved towards the Pharisees he did he moved Nicodemus came to him and Joseph of Arimathea and he moved towards Scholars who think they knew way too much to follow him The scholars in our city who think they know way too much to follow him he moved towards them and He moved towards women who were displaced in that particular culture and he they followed him and he honored them and he moved Towards Samaritans and Jews and Greeks and Romans and every ethnicity that was represented in that time And he moved towards children and boy Did he say do not stop the children from coming to me the children of the city?

He gave a harsh warning do not do not stop the children from coming He came to the city he longed for every type of person to gather them all that was his heart for them And you see in that Jesus Christ instincts Let me move on to the final point, but I Think if you ask a question like when you read the Gospels would what is the best way to describe the instincts the heart of Jesus Christ?

To describe who he was lots of things we can say Undoubtedly he was a brilliant theologian right he he was a better theologian He knew God better than every single scholar across the street at New College and Edinburgh Theological Seminary Right. He was a great scholar himself. He could unpack the Old Testament unlike any anybody, right?

[18 : 50] He was an epic teacher He could gather a crowd and teach better than anybody could much better than Plato or Aristotle ever knew He was an unbelievable man of wisdom. Yes indeed I've read Nietzsche and Plato and Aristotle and Foucault and all the guys and all the great philosophers men and women and None of them had the wisdom of God in their hearts like Jesus Christ had and does have but I think if you read across the Gospels the best way to get at the instinct the heart the reality of who Jesus is for The city of Edinburgh for us is to simply say Jesus Christ is the son of God who is a compassionate redeemer Jesus a compassionate redeemer and There has been no other religious leader in human history who you can say that about Many many people have founded great movements, but nobody can be called the compassionate redeemer of humanity except for this man thirdly and finally

What do we need to seek a citywide movement of the gospel as we step into this vision of value series? simple answer the same one that Guthrie gave in 1858 we need Regular attenders members believers in Christ today. We need the heart of Jesus for Edinburgh we need to take on the heart that Christ has for our city and We can say today that only God can bring a movement of the gospel to Edinburgh we can We could we pray we prevail it we prevail and prayer for this But what the Bible does teaches that it's not a zero-sum game only God can bring this movement and We can build the altar Asking that God bring the fire down to our city That's what we see across the scriptures and so let me just close we're gonna be talking about that for the next couple of months Let me just close with two questions to finish and they are simply this why should we long to reach the city of Edinburgh?

Very briefly and then lastly, let me just ask where can we get the power for this? Where do we get the power? Why should we long to reach the city of Edinburgh as a church and as a Community of gospel churches across our city lots more to come on this But I just want to quote to you from from Guthrie one more time remember that quote. He said great cities Some have found to be great curses many a young lad and Young woman have come to the city thinking that they would have a great fortune and instead they've lost their faith He writes in the 19th century and Then I didn't finish the quote because this is what he says right after he says yet. I bless God for this city That's what he writes and he says the world would not be what it is Without the great cities without Edinburgh the disciples were commanded to begin at Jerusalem Paul and the book of Acts threw himself into the cities of the ancient world Cities have been the lamps of light along the pathway of true religion

Cities have stood on the surface of the earth like the great breakwaters Rolling back the tide of oppression Cities have been the cradles of human liberty. They have been the radiating centers of almost every church reformation And he says I have no sympathy with those who regard them as tumors of a disease I bless God for this city. He writes The Bible has a subversion story when it comes to cities and that subversion story is that in Genesis 11 the Tower of Babel The great first world city the first great world city I should say it was scattered because it was evil So many sinners packed into such a tight space and God sent it out and when you come to Revelation 21 You see that what's what was once the city of man by the power of the gospel has now in Revelation 21 become the city of God That God is now re-gathering the nations into a space to dwell together forever in eternity that God takes What was broken a city and he flips it on it said through the gospel and he makes it into the city of God ultimately in Revelation chapter 21 and 22

One day the city the city of God will cry out like the rocks do Blessed be the king who enters into Zion Lots more to come on that. Let me finish with this. Where do we get the power?

[23 : 09] Where are we gonna get the power? It's very difficult to maintain love for a city for people as Sinners as Christians who are justified yet sinful and where are we gonna get that power?

180 more years we pray that God would use this church community long After we're gone 180 more years 200 more years of using the free church and other gospel preaching churches in our city To seek a citywide movement of the gospel, but let me close with this We read here that Jesus Christ looked out upon Jerusalem and he wept I Think in that moment one of the things you can say is that his heart?

Was so wrapped up with our hearts the hearts of humanity It was like he tied his heart into a knot With the human heart, you know, he became human fully human and When he did that he tied himself to us he made himself human and in the book of Hebrews we read about the fact that when He became human his joy became wrapped up in our joy So any possibility that his people human beings could have joy became completely wrapped up in his joy And his joy can't become completely wrapped up and knotted with our joy And you see the writer of Hebrews talk about that all across the book of Hebrews and when he cries here when he weeps Tears of compassion tears of longing Don't miss this that he is not crying for himself He is not crying as he ponders the cross that he's about to face

That's not what he's crying about here. No when he looks at the city and weeps He cries for the people he weeps for the people his compassion is poured out upon them Because he wants them to experience the joy and the peace that he has in his own heart and in order to do that In order to do that the tears in this moment as he enters Jerusalem by Thursday Will become the tears that he weeps in the Garden of Gethsemane In the Garden of Gethsemane he shrieked he wept and in that moment his tears His tears are for something else his tears are for the fact that he knows that his joy is so wrapped up with our joy That if we would ever have joy and peace in our lives, he's got to be wrapped up in our misery If we would ever experience what makes for peace as he puts it He has to experience total unrest a total loss of all peace and so the tears that he offers on this moment for Jerusalem for Edinburgh for us

Become the tears of knowing that he is about to step into the moment where he will cry out my God my God Why have you forsaken me? He came to be so wrapped up for your joy his joy tied into your joy that he got wrapped up into your misery He wants you to have peace to such a degree that he was willing to lose all peace to go to hell for you To go to hell for me to go to hell for the people of this city on the cross. I think one of the ways to say it This is not a perfect illustration. They never are but Some of you don't have to imagine this but imagine having a desperately sick child and I've had very I've had fairly sick kids and I've been in the hospital in hospital with my kids on several occasions but never a desperately sick child and I think anybody in this room who has experienced something like that or Has watched somebody else experience something like that knows and would say probably the same thing

[26 : 52] You don't have to be a parent to say this you don't have to be a parent in this room today to feel this not at all if you are next to the bed of a desperately sick child and You look at them. I think one of the things probably in all of our hearts. We would say is I would rather it be me Right you say I would take your place I don't want this for you if I could suffer for you. I would right in Jesus Christ He looks out in the city and he weeps. What is he? What is he thinking? What is he weeping the compassion?

How do you capture it? He's looking out at what does he say I'll long to gather you like chicks like children under my wings He's looking out and you saying I'd rather it be me. I Would rather be the one to die. I would rather be the one to suffer I want to take the misery that the justice you deserve into myself so that you could have the peace that I deserve He wrapped himself up so much with us like that now listen friends Christians believers Maybe if you're not a Christian day a skeptic or you're curious Let me just say one thing You might come to say you you know I've made a shipwreck of my life and it is beyond repair. Let me say Jesus has you right where he wants you in that He has a lamb like tenderness towards you. He he says to you today. I want to take your place. He did But to the Christians of the believers today the members of this church as we think about the vision He became what our city deserves so that so many people in our city could experience the city of God one day and

That means that to take on the heart of Christ for Edinburgh If we're gonna do this if we're gonna take up the heart of Jesus for our city We have to look at the heart of Christ for us You've got to see it. You've got to experience it. You've got to taste it every day the heart of Christ for you Is the only way you will ever have the power to have the heart of Christ for this great city For a citywide movement of the gospel we pray may his instincts become our instincts Let's pray father we ask For the instincts of Christ the heart of Christ and we thank you for the heart of Jesus for us at the cross So we just plead today Lord that you would change us transform us bring somebody today To faith in Jesus for the first time we ask and Send us all out strengthened in the mission you've given us for a citywide movement of the gospel Not for the glory of St. Columbus or any church or ourselves No matter what you do with these institutions Lord. We just simply want to want we want to long

For the souls of so many like Jesus does and so we pray for this heart in Christ's name.
Amen