

Gospel Hub

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[0 : 00] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today. A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here.

And we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community. And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good, they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it. Which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in his word. I mentioned last week that we're taking a break from our series in the book of Judges and we're turning for five weeks to our Grit and Grace Generosity Initiative, which is really just a focus on the vision and future of our church.

You hear the words generosity initiative, you may immediately think, well, this is going to be a series about money. The reality is our church is not about money, our church is about a mission.

We just happen to need money to accomplish that mission, but we need it for our mission.

And so we're going to talk about that mission and our vision for our church. Last week we looked at Matthew chapter 5, where Jesus talks about the church as the city set upon a hill. And he says, you are the light of the world.

[1 : 14] And so we talked about the fact that the church is the place that shines God's light in a dark place. The church is a place that shows God's rule and reign on this earth. The church is an embassy, represents another country in a foreign land.

And so for this week, the next four weeks, essentially, we're going to be talking about how it is that we want to be a faithful and effective embassy. One of the challenges and joys of this church that we talk about is that we are a church that constantly says hello and constantly says goodbye.

Of course, if you're here with us every summer, you know we send off military families and we receive military families. And so this can feel at times maybe like you're running a company, right? And you pour all these things into people. And the moment, you know, you've come to that investment, they leave and head off for another company. Losing members, right, that move to other churches in other parts of the country, other parts of the world.

And so the question we're going to think about this morning is how do we embrace losing? How do we embrace saying goodbye so that other people will gain?

[2 : 26] How do we embrace our loss and others' gain? It's with that I'm going to invite you to turn with me. We're going to be looking in 1 Corinthians 3, verses 5 through 9.

You can turn with me in your worship guide. You can turn in your Bible. You can turn on your phone. No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's word.

And God tells us that his word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold. And it's sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. And so that's why we read now 1 Corinthians 3, starting at verse 5.

5. 5. What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive the wages according to his labor.

[3 : 30] For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you this morning that we are your field and your building. That you are at work in your church, growing and sustaining and providing.

We thank you that you've been at work in this church in that way. We ask for your continued faithfulness and provision. And we ask especially as we come to your word this morning, that you would do what you've already promised to do, which is to speak clearly to us.

And we ask that you would help us to be able to listen and hear and understand and believe. And most of all, we ask that you would show us Jesus. That we would see his holiness and power and glory and love and authority.

That we would grow in our love and affection for him. We'd grow in our reverence and our all for him. We'd grow in our obedience to him. And we ask these things grateful that we don't have to earn them or deserve them.

[4 : 35] We know that we can't. And so instead, we simply ask for them in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. In 2010, a group of researchers published their findings that they had discovered from studying over 100 astronauts and cosmonauts.

They wanted to know, okay, what effect does it have on a person long term when they have spent time away from the earth, when they've spent time in space? How does this change them as people?

One person described the study this way. They are looking for the effects of outer space on inner space. If you leave the globe and you get to look down at our earth from outer space, what does it do to you?

How does it change you? And you'll look and you'll see this on page 8 of your worship guide. It summarizes their results in this way. Upon returning from space, astronauts are less focused on individual achievements and personal happiness and more concerned about the collective good. This reaction is known as the overview effect. In other words, astronauts gained perspective. We might say they gained perspective in a very literal sense.

[5 : 51] They saw the big picture. They saw the big picture of the earth. And they realized in relation to all of that how small and tiny and insignificant they actually were.

I've told you all before of my trip to the Grand Canyon. And my main thought when I looked out on the Grand Canyon is, wow, I am really tiny. Astronauts, they have the same reaction.

And so when they come back to earth, it actually has this long-term effect on them, how they think about the world as this entity and how they think about their place in it. One astronaut from Apollo 14 named Edgar Mitchell said this, How did being in space affect those astronauts and cosmonauts long-term?

Being out in space gave them a true and right perspective on the earth. They saw the big picture. They understood how things related to each other.

Paul here, in this passage, is writing to the church in Corinth, which would be in Greece, modern-day Greece. And he is telling them, Look, you have lost sight of the big picture.

[7 : 15] You do not have the perspective that you need. He is writing to a church that is experiencing conflict and division. That is one of the main things that Paul addresses in this letter.

And one aspect of their conflict and their division is that they have separated into tribes based on different teachers that they like. And so that is why he says in verse 5, What then is Apollos? What is Paul?

The reason he says that is because people in that group have separated into Team Paul and Team Apollos. Paul, being the author of this letter, the apostle, of course, is the one who has taught them so many things.

Apollos is actually another famous preacher from the early church. You may remember him from Acts chapter 18. Priscilla and Aquila had to pull him aside and say, Hey, you are a great preacher, but you do not know everything.

Can we catch you up to speed? Presumably after that, Apollos continued to be effective in ministry. He was well known for his preaching. The problem is that these people had missed the point.

[8 : 12] They had decided, you know, we're going to belong to Apollos because he's the one who helped us believe the gospel. And somehow, this was causing real division and strife in the church. In fact, that shows up earlier in the letter here.

He says in verse 3, which we didn't read, While there is jealousy and strife among you. So it's not just that they have different preachers that they like.

It's that this has caused this great conflict in the church. And so they have missed something important that Paul wants to call their attention to. Paul is reminding them, Look, you need to zoom

out and you need to see the entire globe.

You need to zoom out and see the entire church. You need to zoom out and understand what it is that we're actually trying to accomplish.

Paul is begging them to have the overview effect. He says, Let's look at the whole situation. Each church, each person, yeah, they have a particular role.

[9 : 18] But that church and that person have the same mission. That church and that person are working towards the same goal. And so we're going to move backwards here in this passage.

The last verse we read is verse 9, which says this, For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. So Paul is reminding them, This thing that you're working on, This is God's. It's not yours. Not only is this thing that you're working on God's and not yours, There's actually only one of them. Notice what he doesn't say.

He doesn't say, You are God's fields, plural. He doesn't say, You are God's buildings, plural. No, you are one field and one building.

And so there is one goal. Every church has the exact same task. When another church wins, that means that you win. And when you win, that means that another church wins.

[10 : 22] Why? Because there's only one field. And you all are working in this same field together. And so when you get caught up in what your role in the field is, You have lost completely what's happening.

You're out of touch with reality. When you're talking about Team Apollos versus Team Paul, You're forgetting that Apollos and Paul are working for the same kingdom.

Forgetting that Apollos and Paul are working for the same goal. Paul also hits on this in verse 6. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

In other words, don't pit us against each other. We've got one task. Paul and Apollos, hey, we're both working in the same field. We're both trying to get the same result.

And guess who that result belongs to? It doesn't belong to Paul. It doesn't belong to Apollos. It belongs to God. So there's no need to be territorial.

[11 : 21] Why? Well, because there's only one territory. There is only one field. I asked you at the beginning, How do we embrace losing so that others gain?

One answer is this. If we see the big picture, we realize we're not losing. If we see the big picture, when we see the big picture, we know when we say goodbye, when we lose, we're sending that person to work in the same field.

That field belongs to God. Verse 9, you are God's field, God's building. Paul doesn't just tell them here, though, that there is one mission, one purpose, one field.

He also reminds them that this should lead to great humility on their part. If this is God's field and not their field, if it is one field and not multiple fields, what does that tell us about those who work in the field?

Well, Paul helps us understand in verse 7. He gives us this dose of humility. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything.

[12 : 42] One commentator says this. Ministers are merely farmhands. We might say that about Christians and churches in general.

We are merely another outpost. We are merely another place in the same field. We are merely another setup gardening God's church.

It says the same thing in verse 5. What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed as the Lord assigned to each. Yeah, you're just farmhands.

God needed a farmhand here. He needed a farmhand there. Apollos is farming one section. Paul is farming another. You think you're a big deal?

Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything. That is how big of a deal you are. And how do you take hold of that?

[13 : 49] Well, you catch the bigger picture. You see the bigger vision. And when we see the bigger vision, we realize we are not as important as we think we are.

You and I are just waterers in God's field. You and I are just people who go out and pick weeds in God's field.

Now, if there's a great crop, who gets the glory? The weed picker or the person who owns the farm? All the glory goes to God.

Verse 7, only God gives the growth. There was a space shuttle commander named Jeff Ashby. And he talks about how his first time in space changed him forever.

He circled the entire globe in 90 minutes. So in an hour and a half, he saw every single continent. And he said this, seeing how fragile the little layer is in which all of humankind exists, you can easily, from space, see the connection between someone on one side of the planet to someone on the other.

[15:04] And there are no borders evident. This is on page 7 of your worship guide at the bottom. When you get to see an overview of the earth from outer space, you realize you share a common identity with all human beings.

We might say this, when you see that God's kingdom is one field, you realize you share a common identity with all churches.

When you realize that God's kingdom is one field, you realize you share a common identity with all Christians. So it's not just that we are servants.

It's not just that we're merely weed pickers and waterers. It's that we're weed pickers and waterers working together towards the same goal. And you saw in the video before the worship service this morning, we talked about multiple times when we say gospel hub, we're talking about the fact that we're constantly receiving people and sending them out, right?

When I think about a hub, I think about an airport hub like DIA up in Denver, one of my least favorite places in the world. What does a hub do?

[16:17] It takes in so many planes, right? It fuels them out, fuels them up, and then it sends them out. Now, all airports do this to a certain extent, right? But a hub does it on a whole other level.

We talk about being a gospel hub at this church because we, like every church, receive and send, and this church does that on a whole other level.

We have five military installations here in town. We are constantly saying hello, and we're constantly saying goodbye. We have planes constantly coming in and constantly going out.

What do we want to do with those planes? We want to be a gospel hub. We want to fuel those planes the best way we can. We want to maintain those planes so that they are ready for the next stop on their journey.

We want those planes to even be at a whole other level than they were when we received them. We want them to be able to go to the next airport even more prepared, even more fueled than they were before.

[17:30] That goes along with other parts of our vision. Why do we need robust discipleship? There's a lot of reasons we need robust discipleship. One of them is we want to do the best job we can in the two to four years that we have someone.

We want to be an effective embassy. We want to be an effective hub. Now, when we talk about these things, it's important to remember there are some of us who don't get sent out.

There are some of us who are not military. In fact, there's been times in our church where people have said things like, Well, what about the rest of us? And Paul answers that clearly here, verse 6 and verse 7.

Verse 6, I planted, Apollo swattered, but God gave the growth. God needs different workers in his field. God needs people who go.

God also needs people who stay. We might rewrite verse 7 this way. So neither he who goes nor he who stays is anything.

[18:39] But God gives the growth. We want our church to be a place where God gives the growth. We want to be effective farmhands.

We want to be people who do the best job we can watering and weeding. And we want to remember that when we send people out from this church, we are sending them out to another place in the same field.

When it comes to verse 6, there are going to be times where we plant and others reap. And we've talked about this as a leadership in this church for a long time.

That we've heard stories of other churches where someone comes in from the military and they say, Oh, you're in the military. Well, we're not going to consider you for leadership because we're going to lose you really quickly. Our investment is not going to pay off.

Verse 9, you are God's field, God's building. No matter what investment we make, it will pay off. It may not pay off here.

[19 : 46] It pays off somewhere else. This church, our goal is to be a gospel hub. If we plant and someone else waters and another church sees the growth, praise God.

Our goal as a church is that when other churches receive those that we send out from Cheyenne Mountain, the group that I affectionately refer to as our Cheyenne Mountain alumni, that those churches would rejoice because they know that that person is coming from a hub where they were fueled and trained.

They know that that person was equipped for the next level of leadership. That's our vision as a church. Our vision is that we would be a faithful gospel hub sending and receiving.

By the way, you might notice that the symbol for gospel hub is not an airport. It's actually a fountain. Fountains also receive and send. What do you call a fountain that doesn't receive or send at all?

It's just a stagnant pool. Brothers and sisters, we want this church to be a place of life. We want it to be a place that is sending and receiving.

[21 : 05] We want it to be a place that's training and equipping. We want it to be a place that cares well for the people God gives us for as long as he gives us to them. And if someone else sees the growth, praise God.

You are God's field, God's building. We talked last week about the challenges that this church has faced over many years.

In fact, last night I had dinner with Dina Stewart, which very few of you probably know that name. She's the widow of our founding pastor. And Dina shared with me some of the stories from the early years of Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church.

And I told her, yeah, this story that you just shared with me, that's why we call it Grit and Grace. Because it's been hard for this church to last for 27 years. And, praise God, we've made it for 27 years.

Why? Because God gave the growth. Why is our church growing right now?

[22 : 18] Because God gave the growth. Why are we moving forward in mission with great confidence?

Because we know that God has not just given growth in the past. God is the one who will give growth in the future. And so it's an exciting time to be a part of Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church.

That's why we're focusing on our vision. That's why we're having this generosity initiative. We want to be faithful in shepherding that growth. I talked to you earlier, I asked you, what do you call a fountain that doesn't send or receive?

It's just a stagnant pool, probably nasty things growing in there. What do you call an airport that is understaffed? Yeah, a lot of answers.

Chaos. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Chaos, right? We want to be a well-staffed hub. We want to be a place where we have the resources we need to fuel up the planes God sends us.

[23 : 21] We want to be a place that has the resources we need to repair and care for those planes. We want other churches to know those planes will be better off after they've been here with us.

How do we do that? We need the staff to run this hub. And so that's why we're doing Grit and Grace. Our goal is to move forward, to continue to be a gospel hub, to be a faithful embassy of God's kingdom.

To do that, we want to bring on a second full-time staff member. Problem is, our money right now is tied up in our mortgage payment. We are looking to reduce \$800,000 worth of debt to eliminate our almost \$8,000 a month mortgage payment and redirect that towards the ministry of being a gospel hub here in Southwest Colorado Springs.

We want to do that with great hope. Because we know that he who plants and he who waters are nothing. But God gives the growth.

And we're praying that God would give the growth in this situation. We're inviting you all to give. We're inviting you to be generous. Not because we're about money, but because we're about a mission. And we want to be faithful and effective in that mission here in Southwest Colorado Springs.

[24 : 33] And our hope is this, that God is at work in our work. Our hope is, as one person has said, that God's work establishes our work.

God has brought us the growth. And now it's time for us to take the next step. The next step in our story as a church. We want to raise up leaders for the global church.

We want to be an equipping church. We want to be a good sending church. We want a second pastor who's going to help us put together a discipleship plan that we would fuel our people well. We want to grow. We'll talk in a couple weeks about robust discipleship. We want to be a place where people are trained and equipped in the whole counsel of God. So that's why we're inviting you all and challenging you.

Join us with it. Join us on this journey. Help us be good waterers and planters. Many years ago now, a man named Andrew Peterson wrote a song called Planting Trees, which is on the back of your worship guide.

[25 : 49] Part of it is. And it captures much of our vision of a church. He talks in the first verse about planting a tree. They chose a spot. We dug the hole. We laid the maples in the ground to have and hold.

And then he says this. So many years from now, long after we are gone, this tree will spread its branches out and bless the dawn.

That's our dream as a church. That's our vision. That we would plant trees at Shine Mountain that would bless people we haven't met. That we would invest in people who would lead in other churches.

That we would equip and raise up leaders in God's field, those who plant in water, we'd send all over the world. Why? Because verse 9, we are God's fellow workers.

You are God's field. God's building. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you for your faithfulness to this church.

[26 : 54] And we ask boldly that you would continue to sustain your embassy here in Southwest Colorado Springs. This outpost. This colony of the kingdom of God. And we ask that you would free us from competition.

And you would help us to see our role in supporting your church. Whether we see the fruit personally or not. We do it because the great love that we've received and the work that we know that you're doing.

That it's not up to us, but it's up to you who honor our faithful and imperfect efforts. Because we know that you give the growth. And we ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.