

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

WE ARE TARDERS POINT | WE HELP PEOPLE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

AARON BROCKETT | NOVEMBER 17, 2022

Alright. Alright. How are we doing today? Doing good?

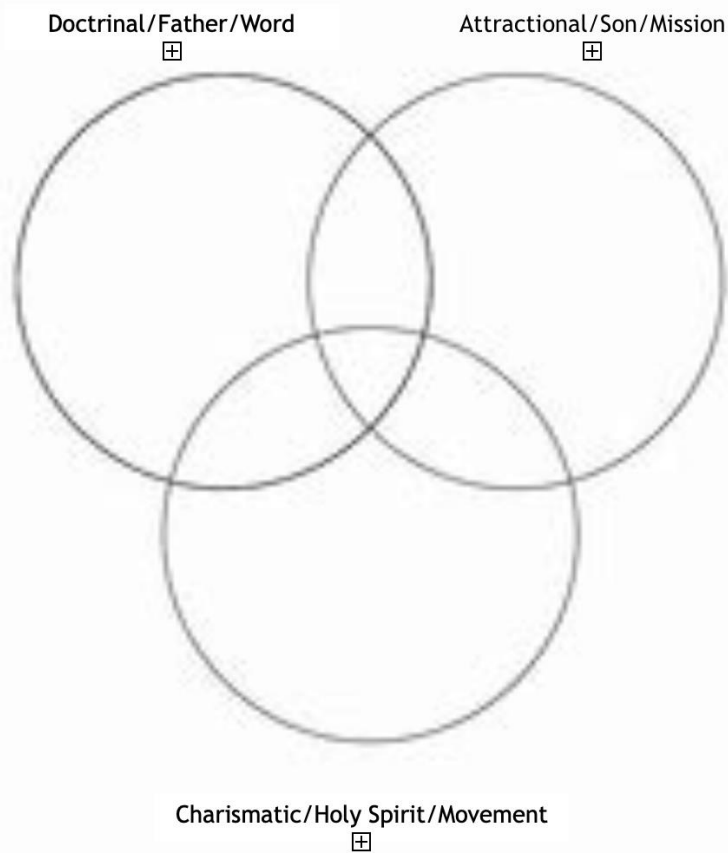
Man, it's so good to be with you. I want to welcome everybody gathered across all of our locations and online. And I just want to wish you a very, very happy Thanksgiving.

Honestly, I was just reflecting over the last couple of days just how grateful I am for each and every one of you and for just this sweet season that God has us in as a church family. I truly, truly am grateful.

Today, I've got a lot of ground to cover, very little time to do it. So I want to jump right in here. But first of all I just want to let you know that next weekend Pastor Ryan is going to be here to wrap up this series that we have been in.

And then two weeks from today we launch our Christmas series. It's going to be three weeks long leading up to Christmas. And I want to forecast for you what that series is and why we are doing it and your role to play in it. Alright?

Week one of this series, I kind of introduced you to this Venn diagram.



Hopefully you remember this. If you were not here basically what I did is that I walked through this and I said that out of the New Testament we see these three streams or three circles of churches. We've got Word of God churches, on mission with God empowered by the Spirit of God.

I just simply made this observation that even as you look at each of those circles there might be one of those that you kind of identify or sort of drift toward.

Maybe it was the church that you grew up in. Maybe it was the church you came to know Christ in. Maybe it's just your personality that just kind of leans toward one of those.

And I would say that all three of those are perfectly great. They are all found in Scripture. They are all reflective of the Trinity. We've got God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

But then I just made this observation that as a church we aspire to be right in the bullseye of the middle of that. We want to be a Word of God church. We want to be

passionate about the mission of God to reach people who are really, really far from Him. And we want to be filled with the Spirit of God as we do it.

In week one of this series I just said that we want to help people know God. And that word *know* in the original language is not just head knowledge. I don't want you to just know about God, I want you know God with your heart, like this personal relationship with Him.

So, because of that, as a church, at times we're going to build bridges, so to speak, into the lives of people who are really far from God, not tracking, not connected to church.

Now, we want to be a Word of God church, so we'll do an eight-week series in Daniel. We'll do a 10-week series in Romans. But also we're on mission with God, which means periodically we'll do a sermon series that will be a little bit shorter as a bridge-building event so that you can invite your friends.

And here's what I'm praying will happen. God will put a foot in the door of their life and an onramp to see what He might do in their lives. That's what this Christmas series that we're going to start in two weeks is about.

So I want to encourage you to be praying over that and invite friends. We're calling it *Christmas at the Movies*. And I just want to tell you what that is, and maybe more importantly, what it isn't.

What I'm going to be doing every week is I'm going to be teaching out of the Bible, but I'm going to be using, for illustrative purposes, classic Christmas movies. I'll leave it up to you to guess which ones they are going to be.

What I want you to see is the reason why we love them is because the gospel message is woven throughout each of them and because story is the language of the human heart. Jesus knew that.

So why *Christmas at the Movies*? For the same reason Jesus taught in parables. About a third of His teaching was storytelling. So Jesus knew that if He really wanted to capture not just our minds, but our hearts, concerning the love of our heavenly Father for us, He didn't just do a doctoral dissertation on atonement. He told stories about lost coins and lost sons. And I'm so glad that He did because stories speak to the heart.

So that's what we're doing. In every message that I teach, I'll always teach out of the Bible and then I'll provide some illustrations. In this series, the movie clips are the illustrations.

So I want to encourage you to invite a friend, right before Christmas, somebody who is not connected to church, and see what God might do. And then we'll reconvene and our Christmas Eve candle lighting service will be as normal, one of the highlights of the year. So I'm really looking forward to what God is going to do.

Today, we are in week three of this series called *We are Traders Point*. And if you're just now joining us, what we've been doing is walking through this right here:



We've been calling this, kind of an internal language here, the Great Commission Engine.

Now, the Great Commission is something that comes out of Matthew 28 where Jesus said, "I want you to go and make disciples of all nations."

So here's the way that we've chosen to frame it up. When you pop the hood of Traders Point to see what drives us, you're going to find this.

We've just been walking through this. We want to help you know God. Last week we talked about this. We want to help people find life-giving relationships that I believe the New Testament church modeled for us. It's both big and small. It can't just be one or the other. There is something dynamic that happens about both. I would even go as far as to say that discipleship is dependent upon relationship.

This week I want to talk about this. We want to help you make a difference.

Now, we've been looking at the book of Acts together in this series. And the reason why is because it just shows us the birth of the big 'C' church. And there is so much we can learn.

So last week we talked about the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit falls freshly upon this ordinary group of people. And then they had this spontaneous baptism of 3,000 people and they gathered together and they were devoted to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, breaking bread, and to prayer.

Well, you get that group of people, that amount of people (3,000 is a lot) all together in one place and it is just a matter of time before you've got a systems problem, before you run in to some sort of organizational hang-up that is actually keeping you from fulfilling the mission.

We read about that in Acts, chapter 6. So check it out with me. It says in Acts, 6, starting in verse 1:

"But as the believers rapidly multiplied," so he uses that word *multiplied*, he doesn't say add, he says they were multiplying, *"there were rumblings of discontent."* Huh. Imagine that. Use your imagination. Alright? Father, forgive me. I'm being facetious. But, it's true.

"The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food."

So understand, there was a group of people who were just simply being overlooked. And their tangible needs weren't being met. So, verse 2:

"So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, 'We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God,'" in other words they were like, *"We're going to keep the main thing the main thing here,"* *"not running a food program. And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility."*

We will delegate this to them. Verse 4:

"Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.' Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them." Now check out verse 7, *"So God's message continued to spread."*

That was what was needed to take place. Now, this is not just a practical, problem-solving passage. This isn't just a system issue. This is a spiritual one. So the way that God had set this up is this. You come to know Christ. You give your life to Him. Then the way in which you and I grow and mature as followers—I would even say continue to grow in our relationship with God—is when we refuse to keep that to ourselves, and we begin to serve other people.

In Ephesians, chapter 4, it gives us a description about this. It says in verse 15:

"Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is"—look at these descriptors—"healthy and growing and full of love."
Ephesians 4:15-16 (NLT)

So God's design for this in order for us to continue to (remember what the mission is) go and make disciples, not just converts—go and reach people who are really far from God—is that we cannot keep this to ourselves, but we are a body, and each part does its work so that God's message can continue to go out.

So, let me say it this way. There should be no such thing as the peanut gallery in the local church, where a group of people just gather together, maybe once a month, maybe more than that, and just come in and take their seats with a cup of coffee, and then receive or watch the professional Christians do ministry on a stage.

That's not what this should be about. This is the idea that you have been gifted for a purpose. You have been saved on purpose for a purpose.

I had a mentor say this to me when I was in Bible college. He said, "Aaron, because we are saved by grace, that ought to make us gracious and generous, generous people." It's the idea that I can't keep this to myself. I've got to begin to serve.

Some of you might be like, "Okay, how do I even get started in that? What does that even begin to look like?" And it's as simple as just being asked.

I was thinking about this last week. The first time that I got into ministry—I was a college student and I wasn't even thinking about going into full-time ministry as a job. I was just attending my church.

And I remember my junior high youth pastor at my home church asked if he could talk to me for five or ten minutes. I thought I was in trouble. So I just kind of said, "Okay, what do you want?"

He said, "Well, the fall semester is coming up." And he said this, "Your name came up and I was wondering if you would be willing to be a junior high disciple group leader this fall."

Now, two things went through my mind as soon as he said that. Number one, I was sort of flattered. I was like, "Oh, my name came up." The second thing that I thought was, "I can't do this. Junior high kids? They will eat my lunch." I was intimidated, "I will be so un-cool. I don't know. What has qualified me to do this?" So it was really kind of a wrestling match.

I gave him a very weak, "Yes." Which is all that it took. And that fall semester I led that junior high group. I don't know who was more blessed. I know for sure it was me and it challenged me, and it stretched me. And that was my entry point in ministry.

The very next thing that happened was I signed up to go on a short-term mission trip with a group of people. About two weeks before we left to go overseas the leaders of the group called me and they said, "Hey, Aaron. We're putting together the itinerary. We're going to be visiting some of these churches. And we need somebody to preach. And your name came up. We just want to know if you would have a couple of sermons prepared to preach while on the mission trip."

Guys, I had never preached a sermon in my life. And two things came up. I was flattered. Following that, I was incredibly intimidated. That mission trip was in Russia in the summer of 1995, just a few years after communism had fallen.

The first sermon I ever preached was as a 20-year-old in front of a statue of a hammer and a sickle with an interpreter. I was like, "I am so out of my league here." And that was enough for God to get ahold of me.

See, most of the time it comes with an *ask*. So here's my formal *ask* right now. If you're not connected, if you're not serving in some way, would you be willing to jump in and begin to serve?

And here's the reason why. Not only the passages that we just looked at, but because of this. You (and I'm talking to our church family right now) will have a ministry within this church that I will never have.

And what I mean by that is, because I'm the pastor and because my face is plastered on this screen. I can't even look at that. Gross. I can't stand the sound of my voice. I just don't like it. But because I'm seen around here, I have no anonymity.

So when I walk up to people in the lobby and I'm like, "Hey, how is it going? Are you new here?" they expect me to be nice because I'm the pastor, "Man, that's your job."

But when you do it, there's something very, very profound about that. In fact, I want you to serve in such a way that people would mistake you for staff. And they would be like, "So, how long have you been on staff here?"

And you go, "I'm not." And they would be like, "Well, why are you so kind and gracious and why are you so helpful? And why are you showing up early and staying late and doing this?" And you can say with full integrity, "Because of what Jesus has done for me. I want this for as many people as possible."

This really came home for me many years ago, maybe like 12 or 13 years ago. I met this young, single mom who has just begun attending our church and she was telling me about her experience here.

She said, "I showed up with my daughter by myself. I didn't know anybody." She was like, "I was super intimidated because of the size of the church." And actually we were a lot smaller then.

And she was like, "I was so intimidated. I walked in and I didn't know where to go. And finally I found the classroom to check my daughter into. And I came into this room. And I sat by myself. The music was really intriguing, and I enjoyed it. And the sermon was really relevant and really spoke to me."

And then she said, "I got done. I picked my daughter up. And she loved the Kid's Ministry. She was asking if we could come back the next week." And she said, "But as I was walking through the lobby out the door, I said to myself, 'I probably will never come back.'"

That really threw me. I was like, "Okay, I'm missing something here. You had a great experience all morning long, but you decided in your mind that you weren't going to come back?"

And she goes, "Yeah, because I just didn't know anybody. And it took a lot of courage to come. I'm a single mom. And I just didn't know if I could keep doing this every week. So I just thought to myself, 'This will probably be the last time.'"

And I said, "Well, what changed your mind?" And she said, "Well, right as I was getting ready to hit the front door, I heard my name."

Guys, there is something so powerful about hearing your name, especially in an environment where you're not expecting anybody to know you.

And she turned around and there was this lady with a big smile on her face walking toward her, and she said, "I immediately recognized her because she was one of my co-workers. And she walked up to me, and she goes, 'I didn't know you went to church here.'" And she goes, "I don't. This is my first Sunday."

And her co-worker goes, “Oh, well did somebody show you around?” And she goes, “Well, no. I just went to the kids’ wing and then I went into the auditorium and that’s it.”

So she goes, “Well, let me give you a 10-minute tour, show you around really quickly so that way you can know your way around.” Then she goes, “Do you and your daughter have plans for lunch? My husband and I would love to treat you guys.” And that single mom looked at me with tears in her eyes and she said, “They are why I came back.”

Guys, you have a ministry here that I will never have, and I actually envy it. It’s why when I travel I love going to churches where nobody knows me. And here’s what I love to do. I’ll walk in with that anonymity, and I’ll try to find somebody who looks incredibly uncomfortable to be there and I will walk up, and I will be like, “Hey, man. Is this your first time?”

And he might be like, “Yeah.” And I’m like, “Hey, let me show you around.” I don’t know what I’m showing them. It’s my first Sunday too. I’m just like totally making it up just trying to help get somebody get connected. I love that. And you’ve got that opportunity. And I want to give that to you as well.

Here are three questions for you to ask as you are looking for opportunities to serve. Really simple:

What are my gifts /experiences?

What are the things that you are naturally good at? What are the things that you’ve experienced that you can use?

Here’s the second question:

What are my passions?

What are you really passionate about?

And then the third question, I would say, is maybe the most important:

What needs to be done?

What needs to be done? I don’t know very many people who will go, “You know what? I just have the spiritual gift of directing traffic in the parking lot.” No, it’s just like it needs to be done.

So, I want to encourage you to jump in on that. And when it comes to Traders Point outreach focus, as a church—in other words the difference we are trying to make as a church in the world—we put these into three different categories. Alright? If you’re

taking notes you might just jot this down so that way you are aware and you can pray about this:

Planting churches and multiplying movements

We are trying to plant churches. And we start churches in urban areas all around the world because we believe if you can change a city, you can change the world. So we plant churches and multiply movements. So we are trying to multiply, that's why we do multi-site.

Honestly, I got this question last week, "Why did we go multi-site?" One of the reasons why is because it just multiplies the amount of leaders that we need. And we are trying to start campuses, not to grow; we are trying to start campuses where people are driving more than 20 minutes to us so they can be on mission with us.

The second thing is:

Developing leaders for ministry and marketplace

We are trying to develop leaders or disciples both for vocational ministry and the marketplace. So we have a leadership college and we have a leadership residency program, we're trying to pour into the next generation of leaders. And many of them will go into full-time vocational ministry, most will not.

In fact, if you're here and you're a part of our church, we want to try to build your leadership ability for the marketplace so that you are a better employee, so that you are a better boss or business owner as you represent Christ in the marketplace—modern day Daniels in our community.

And then the third bucket that we focus on is what we might call:

Compassion: meeting tangible needs of people

We just want to meet the tangible, physical needs of people who are hurting in our city, community, and all around the world.

Jesus said, in the Great Commission, "You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem," and then He extended the circle out, "Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

So here's the way to say it. We want to help you make a difference:

HERE

NEAR

and,

FAR

So here in our own church family—those single moms, those hurting young men, those kids who come to our church—the body of Christ serving one another when we gather.

We also want to help you serve outside the walls of this church in our community and then even to have a heart around the globe. You can go to our website and find a whole list of outreach partners that we partner with around the globe.

But the one that I really want to focus on in our remaining time together is the effort that we are trying to make into the lives of vulnerable children and their families, both in our city (it's a huge, huge need) and around the world.

And the ministry is called:

Foster and Adoption Ministry (FAM)

We have a resource center here on the campus of Northwest where we try to meet physical, tangible needs of foster and adoption families and vulnerable children in our own community. Here's the reason why. This comes right out of Scripture. In Isaiah, chapter 1, verse 17 it says:

"Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows."

James 1:27 says:

"Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress...."

So we believe one of the biggest ways that we can make a difference is by looking out for and caring for vulnerable children. And we want to do that through a number of organizations, locally, within our own city.

We also want to do it with an organization that I want to introduce to you today and get you familiar with. This is one of our strategic partners called Missions of Hope International. They are based out of Kenya, Africa.

In fact, I first got introduced to Missions of Hope in my first year here at Traders Point, it was 2008. I got invited to go over to Kenya. I didn't know anybody. I didn't know the connection.

What they were doing, they work in one of the largest slums in the world called the Mathare Valley. And they were looking for churches to partner with them where we would sponsor one of the communities within the Mathare Valley.

We would come along in prayer support, financial support, and even short-term trips where we would send people over. We would become a sponsor to that area. They wanted me to consider our church sponsoring Bondeni.

So I go over there, and I say, "Great. Let's drive through." And they were like, "No. We can't. It's far too dangerous. In fact in the middle of the day we can't take you through." They said, "This is going to be one of the toughest communities to break into." And I was like, "Great. We'll take that one. We'll take the hardest one."

So they take me up on this hillside to look down into Bondeni and there was this river that flows through the community and there was all this sewage that flows through the river. And there were these men down there making home-made brew, beer, in that filthy water.

We were standing up on the hillside overlooking that community and we were just praying over it. And I'll never forget. They saw us up there and they looked up and they flipped us off. And I was like, "Alright. Welcome to Bondeni."

Since that time, guys, we have started a church in that community. We have sent multiple short-term trips to Bondeni. We've started a school. The school burned down. We rebuilt the school. And we've sponsored hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of kids in that area.

Now if you were to go over there, not only is it safe to drive through, you can walk through. People know who Traders Point is. It is amazing to see how revolutionary that has been.

So right now I want to go ahead and introduce you to the leaders of Missions of Hope International. They are with us today. Would you please, as they come out on stage, give a warm, Traders Point welcome to Mary and Wallace Kamau.

You guys. So good to be with you. We made sure to turn the temperature down outside for your visit. Glad you guys could be here with us.

Mary and Wallace, thank you for taking the time to travel all this way to be with our church. In fact, in many ways we feel like you're a part of our church family. And in many ways I feel like I'm a part of Missions of Hope International and what God is doing over there. The partnership between us over the last 15 years has really been pretty amazing to see.

I want you to know that this is a power couple right here. What's happening in Kenya through their leadership is simply phenomenal.

I've been saying this for years. I don't know if I've ever said this to your face, but I'll say it now. I want to nominate them for a Nobel Peace Prize for what they have been doing in Kenya. It's simply astounding.

I'm going to let them speak to this, but I just want you to know that Mary was a college student in Nairobi, and she had no idea that the slums existed. Now, we're talking about slums, We're talking some of the worst of the worst poverty conditions that you can imagine.

And she went to school with a boy who grew up in the Mathare Valley. He was telling her about it, and she didn't believe him. So after class she went down to check it out for herself. She was stunned by what she saw, little kids playing in sewage. Extreme poverty. Little hope. No education. No access to health care or nutritious meals.

So she began to spend time with these kids on her own time after school. That started with like 50 kids. I'm going to let her tell you how this has grown. They started what's called Missions of Hope International.

So, Mary, tell us a little bit about that experience that God had in your life where you went, and you saw it. What this mission field has become today and what's the scope of the ministry.

Mary

Thank you. Having launched this community after we were married in the year 2000, God laid it on our hearts to start a school so that the children come to the school. They can come to the school and be entry points to their families. We can be able to be led to their families, we can disciple them, connect them to a local church. But also we can empower them so they can be able to earn a different living and empower them through different programs.

So in the year 2000, we started with 50 kids and over the last 22 years God has just blessed our ministry because of partners like Traders Point. And today we have schools across Kenya. Not only the slums but also in the rural communities and we have 25,000 students attending our schools.

Aaron

Let's say that again—25,000 students. That's amazing. That's amazing.

Mary

Yes. And then of course through economic empowerment to the families we teach them and train them on how they can start and run and grow small businesses. We

also teach them on different kind of skills that they can use to find jobs or start businesses.

We also have health programs. We have both dental and medical clinics across our communities. And we also plant churches. Currently we have planted 34 churches in all of these different communities and the story continues.

Aaron

Absolutely. Absolutely. Love it. Wallace, tell us a little bit about the partnership between our church and Missions of Hope, what has that been enabling you guys to accomplish?

Wallace

Yeah, so thankful because of our partnership with Traders Point. Because, as you said, we are in Bondeni, by the way it is the lowest point of the valley, and within that community, which was one of the hardest communities to penetrate; we now have a church that is thriving. And we have a school with an enrollment of over 900 children. And transformation is taking place in that community.

And it's not only that. We are now in a new community called Kilifi, specifically in a village called Kibarani where we have a modern school.

In the year 2020 we celebrated 20 years of ministry, and we launched a new strategy. We call it MOHI 2.0, whereby, as we start the school year, we use a chapel alongside the school. So, Traders Point, now we have the first modern school with that new strategy, and we are so thankful to God.

You also have come alongside us because as the ministry grows. We have all of these new schools and anticipating to have 100 new schools in the next 10 years. We have to develop leaders. And you have come alongside of that in a leadership development program where you have allowed us to use the same fashion you have here that you have customized. And it is so, so helpful.

Ever since, we have been partnering with TCM in pastoral programs whereby they are training our pastors and building their capacity through a master's program. You too are partnering with STADIA who are a church planting partner. So we are very, very thankful for the partnership with Traders Point.

Aaron

And you know the learnings are like two ways. We had a team that went over a couple of months ago, in October, just to spend some time with the leadership

development side of things. And they came back, and they were like, “Missions of Hope does things so well. We need to learn from them.”

And then there were some things that we could offer, some tools out of our toolbox to kind of help you guys. So this is like this beautiful partnership.

Mary, you are, hands down, the most visionary person that I’ve met. I’ve gotten to sit next to you on an airplane and to hear you talk about your vision is amazing. It actually humbles me. I thought I had a lot of vision, not compared to her. Her vision is amazing. And God is using it in big ways.

Guys, we are in Nairobi with them. We are still continuing to partner there, but now we’ve gone out to the coast of Kilifi. And in 2019, pre-COVID, I got a chance to go out to view it all. There was already a school there, but there wasn’t a facility. And we were able to catch a vision of what God could use us for.

What I love about their ministry is there are these three legs of a stool. You’ve got the churches that they’ve planted; you’ve got the schools that they are providing, plus the healthcare and the micro-finance so that way it is a holistic person that they are trying to minister to.

And what that is—it is providing a pathway for people out of poverty in a way that sticks. So I just want to thank you guys for the work that you continue to do.

Tell us what child sponsorship is and why it’s so crucial to what you do.

Mary

When you sponsor a child with \$40 a month you are actually giving this child a little lifeline. It’s like you are giving them an opportunity to break out of the cycle of poverty, making a huge difference because this child comes to us while in school. And while they are in school they get two meals a day.

They are taught the Word of God. In our schools every day our children have devotions. We also have a Saturday program, which is like a VBS type of program. We also have mentorship programs for these children.

And these children are also able to get Christian teaching because in our schools through the sponsorship funds that you provide, we are able to employ teachers, Christian teachers, who get to love on these kids.

And then we also have social workers who connect the schools to the families and that is how we are able to reach out to the families. And of course it’s not only the child, the child that you sponsor, but it is actually the entire family because the child is the one who is the entry point to the family and then to the community as a whole.

And of course this child is also gets basic healthcare in our clinics, dental and medical. And the children are also able to have their parents empowered through Missions of Hope. So it is that holistic ministry starting with the child and then going to the family and the entire community.

Aaron

Yeah. Yeah. I can't think of any other single thing that any of us could do individually or collectively as a church that makes as big of a difference as child sponsorship. So I want you to take a look at the screens and this story.

Video

I was born and raised in the slums of Mathare Valley. I lived with my mom, grandmother, and baby brother. I knew nothing of my father.

The Mathare Valley is an unforgiving place to call home. People say nothing good can come from there. But when I was four I was given an opportunity. I was selected as one of the first fifty kids of Missions of Hope.

At MOHI I was safe. I had two meals a day and medical care, a great school, and amazing teachers who loved me and taught me about how God loved me.

One night when I was 10, I woke up to the smell of smoke. Our house was burning. We were able to escape, but we lost everything. We had to start over. Mom fell into depression. I was left to take care of my brother.

A few years later, MOHI provided a way for me to attend a boarding school. In high school they paid my school fees, bus fare, and even pocket money. They made sure that all I needed to do was focus on school.

That is when my mom passed away. I had to be an adult for me and my brother. I really thought about giving up and not going back to school.

I think about that time even now, but I do believe that good things can come from the Mathare Valley. MOHI gave me a loan for college. I was able to graduate in 2019 to pursue a career in law. After becoming a lawyer I went back to school and recently was sworn in as an advocate for the High Court of Kenya.

Life in Mathare is hard, but I let the challenges make me stronger. I never want to get to the point of giving up. Today I am an example that good things do come from the Mathare Valley.

Today I am an advocate for others because someone was an advocate for me. Soon, I will become a child sponsor so that I can impact a life the same way my sponsor impacted me. Together we can bring hope and transform lives for Christ.

Aaron

Isn't that amazing? Man. I love the line where she said, "Today I'm going to become an advocate for others because somebody was an advocate for me."

Guys, that's the gospel message, God advocated for us. He sent Jesus to adopt us as sons and daughters into His family so that we could become heirs. And now we don't keep that to ourselves. We extend that out. Because we're saved by grace that ought to make us gracious and generous.

So, here's what we're going to do today across all of our campuses. We're going to sponsor a whole bunch of kids. Alright? Yeah, we can clap for that. First hour alone we've already sponsored well over 500 kids. So I'm looking forward to seeing what God is going to do the rest of this day.

Let me just tell you that this is not meant to be a high pressure, hard sell kind of a thing. Nobody is twisting your arm. If you're like, "Man, I already sponsor kids," or, "I'm just not in the place to do this," man, that's totally fine. We just want you to pray over what is happening at Missions of Hope.

But if you are in a place where you can say, "You know what? I'm feeling like God is leading me to do this," or, "I'm going to go to Starbucks a few less times a month so that way I can sponsor a child," then I want to encourage you—here in a few moments we'll provide you time to do this, you just get up from wherever you are and you'll see these racks all around the room that have packets of kids who need to be sponsored right now in the community where we are partnering with Missions of Hope.

So I just want you to get up, come down, and grab a packet. I know that our impulse as people is to kind of riffle through and find the kid that we really want. And that's totally understandable. But I just ask you to grab a packet. All of these kids need to be sponsored. And then take it back to your seat. Spend a little time filling out the bottom section.

This is so important. Do not leave the building with the bottom section in your possession. You need to fill it out. Rip it off. Pass it off to one of the volunteers in the bins as you leave. If you take the bottom section with you, that child ends up in sponsorship purgatory for a few months trying to figure out where they are. So rip off the bottom portion. Leave it here. You can take the top portion with you.

As we said, \$40 a month provides two nutritious meals a day, it provides them an opportunity to go to school, it provides them medical and dental care, people to come around them and mentor them and disciple them and care for them. And you can see the impact that it makes.

If you are under the age of 18, you need to talk to Mom and Dad first before you grab these. Alright? We don't want a bunch of surprises, "Mom and Dad, surprise. You've got six extra kids." Let's not do that. Just talk to them first.

I just want you to spend a few moments in prayer and see if you're feeling like God is leading you to do this.

You know, one of the things that I love about the size of our church is that we can make a sizeable impact around the world. And this is an opportunity to do that. As I said before, the reason why we do this is because this is our response to what God has done for us.

I just want to read a passage of Scripture over you before I pray. It's Galatians 4. It says this:

"And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world. But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.

"And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, 'Abba, Father.'" That word Abba just means Daddy. "Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir." Galatians 4:3-7 (NLT)

Let's do this, not because anybody is pressuring you. Let's do this, not so that you can feel good about the fact that you're sending some money overseas to a child. Let's do this because God gave everything to reconcile you back to Him as His son or His daughter. And now it's our response to make a difference in this hurting world in which we live.

Let me pray for you.

Father, we come to You right now and we're so grateful that we get to be a part of a church where individually we can make a difference, and we should. Collectively the difference we can make when we all put our shoulder into this is profound.

So, God, today in these few moments together I just ask that as a church family we would see hundreds of children's lives changed forever because of our desire to respond to what You've so freely given to us. We ask this right now in Jesus' name. And everybody says: Amen.