

A City Set On a Hill

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Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. My name's 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.

If you've been tracking closely with our church communications, you know that we're actually taking a break from Judges this morning and for the four weeks following. And we're taking that break because we're going to focus on our Grit and Grace Generosity Initiative.

Now, when you hear that phrase, generosity initiative, you might initially think, oh, we're just going to be talking about money and giving. The reality is we're going to talk about that almost not at all, because as we've told you all before, our church is not about money.

[1 : 0 5] It's about a mission. Now, we need money to fuel that mission. But what we want to talk about is the mission that we have for this church. And we're going to talk about that mission and that vision, part of what you see on pages 13 and 14 of your worship guide.

As we do that, we're going to turn first to the Gospel of Matthew. We're going to look in Matthew chapter 5, when Jesus talks about His vision for His people, the church, one of the most famous passages in all of Scripture.

We'll be looking at Matthew chapter 5, verses 13 through 16, but we're going to focus almost exclusively this morning on verse 14. And then we're going to come back on October 22nd and finish out coming back again to this passage.

We're just going to look at one thing simply, which is God's calling on His church. His church is meant to be an embassy or an outpost or a colony of the kingdom of God, which raises the question, why does the church exist?

Why are we actually here in this world? What's our role? It's with that question that I'm going to invite you to turn with me now to Matthew chapter 5, starting at verse 13.

[2 : 1 3] You can go there in your worship guide. You can turn on your phone. You can turn in your Bible. 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 Matthew chapter 5, starting at verse 13. Verse 15.

I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word.

Amen. Our Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you this morning, most of all, that your Son, Jesus, is the light of the world.

We thank you that He's been the light of our lives. And we ask that you would use us to spread that light and share it in our families and our friends and our communities.

[3 : 47] And we ask that you would use your Word this morning in a powerful way, that you would speak to us clearly, that we would understand the great calling that you've given to us and the great grace that you've provided for us in Jesus Christ.

Most of all, we ask that you would help us to see Him, that He would be more beautiful to us than He was when we woke up this morning, and that you would shape us more and more to look like Him.

And we ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. I've mentioned to you all a number of times that I grew up in southern Maryland, just southeast of Washington, D.C.

And there were many times that we would go into the city. My mom was especially passionate about making sure we took advantage of all the free museums there. In fact, I didn't realize really until I was older that most museums are not free.

But in Washington, D.C., they are. And as we would drive to various spots, sometimes we would drive along Massachusetts Avenue, which if you're familiar with our nation's capital, you'll know that there's a neighborhood there that's called Embassy Row.

[4 : 52] And it's called that, of course, for a reason, which is that that's where all the embassies are. So as you go along, you'll pass the Embassy of India to the United States. You'll pass the Embassy of Greece, the Embassy of South Africa.

And, of course, we could go on and on. This is the place, this is the spot in D.C. where other countries have their outposts, their representation. Now, Denver has something similar.

I don't think they're called embassies since they're not in D.C., but they have consulates. So if you are a German citizen traveling to the U.S. and you have trouble, there's a German consulate in Denver. If you're a Canadian citizen and, God forbid, you should run into trouble, there's a Canadian consulate waiting for you there in Denver.

Now, of course, if you're familiar with these things, you know embassies do not just exist to exist. They have a purpose. They are meant to represent another country in a foreign land.

My grandmother used to be, when she was a little bit younger, quite the world traveler. And so she would go to all sorts of countries around the world, but many countries she would need to get a visa first.

[5 : 59] And so she would come up to stay with my parents in D.C., and then she would go into the city. She would visit the embassy so she could get permission to travel to that other country.

If you want access to another land, often the first place you go is to the embassy, to the consulate. Now, the opposite is also true.

If you are traveling in another country and you run into trouble, where do you run? You run to the embassy.

If you're an American citizen and you're in Florence and things go sideways for you, where are you headed to first? American embassy. If you're in Berlin or Munich, you're in trouble and you're an American citizen, where are you going to run first?

You're going to run to the embassy, to the consulate. There's a number of movie and TV scenes actually based on this concept where someone has a tight situation. They're trying to escape a foreign government, and they're just able to cross the pathway into their embassy in the nick of time so that they can be safe.

[7 : 07] Of course, we know embassies are not always pleasant places to be. We can think of Tehran in the 70s or Benghazi in 2012. I bring all of this up this morning to say this.

The church is the embassy of God's kingdom. The church is the place that represents God's rule and reign here on this earth.

The church represents another country in a foreign land. If you are a citizen of God's kingdom and you run into trouble, where do you run for refuge and help?

You run to the church. If you are someone who is not a part of God's kingdom and you want to learn about it, you want to have access to it, where do you run?

You run to the church. The church is the place where we access God's rule and reign. In the church, as we've talked about many times before, there's a place that shows the light in a world that is dark.

[8 : 23] In fact, that's what Jesus is calling our attention to here in verse 14. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Brothers and sisters, that is our calling as Christians. It's the calling of the church in general. It's the calling of this church in particular.

We are meant to represent heaven here on earth. We're meant to work and pray that God's kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven.

And we're meant to do it right here, right now, in Southwest Colorado Springs. If you go to the Indian embassy, I can promise you one thing.

They are not serving hamburgers. Right? They are representing the country. They are representing another place.

[9 : 26] What does it mean for us to be the light of the world? It means many things, but it cannot mean less than this, that we represent God's rule and reign here and now.

It cannot mean less than representing God's kingdom. It cannot mean less than showing what is true in a world that is filled with lies.

It cannot mean less than giving hope in a world that's filled with despair. It cannot mean less than showing forgiveness and reconciliation in a world that loves cancel culture.

It means modeling humility in a world that can't get along. It means bearing witness to the fact that the problems in this world are so great and so deep that no man or woman or group of people can solve them.

It means reminding us of the reality that the line between good and evil cuts through every human heart. It means, in all of that, that we are telling the world that God is our creator.

[10 : 58] Jesus is our redeemer. That is what it means for us in this place and this time to be the light of the world. It means that we are following Jesus together as one community.

And we are convinced of the fact that there is no one so good they don't need God's grace. And no one so bad they can't have it. In other words, the church is meant to be the place, it is meant to be the embassy, where the light of God's kingdom shines the brightest.

In fact, that's what we're saying. If you look on page 13 of your worship guide, all of these things that we prioritize as a church, we are saying this is what we believe the task of our embassy is.

As we are a small slice of heaven on earth, as we represent God's rule and reign in this world, how do we do it? Well, we do it in a variety of ways. We do it with our joyful worship that is the foundation of our community, where we are drawn in together as one people, equipped and filled and then sent out.

We do it as we are a thick community. We're not just people who happen to know each other's names, but we show up in the midst of suffering and struggle and joy. We can remind and practice Paul's words in Romans chapter 12, that we rejoice with those who rejoice and we grieve with those who grieve.

[12 : 21] We're an embassy when we exercise our fervent witness that we are actually a city set on a hill that gives light. It is not something that's hidden under a basket, that we are quick to share with others our hope in Jesus Christ.

And as an embassy, we are a place that trains people and brings them up in the ways and practices and the culture of this foreign land. It also means that we're a gospel hub.

We know that this is a place where people come and then they're sent out. And so we want to be effective and faithful in training up leaders for the global church. That is the task of this embassy.

In fact, I would argue it's the task of every church, of every embassy. However, there are things about this outpost, this colony, this embassy that are unique and special.

There are things about our church here at 4450 West Meadow Drive that are not true of every church. We have a special calling to be a light in a dark world.

[13 : 32] I want you to think with me about this for a second. We are especially strategic geographically. To our south, right over there, we have Fort Carson.

We are not sort of close to Fort Carson. We are literally across the street. South Academy is the only street that separates us from that army post.

When you look out the windows of my office, you can see the tops of houses on the fort. So we're right outside the gates. Gate three, right over there.

That's just the south. Now I want you to think, what happens when we look to the west? We have the Broadmoor Bluffs and the Broadmoor, right? Jump a little north, you hit the Broadmoor.

That's our west. What's to our east? We have one of the underserved areas of Colorado Springs. To our north, what do we have? Downtown Colorado Springs.

[14 : 35] I challenge you to find a more strategic embassy in terms of location. We are right here at the intersection of all of those things.

Shine Mountain is not just strategic geographically, it is also spiritually strategic. We are in the midst of a lot of areas that are hard ground for the gospel.

So let's go through our cardinal directions again. We have to the south of us, Fort Carson, a place of great spiritual darkness, right?

Drive onto the post, you can feel it when you go through the gates. The military is not a place where the light of the gospel shines bright.

Praise God that so many of you are doing that in spite of it. That's to our south. Now let's look at our west. To our west, we have incredible wealth.

[15 : 34] We have incredible wealth in Broadmoor Bluffs. Just to the north, we have incredible wealth in the Broadmoor. What happens when you have incredible wealth? We talked about this already in Mark chapter 10.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. Wealth inoculates people against the gospel.

It is hard to believe that you are spiritually needy when you are materially rich. It's hard to believe that you're spiritually needy when you're financially wealthy.

Now remember, I've said many times before, wealth is not bad. It's just very dangerous. Okay, it's not bad. It's dangerous. We need wealthy Christians. We need wealthy Christians who are focused on the kingdom.

So that's our west. That's our south. Once again, to our east, we have one of the underserved parts of our city, parts that's often overlooked and ignored. Then, up to the north, south downtown Colorado Springs, you have many people who rejected the gospel.

- [16 : 46] Folks who grew up in Colorado Springs, perhaps in the church and for a variety of ways, have walked away. geographically and spiritually, you would be hard-pressed to find a more strategic location than Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church.
- You'd be hard-pressed to find a more strategically placed light for the gospel. Now, many people talk about Colorado Springs.
- They'll even use this phrase. They'll say, Colorado Springs is a Christian Mecca. It's just a Christian town filled with Christians. We've got focus on the family. We've got Compassion International.
- We've got the Navigators. And I could just go on and on, right, listing all the ministries that are here. That is only true of northern Colorado Springs.
- It is not true in the south. Where is focus on the family? Over 30 minutes from here. Where is Compassion International? 30 minutes from here.
- [17 : 59] Yes, Colorado Springs is a Christian Mecca in the north. It is under-churched in the south. There have been many churches that have come and gone in this part of town.
- And over the last 27 years, God has established and sustained this church. God has preserved us in what is hard soil, literally, you can go out into our field.
- And he has sustained and preserved us in what is hard ground spiritually. God has seen fit for almost three decades to have an embassy right here, 4450 West Meadow Drive.
- God is continuing to build his church. When I started out here at Cheyenne Mountain many years ago now, at least it feels that way, I had a meeting with a man named Kevin Feldado, who's a campus pastor for Woodman Valley Chapel here in town.
- And he's over the campus that's sort of in the southern part of town. And he said, Matthew, if you go up to northern Colorado Springs, you would have a hard time finding a public school that does not have a church meeting in it.
- [19 : 15] And if you go to southern Colorado Springs, the opposite is true. You will have a hard time finding a school that does have a church meeting in it.
- By the way, when we started out, our first years as a church, we met at Broadmoor Elementary School. Giant mountain trivia fact for you. We have many churches in the north of this city.
- We have very few faithful Bible-believing churches in the south. Brothers and sisters, we have a mission and a calling here in southern Colorado Springs.
- We have experienced God's blessing here over and over again. God has given us an enormous opportunity in this community and this location.
- Now, this is our church in a secondary sense. It is God's church in a primary sense. In other words, the reason that this church exists at the intersection of South Academy and 115, the reason that we are just north of Fort Carson and just south of downtown, the reason that we are just to the east of the Broadmoor and we are just to the west of eastern Colorado Springs is because God decided there would be a church here.
- [20 : 45] And God, in his mercy and in his grace, has chosen each one of us to be a part of that church here. God has a mission and a future for this church, and he has a vision for it.
- God has chosen this people in this place and this time to reach this area. God has chosen you to be a part of a church that is serving a spiritually dark part of town.
- And God has chosen to strengthen and sustain us year after year after year. By the way, that is why we are calling this generosity initiative Grit and Grace, because it has taken an enormous amount of grit from the people here and an enormous amount of God's grace for us to make it almost 30 years.

There are multiple times this church should have shut her doors, and there was a small group of faithful people who said no. People like David and Paula Johnson, people like Ken and Nancy O'Connell, who refused to give up.

And so God used them as his instruments, because ultimately it was God who decided that this church would be here in this place at this time.

[22 : 12] Of course, there's a number of miracles that have happened. David Johnson talked about those at our congregational meeting on September 17th. Miracle after miracle after miracle for us to stay as a church in this area, for us to purchase this plot of land, for us to be able to build this building.

And we are at a place as an embassy of the kingdom of God where it is time for us to take the next step. We're at a place as this outpost and this colony to go to the next level of impact and influence in this part of town.

And so we are asking God for another miracle. We're asking God to provide for this church again. We're asking him to be faithful in the future as he has in the past.

I don't have to tell you that this church is growing. That is something everyone in this church agrees on despite all the other things we might disagree about.

All you have to do is look around on a Sunday morning and say, wow, there's a lot more people than there were a year ago. And this church right now is what I call a two-engine plane with one engine.

[23 : 29] In other words, a community of this size, an embassy, if you will, of this size requires a certain amount of staff, not for the sake of staff, but for the sake of ministry and mission.

And so the time has come for this church to move forward. When we built this building and opened it up, we went up as a church in what we were able to do by an order of magnitude. Those of you who are there, remember that.

It is time for us to step up again by an order of magnitude. And so we're inviting you as a congregation to take part in that. We're inviting you to be generous and give towards this campaign.

Our goal is to raise \$800,000 so we can eliminate our debt. We can redirect our resources from facilities to ministry. We are inviting you to give your resources towards God's mission.

We're asking you to fund this embassy. Why? Verse 14, you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

[24 : 39] We talked about this last week as well when we looked at judges, that God uses us as an instrument.

God's going to accomplish his purposes. He can accomplish his purposes whether we decide to come along or not. And don't miss out on the joy of obedience.

Don't miss out on the joy of joining along. Don't miss out on the joy of being used by God. God's going to be the light of the world. God's going to be the light of the world. God's going to be the light of the world. We want to be an effective outpost in a strategic place of spiritual darkness.

And how ultimately do we do that? Well, Jesus says here, Father, you are the light of the world. And why is he able to say that?

He's able to say it because of what he also says in John 8. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

[25 : 52] There is a great light, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And he chooses in his grace to use us as small lights.

Lights that show and reflect his love and mercy and goodness and justice and truth out into the world. Brothers and sisters, we are the light of the world because Jesus is the light of the world.

We are an embassy. We are an embassy. Merely representing the king. And so what do we do? What's our prayer in the midst of that?

Our prayer is here for you on page nine. Grant, O Lord, that we may hear your people be a witness to your faithfulness, your light for all the world to see.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you for your faithfulness to this church over many years. And we ask that you would continue to use us as your instrument.

[27 : 01] You would use us to shine your light into this community where there's so much darkness and despair. You'd use us to bring the hope and the joy of the gospel that you'd continue to sustain and preserve this community here in Southwest Colorado Springs.

We ask all of these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.