

Unlocking Gratitude

Week 4 Multiply

Pastor Mandy Barkhaus, Jesse Sierks Ken Babcock, Pastor Prabin Spika

Mandy:

Several times in the last few weeks, we've used the imagery from Scripture about of of, planting and harvesting or sowing and reaping. And for some of us, like, we understand these analogies, like, we get it, but there's probably some others who maybe like farming or gardening or like, not quite in their wheelhouse and they're like, okay, I can kind of understand that, but I don't truly get that imagery.

But there is something that we all have experienced that we can all understand. And that's this eating. Right. Okay. You with me? We've all experienced eating. Imagine a farmer who gets the soil ready and plants the seeds and waters and cares for the soil and cares for the takes care of the weeds and the crops begin to grow.

Soon it's time to harvest. The farmer harvest and this harvest, this crop that the farmer has collected, it feeds families and it creates jobs and it brings life to community. Now, the farmer may never hear an individual say thank you for that. But all across the community, people are praying and prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving to God for one person's act of service.

Now, in our lives, we often do that. We often plant seeds of kindness or generosity or service, and sometimes we plant the seeds and we never hear anything about these seeds. We may not always hear or thank you for the lives that have been impacted. But when we live faithfully and we do what God has asked us to do, others will thank God because of what we've done.

Now Paul in Second Corinthians says these words. Paul says, you will be enriched in every way. So that you can be generous on every occasion. Through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. Then he continues on. He says, this service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but it is also overflowing in many expressions and in many expressions of thanks to God.

Our actions, our actions have the power and the ability to inspire praise and thanksgiving to God, the one who makes all things possible. That is why we want to connect with our neighbors, to live God's love. That is the our vision statement that we have identified. And we have also identified three strategies to go along with this vision statement.

Now, one of these strategies is to inspire all who attend horizons to connect with their individual neighbor. And one of the things that we've done through this is start a good neighbor experiment. This cohort here, this picture right here is a picture of the cohort of the Good Neighbor Experiment. And they have been meeting for weeks, and we have been learning about and putting into action about how to be a good neighbor.

We are growing together. We are learning. Jesse Service, who has kind of helped lead us and also been part of this, has put together this video. take a look at this.

Jesse:

Hello, I am Jesse Starks. My family and I have been attending horizons for several years. I have a small group with my chosen family. I am part of Verizon's Saturday morning workout group. I am taking part in the Good Neighbor Experiment to push myself to reach out to my neighbors. I record for service on occasion. Let's all turn around to see if it's my week.

Hi future Jesse and I lead the setup team. We move the chairs and tables when the chairs and tables need moving. You might have received an email from me. James. Chapter two. Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead. I am driven by this passage. It is a core belief of mine that we don't just talk about doing good or making the world a better place, we act on it.

I see how horizons pours into me and my family. I see the grace and love that Allie and Liz have for my children back in D.C. from Derek and dozens of VBS volunteers. I see the impact that has had on their lives, the improvement in their attitudes and relationships. I cannot do that. But I can do other things.

Like being a better neighbor. A core tenet of the journey is that it's okay to fail. Talking to new people can be hard. It's embarrassing to forget names as often as I do. It's embarrassing to see someone daily or weekly and not know their name or where they work, or other details about them. But it's also okay I forget you forget.

I'm busy. You're busy. Now I give myself grace. Because I do fail. Not always. I now know the names of my neighbors. Not as well as my kids know their kids. But it's a start. It's a good foundation. I have less anxiety about talking to them at neighborhood events, birthday parties, or just in passing. Another is that being a good neighbor does not mean being best friends.

It's much simpler than that. I started by learning names, by saying hi, by being friends online with your heart in the right place. It can be as simple as that. I'm excited for better neighborhoods, for neighbors that know each other and have grace for each other, for increased civility. Even in an election year. I'm excited for action. Our vision statement isn't passive.

It's not talk. It's not thought. It's effort. It's connecting. Jesus said to love your neighbor as yourself. He said that was the second greatest commandment after loving God. We can do this. How will your kindness spread and grow into something greater?

Ken:

Well. Good words, even if we didn't have your face, Jesse. But thank you so much for sharing that. Jesse is making a difference. He is doing action. And then he challenged us with the question of how will your kindness spread and grow into something greater? And that greater something is not just a reward in heaven that we might receive, but it's about others thanking God because of our kindness.

Now you'll see here a map of our vision and strategies. And the small orange dots represent kind of our own individual neighbors, right? Here's where we live as a Horizons Community and, the neighbors that we hope to connect with. And then the yellow circle that that represents, horizons neighborhood and part of our strategy is to create missional spaces and opportunities to interact with Horizon's neighbors.

Recently it just, three, two and a half weeks ago, three weeks ago, we opened up a disc golf course. And we have had hundreds of people on our property who not have would not have otherwise been. Last week we had, 25 kids here from, students. It was during the day, our high school students, part of their lifetime fitness class.

I think that's what it's called. They were out here on our, on our field, and, now, part of this disc golf, you can there's an app, right? Of course. And you can review and comment on the course. And one of my favorite comments of the courses is, you know, he said, oh, is a great course, blah, blah, blah.

And then he said, they even have prayer stops along the way. Yes we do. Now, our third, the blue dots on there, the blue Little Horizons logos. That is our third strategy of partnering with churches and organizations that are already impacting other Lincoln neighborhoods. Our Zeeman school partnership, our newer partnership with Connection point to the Brim Ministries right thing.

Organizations that are already making a difference in Lincoln. We want to be a part of that. Now, if you see this map, if you look at this map like this is just Lincoln, it's like, well, well, you know, yes, our vision and our strategies, we're focusing on Lincoln. And in this community. But our church is much more than just about Lincoln.

In fact, our mission statement is we are a community where we mature as disciples and lead all to Jesus for the transformation of the world from one generation to the next. And so that's where project Hope comes into Action. And project Hope Horizons has been supporting, this ministry since 2005. That's when the first project, Hope seed was planted.

Pastor Mandy:

And a couple months ago, Sister Jesse was here speaking to us, and she was part of our worship and sharing with us what she is doing in her community. She cares for young girls and children, providing hope and education and training, and employment. Then the second home that we're connected with as part of project Hope is Bethel Children's Home.

Prabin and Susama Sipka. They run that home and they have kids who live there, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that are part of their home. And they provide housing and food and education and worship, not only just for the kids who are in their home, but also others in their community. So they are shining the light of Christ in their community in India, which is amazing.

That's, and thanks to some right of, of, of your support to project Hope. If you are one who supports project Hope through your prayers or through your financial gifts, you are making a difference. People across the world, on the other side of the world are thanking God because of your generosity. Most of these people you will never meet, you will never hear thank you from, from, from them.

But today we have the honor and privilege of hearing from Prabin, and I'm going to invite Prabin and Ken to come up now and, join me on stage. So Ken Babcock is, part of the project Hope team, and, he's going to be sharing a little with you. And we're so excited to have Prabin with us today.

He's he, last time he was here, it was a couple of years ago, and we're so excited. Come on, come on. That. We're so excited. Ken's going to share a little bit more. Prabin come here and stand here in the middle. Thank you so much for being here. We're so excited to have you here and to hear your,

your faith in Jesus and some stories about what you're doing in your community. Thank you for your faithfulness.

Ken:

Thank you. Before the talks, I just wanted to highlight the profiles of three of the youngsters. There's currently there's 70 kids. That provenance isn't hard to take care of. Full time, 24 seven. Of those 70 kids, there are 70 stories about how they got there. These are just three that have been highlighted in our in our newsletter. And if you want your news, newsletter, see me. We'll send that out to you quarterly.

But little gal on the left, she comes from a new has an her family, but her father is very, very ill with a kidney disease and cannot work. Her mom works as a maid, but does not make enough to keep the family going. So a social worker brought her to Bethel, and they accepted her. And that little girl wants to be a doctor. She wants to help people like her dad. The gentleman in the middle once again started out nuking her family. His dad is an alcoholic. Then his mom passed away. Because that the dad remarried, but the new wife will not take care of him, refuses to take care of him. A local pastor found out about this and made it possible for him to go to Bethel.

Then that little gal she's had a lot of, serious issues because of her parents. Her parents decided to split up. They went different directions, actually left the area and left her with her grandma. And her grandma was not able to do it. Not able to take care of her. So once again, a pastor came in and got it. Got her in Bethel. She's one of the 70. And those pictures just mount me.

Shruti wants to be a teacher when she grows up. So, without further ado, I might just introduce Probyn. Robin is, is a hero of mine. I got to be over in India a few years ago. And here is a gentleman and his wife, Susama that genuinely live their faith. So, Prabin Thank you. You know,

Prabin:

Good morning. Praise the Lord. Really, it is a great privilege for me to stand before you and tell something about the battle, about the India. What is, I thank God for this great privilege which God has given me to speak something. Hallelujah! Our God is great. God. Hallelujah! The Bible said John chapter 3:16 God loves this world.

We know everybody.

God, soul of this world and those who believe in him, they will not perish but have eternal life. My friends, thank you for your love. The gift of love. There is a great power which is changing the life of the people. And God loved this world and the people that believe. And they change their life and they got the eternal life the same way.

Your generosity, your kindness, the gift of love. There is a great power and that that power to change the life of the orphan, the poor and the destitute, that children of the India.

Because the hopeless children. They got the hope. The parents, children, they get the parents there. And because of your love, the gift of your love, that is your power. That break the cycle of the poverty.

Your small gift of love. It is bring the big difference in the life of the precious children of India. The Orissa where I am working. So I thank God and thanks to my beloved brother and sister of this church, Horizons Your generosity, your love, your kindness, your mercy, your swing. You are sowing the seeds. As the pastor she was telling you are showing the seed.

So we will reap with the joy. You are to sewing the seed to the Kingdom of God. You are planting the tree to the Kingdom of God because the children, they know that Jesus Christ.

They know the loving father because of your help, because of your love, because of your gift of love, because you, of your kindness, because of your, mercy upon them. Otherwise they will be perish. Otherwise they will be destroyed. Their spiritual life or physical lives. Who knows what they may be something else wrong way, but your gift of love.

There is power in sight.

That is power which is tending their whole scenario whole life. It is standing. Their generation. And Jesus came and he said, the blood on the cross because the because of that blood, the whole cosmos changed. The whole scene was changed the same way. Because of your gift of love, you are breaking the poverty.

You are breaking the cost of the life of this precious children. And they are getting a new life. They are getting the new hope. They are getting the new joy and happiness in the battle. Children whom?

And God's love this world. And he said, only one begotten son, and because of Jesus Christ, we everybody have the eternal life, the joy and happiness on the father.

Son. So the same way your gift of love has brought the love. And they know that Jesus.

The Indian community, they see the people they are looking, the tenderness of the children, life, the community, how they are coming to the Christ, how the, people are coming to the Christ only because of the gift of love. And that is you, then that gift of love inside that is your power.

But that power is changing to the community, that power attending to the children. That power is breaking the cycle of poverty. That power is swaying the seed for the Kingdom of God. And you are stood up. The tragedy in heaven when you are giving, we are learning to the Lord. When we are giving, you are giving to the Lord.

When you are helping, you are helping to the Kingdom of God and you are storing your treasury in heaven. You are single. Help your one time help or your continuous help. It is not going without any worthless. It is very, very important for us and important for the children. Their life is changing there they are acknowledging the love of God.

They are acknowledging the living God. They are acknowledging, and they come to know that Jesus is their Savior. And they know there is someone who is loving them. And it is your loves. It is making a big difference. Big difference in the life of this children in the life of this ministry adds, can say about that three, three children, the three kids there is a lady came to the Bethel that last year and they have the great vision.

Yes. Several years we are giving the bread and life. And after world class we are, graduating them and telling them to go and find out a job. But now we have a vision for the next ten years. We have to

bring more children to the kingdom of God because Jesus loved the children. The kingdom of God belongs to the children of all the world away.

Not only India, not only to America. All over the world, the children belong to the God's. God's love. These children. And everybody hopes we have children. We are blessed by God.

So my friends, it is not enough to give him bread and life and cloth and hygiene. But more than that, beyond, beyond of that, we have to be little things. How the children can come out, how the children can come out from the poverty, how the children can they will, totally change their generation and the society and the community and the world, because your gift of love, it will change everything.

The grace of God is sufficient for them and sufficient for you and me. So we are planning. We are praying and planning to the Lord after they are 12. They must be go for their professional course. Like it not teacher or doctor or management or pastor or something else. So for that we have to be things while keeping your health.

They are getting the good food, good hygiene, good education, good health. They know Jesus, they are worshiping, they are praying for you and them and everyone. But more than that, if we going to be able to put them higher education or some kind of professional training, so they will totally they are going to it will be impacting their generation.

The upcoming generation will be changed if one girls or boys will be getting a job, he will seek and break their course. They can break their poverty, they can break their circle of the poverty and their generation is going to change in the future.

Otherwise, by giving this bread and our life, I think it is not enough. Because when I saw my three kids, they got the job.

Now I'm the boss today and also our Bethel children. They have also a good job somewhere and they are in the good position. I saw them and I'm so happy. The same way. If our children more children can we get the opportunity, more opportunity for education, for higher education, it will be better. So I request all of you, please come forward with your gift of love and break this cycle of generational change, the generation and generation.

Because one child can stand with the good where they will break every circle and their generation will be changed.

So your help, your gift of love. Very precious for us and precious for ministry. So my friends.

Please think that way. You are really steward of your treasure in heaven. You are seeing the seed. You are planting the tree, one tree, your planting. But the tree is growing with the big tree and bringing more fruits. And the Bible also says chapter 522 that it it fruits the spiritual fruit about the spiritual food, the law of joy and happiness.

More than that, you are doing that things here. And the children of India, they are bearing the fruits of God's kingdom because of your gift of love, had great power to change the life of the poor or the children of India. So thank you friends. Thank you. God bless you.

Ken:

Excuse me, thank you.

Prabin, that's a tough one. Project Hope has been going strong for 19 years and has helped hundreds and hundreds of kids. We owe it all to you and the grace of God that these kids have been blessed. So, thank you.

On behalf of Project Hope, the Bible talks about looking after orphans and widows in their distress. That calling is reflected in our values, and it's something we truly stand by. Once again, thank you for supporting these children.

Today, we have a special offering for Bethel. Whenever the directors visit, we hold a one-week special offering. If you pray about it and feel led to give Bethel some extra support, there are plenty of ways to do so. We've got giving stations in the back if you prefer to give cash or a check. You can also go online, and if you're more tech-savvy than me, you can scan the QR code to give directly.

This special offering ends on November 20, so it's a short window. Please pray and consider giving during this time.

We also have another special event coming up for our youth. If you've been with us for a while, you know that once a year, we sell Christmas ornaments for \$20 each. Every dollar goes to India to provide Christmas outfits for 110 kids. That's our goal—110 ornaments sold to help these children.

If you're interested, we'll begin selling the ornaments next week between services. And just between us, if you come early, you might get two ornaments for \$40. But don't tell anyone I said that—I don't want to get in trouble!

We also have our Cocoa Nights tradition. This year, there are two nights planned, and we'll set up outside with Christmas trees. Families can come, enjoy free cocoa, and join in the festive spirit. It's become a meaningful tradition for many families, and we hope you'll join us.

Prabin also reminded me about the offering I mentioned earlier. Part of the funds raised will go toward a new security gate, as the current one is falling apart. This way, you know exactly where your donation is going.

For 19 years, you've done so much, and we're so grateful. If you're wondering how you can continue to help, we ask of your prayers and, if possible, your donations to Project Hope.

Some of you may see me up here asking for money and think, "Here he goes again." But when you look at these kids' pictures and see them grow from little ones to young adults, you realize this is a long-term commitment.

Occasionally, we lose a donor—sometimes they move out of town or face other circumstances. When that happens, the kids still remain, so we're always reminding people to consider giving if they're able.

For those giving on a monthly basis, you'll receive a note from us in the next week or two asking about your intentions for next year. Please fill it out when you get the chance.

In closing, I just want to thank you again. On behalf of these kids, thank you for providing hope through Project Hope.