

I. Intro

Good morning everyone. I am grateful to be with you all again.

Last time, I was with you we explored the concept that God has suited us to serve His kingdom purposes. He has suited us to bring Him glory.

Recently upon returning home from my last trip to see you all my family and I have been in the midst of trying to **purchase a house**. So as you can imagine we are currently living in a pile high of boxes as we are trying to figure out what our new living arrangements will look like.

Needless to say our search has been quite interesting. Sometimes we'd walk into houses and be extremely excited about what we would see it and other times we would be completely let down. It's amazing just because something looks a certain way on the outside doesn't mean necessarily the inside is fitting to the situation you are needing.

There were instances we would come upon beautiful houses on the outside but not really functional or beautiful on the inside. Which completely defeated the purpose. We need a house that is something that's going to be functional but also restful when we return home.

Serving is very similar, we are constantly called to seek out opportunities where God's spirit might be welcomed in people's lives. I call this the housing concept. Simply the Lord is looking for a place to take up residence in the lives of his people and it is our job to be in step with him as we look for people who are receptive to his Kingdom. People that will allow the good news to rest in the hearts and transform their lives. So today we're going to talk about how do you identify people who are ready to receive the good news. **This concept is defined in scripture as PEOPLE OF PEACE.**

Let's pray together God would give us eyes to see and ears to hear what his word has to say to us today.

PRAYER

Today our journey is going to take us back to Luke 10 starting in verse two. Remember prior to Jesus has prepared his 72 disciples to go out and just serve their communities he has empowered them to serve to make a difference for his kingdom.

Read: Luke 10:2-12,16

2 And He was saying to them, “(D)The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go; (E)behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 (F)Carry no money belt, no [b]bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’ 6 If a [c]man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay in [d]that house, eating and drinking [e]what they give you; for (G)the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. 8 Whatever city you enter and they receive you, (H)eat what is set before you; 9 and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, ‘(I)The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10 But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘(J)Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off *in protest* against you; yet [f]be sure of this, that (K)the kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 I say to you, (L)it will be more tolerable in that day for (M)Sodom than for that city.

16 “(U)The one who listens to you listens to Me, and (V)the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.”

Do you remember last time great love perplexed you? Do you remember when love pursued you?

Recently, one of our staff members Bobby Craig who is our producer at Grace both him and his wife Taylor got word on Monday that they will be receiving a 10 month old to take into their home. They have for years been preparing to be parents and have gone on such a journey to do so because the call God put into their heart.

When Bobby shared on Monday with the staff it caused some tears to form in my eyes because I remember my nieces being brought into our family.

(SLIDE) Harley and Brianna were adopted from the state in Florida and the process we all went through to have them part of our family was a heart tugging one. There is nothing quite like it when someone opens their heart their home to you when you were first complete strangers...

What first prepared the hearts of Kevin and Lisa and I know Bobby and Taylor would say the same just as I can attest too...prayer made a difference for me to be a person of peace.

See....

II. Prayer proceeds people of peace.

- Verse 2 makes it clear we need to pray for Kingdom workers, kingdom servants.
- We need to pray that God will make a way where there is no way into men/women's hearts
- Prayer allows God to open our eyes to see what season people are in so what types of advances are needed. (Words or actions)

God says in **Isaiah 43:19**

"Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.

- Only he knows what to say.

God says in His word in **Proverbs 16:9**

The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

- Prayer protects us on the mission to find people of peace.
 - Enemy wants to steal, kill and destroy God's instruments if glory.
 - Helps us not to get distracted during our mission. (V. 3)
 - Prayer paves the way for us (v. 4)

III. Pursuing people of peace deepens our trust in God!

- When all we have is God in our pursuit of people of peace it broadens our cry to God.
- States there is danger before us (v.3)
 - We need to be shrewd
 - Operate with wisdom
- In verse 4 he said take nothing with you. **(v. 4)**

Pursuing people of peace takes you into uncharted territory. Only God knows His people inside and out.

I can attest the same for pursuing a place to live. No one can prepare you for your journey. My friend had such an easy transaction with her home and with our first home we had the same thing, but this journey was night and day.

I love the quote from Forrest Gump. **Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get...**I can certainly attest for that.

The great thing is if we pray, we are not alone on the journey. If we follow Him and his instructions we are not alone on the journey.

So how do we then identify these people of peace...what are show tell signs that we are being asked to say something.

III. People of peace can be identified by open hearts.

Check out what happens in verses 6-7 their house will open to you! How will you know they are opening themselves to you?

- Ways you can identify people of peace is:
 - Initiate conversation and their conversation will let you know.
 - Watch the **conversation**
 - They will initiate conversations back with you like people did with Jesus.
 - Or they might start the conversation
 - People will not want to exit from conversations with you.
 - Watch their **body language**
 - Says YOUR peace will rest on them. YOu will be able to tell.
 - People will demonstrate active listening in your cooperation as you share your story.
 - Verbal responses
 - Nods
 - Leaning into the conversation
 - Watch for a **generous spirit**
 - Here in scripture it clearly shows the people were generous with their guests to keep around in their homes to be around them.
 - When people go out of their way they are showing an openness to be in your presence.
 - Watch their **actions**

- Give of time
- Give of attention

I don't know if you have ever gone through the foster or adoption process it is pretty intense. My husband and I long one day to adopt a teenager so we when through the process around the same time Kevin and Lisa did for their little ones years ago. It is a series of classes at the most inconvenient times, several and continual house/life inspections and several forms of background checks.

Honestly, I know they do this to ensure your really in for it for the long hall. The purpose is to gather signs of commitment. **See conversation, body language, generous spirit and actions show you the commitment level the openness of a person to receive the good news of life transformation.**

IV. People of peace have actions and words align.

- People of peace will allow the words and spirit to reside with them. (V. 6-7)

If a [c]man of peace is there, **your peace will rest on him**; but if not, it will return to you. **7** Stay in [d]that house, eating and drinking [e]what they give you; for (G)the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

It says your peace will rest on him and obviously his house will be open to you so you can stay, eat, and drink.

Basically, if they are a people of peace they will want to be around you so they can hear what you have to say about God no matter what it takes.

The hardest sometimes is being with people that their words and actions don't align.

(SLIDE OF ARRIE) I want to share with you my other family member Aurelia my niece. At the time she was given to our family I was a children's pastor and a preschool owner. My preschool was right next to the Child Services building and we had a lot of kids trying to be restored to their families. I got to know foster families, children and their parents.

Arrie was one of our foster babies that we were walking with her parents through trying to get their lives established or get our lives ready to receive her... the hardest call we

had was when the state removed her from our lives when Kevin and Lisa almost had the paperwork for adoption.

I got to Arrie daily for the majority of the day. I got to watch her grow up for a two years of her life. The hardest day is when they sent her home and her father wasn't ready. Because of this choice we lost Arrie to a moment anger when she was 2.5 years old.

This horrific experience of having to go to my nieces funeral because she was beaten to death in anger still shakes me to the day.

It has been a great practice of forgiveness and overcoming as yearly we remember her departure. Her life here however has taught me the importance of being observant to signs of where people are at and to understand the importance of intercession when people are not quite yet people of peace and to know sometimes the hardest things that take place are the things that will remove the stones and weeds that choke out truth like it talks about in Matthew 13.

See this event has allowed us to demonstrate what it means to be a people of peace to allow God to change our family that we could handle one of the hardest thing a family can face. It has also allowed for Arrie's dad to open his heart to be a person of peace so he could experience change.

V. People of peace will receive change.

- Remember change takes time, be patient stick with them
- See we are told to not move on. (v. 8-9)
- Remember God's kingdom is built order upon order.

Isaiah 28:10

"For *He* says, Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there."

- Serving others through the great pursuit of finding people of peace sets you up for carrying out the great commission.
- See as God helps you identify people of peace you will clearly see those he is call you to disciple.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and (T)make disciples of (U)all the nations, (V)baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, (W)I am with you [f]always, even to (X)the end of the age.”

(SLIDE) Picture of Brianna and Harley

Isaiah 55:11 So will My (A)word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It will (B)not return to Me empty,
Without (C)accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.

Pursue people of peace. Utilizing the snapshots of your stories. You were suited to serve. You are empowered by His spirit to do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

See Jesus saw great value in you that He pursued you with his own love and now he commissions you to do to the same to pursue the lost so they can know of his great love or them that He died on the cross for their sins so they would be forgiven and have the hope of a new life. You are that person to take the hope to a lost and dying world that is awaiting your arrival.

Close in Prayer

1. Want to be a person of peace and open your heart to God.
2. Want to be a person to pursue people of peace so God's kingdom can be expanded.