

We are here
for a reason.

HERE. **TO SERVE** →

2020-2021 VISION CAMPAIGN



FPC HOUSTON

I am here to serve.

Write your name as a commitment to being open to how God wants you to be a part of the *Here to Serve* vision. Bring this book with you as a guide over the next several Sundays and use the included devotional materials to help you grow.

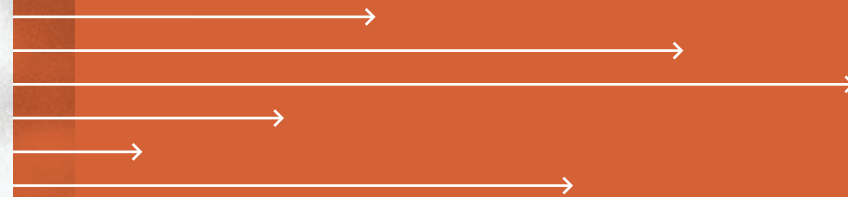
NAME

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

MARK 10:45

For 180 years, our church has sought to follow Jesus' example of open-handed service.

And we believe we're only getting started.



It starts here.

“Here” is the unique context where God has placed each of us. *Because answering the Gospel call to give of ourselves starts right where we are.*

We are here.

There is a reason God placed First Presbyterian Church here—in this growing and changing neighborhood, in the heart of this city of opportunity and innovation. Houston is one of the nation’s fastest growing destinations for leaders in education, business, healthcare, and culture. Right where we are, we have the opportunity to have a profound impact for the sake of the Gospel.

You are here.

There is a reason you are where you are—in each setting, relationship, and interaction. God has sent you to your unique context—your home, your neighborhood, your workplace—to show His love to people in a way that no one else can.



God has placed us
here to serve.



We don't serve for our own sake, and not even for just our own lifetime.

We serve so that the message of Jesus Christ is amplified in this city and so future generations know the goodness of the Gospel.

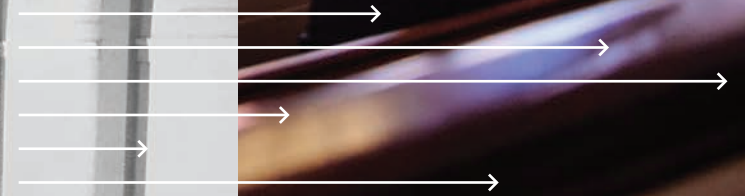
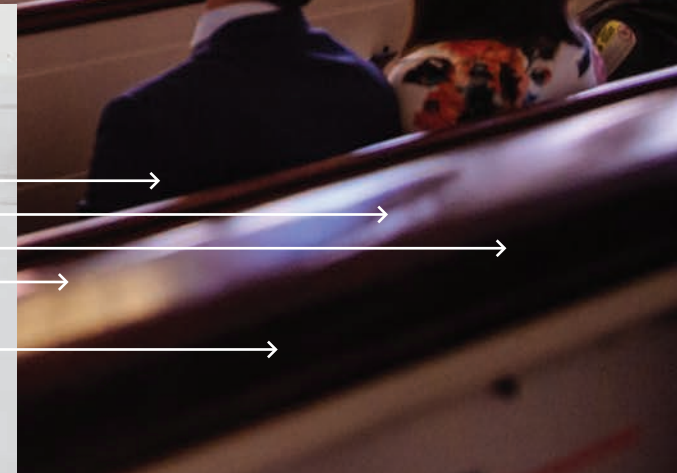
So now is the time to invest in a long-term vision to grow and thrive as a church—inside and outside our walls.

We are the beneficiaries of an extraordinary legacy. For more than 180 years, FPC has served with bold action and innovation, carrying the Gospel to Houston and the world. We cannot stop now or rest on what we have done so far. Together, we must continue to pursue bold and innovative ways to serve and love in the name of Jesus.



INNOVATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN PART OF OUR DNA:

- 1839** First Presbyterian Church is the first church built in Houston.
- 1872** Local missions becomes a priority and 16 church plants are established.
- 1928** FPC begins weekly radio broadcast of sermons, the first church in Texas to do so.
- 1959** FPC is influential in efforts to sort and ship medical supplies for overseas missions, a project that helped plant the seeds for the Medical Benevolence Foundation.
- 1967** FPC is one of the first churches in Houston to begin live television broadcasts of Sunday services.
- 2017** In the wake of Hurricane Harvey, FPC begins live-streaming services online, creating another way for people to hear God's Word wherever they are.



HERE. TO SERVE →

Here to Serve is a two-year campaign and guiding vision to strengthen the ability of First Presbyterian Church to amplify the message of the Gospel for the sake of our future, our neighborhood, and our city.

TOGETHER WE WILL PURSUE THREE INITIATIVES:



1 HERE. For Our Future →

To multiply our church's vision long-term, we will invest in intentional discipleship of our members, enhance Children and Family Ministries, and improve technology.

COST: \$6 MILLION



2 HERE. For Our Neighborhood →

With so much development around us, we want to make our building more open and inviting to guests, regular attendees, members, and the surrounding community.

COST: \$13 MILLION



3 HERE. For Our City →

We want to love Houston through initiatives that will advance the common good of our city and create outreach opportunities to the unchurched and dechurched.

COST: \$3 MILLION

FUNDING THE *HERE TO SERVE* VISION:

For the next two years we will adopt a single fund for all giving. This "one fund" approach means that the total sum of the campaign goal includes our budget for two years of operating expenses to cover the ongoing ministries that are the backbone of this church.

Total Cost for All Three Initiatives (\$22 million)
+ Two Years of Operating Expenses (\$16 million)

=

\$38 MILLION

1

HERE. For Our Future

By investing in our community and church today, we extend our legacy of faith into the future.

For us to truly fulfill our calling as a church and grow our ministry for another 180 years, we need to intentionally disciple the next generation of believers and invest in the development of our leaders.



OUR GOALS:

- Reimagine Children and Family Ministry Spaces
- Create Dynamic Discipleship Pathways
- Invest in Our Staff
- Expand & Improve Technology

COST: \$6 MILLION

Reimagine Children and Family Ministry Spaces

We will redesign the spaces our children and families gather to be places that foster vibrant spiritual growth.



TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Relocate Classrooms for Children

We will relocate our Children and Family Ministry spaces to the Christian Education wing. With this update, all children birth through 3rd grade will be in the same hallway.

Improve Classroom Environment

We will update classrooms to make them more engaging and relevant, and we will combine four classrooms in this hallway to create a large worship space for K-3rd graders.

Create 4th/5th Grade Space

The basement of the Christian Education Wing will be completely renovated to create a space especially designed for our 4th and 5th graders—including a worship space, rooms for small groups, and new bathrooms that will be ADA-compliant. We will also install an elevator to provide easy access between all three floors.

Enhance Adult Education Spaces

On the second floor, directly above the new Children's Ministry space, we will provide additional adult education spaces for parent classes.



Create Dynamic Discipleship Pathways

Discipleship is the lifeblood of this church. Robust and thriving faith is what will drive our mission forward—and that will always be grounded in the work of the Gospel in individual lives.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Expand Available Discipleship Pathways

We want to continue offering high-quality, tailored learning opportunities to disciple believers of all ages to grow in faith—helping them develop a deep and informed faith that will last the entirety of their lives.

Invest in Strong and Healthy Youth & Young Adult Ministries

In a culture increasingly defined by loneliness and comparisons, we want to equip younger generations to root their identity in Christ and find their value in Him. To do this, we must provide necessary resources to grow and strengthen our youth and young adult ministries.

Increase the Capacity of Main Street Fellowship

We want to grow our Main Street Fellowship program so that more people can be developed as leaders and trained in how to live their whole lives through the lens of the Gospel.



Gather
IN WORSHIP

Gather weekly to worship with the family of God. By hearing God's Word and participating in the sacraments together, we are recharged to live on mission in the week ahead.



Grow
IN FAITH

Grow in faith and love for Jesus Christ through avenues such as Sunday School, Small Groups, Discipleship Groups, Women's and Men's Groups, Main Street Fellowship, and prayer gatherings, as well as personal spiritual formation practices.

Go
ON MISSION

Go into the places where we already work, study, play, and live, equipped and empowered to share the hope we have in Jesus. Partner with FPC by volunteering with our local and global mission partners; inviting friends, colleagues, classmates, and acquaintances to Alpha courses; supporting our local church plants; or pitching in with Project Flourish.



Invest in Our Staff

We are building a staff that is best-in-class and equipped to help lead the Gospel movement in Houston.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Focus on Leadership Development

We want to help staff continually improve in their roles and leadership capabilities, equipping them to guide our church with strength and longevity for the good of Houston's Gospel movement. This includes a special focus on building up the leaders of our youth and young adult ministries.

Fill Open Positions & Attract Talent

Our desire is to attract and retain the most qualified ministry leaders and compensate them appropriately so that we are equipped for strong and healthy ministry for the long-term.



Expand & Improve Technology

Through key technology innovations, we will improve engagement opportunities and formative content on Sundays and throughout the week.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:



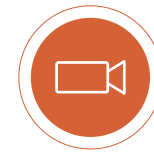
Upgrade & Add Screens

To feature dynamic content that supports preaching and worship, we will upgrade screens in the Grand Hall and invest in portable video screens that can be used in multiple places, including the sanctuary.



Expand Live Stream Capabilities

To offer live stream options from multiple services and both worship spaces, we will add additional cameras in both worship spaces; upgrade our live stream platform; build a second control room for the Grand Hall; and invest in related hardware, software, and sound equipment.



Build an In-House Video Studio

We will construct a video studio to provide a dedicated space for recording digital content. This will allow for quick and frequent production of content and facilitate additional pathways for worship and discipleship.



Invest in Digital Content

To connect with people every day of the week, not just on Sundays, we are investing in creating more digital content to build community and equip people. This new content is for use not only in worship but for creative distribution across web, social, and email platforms—to reach people wherever they are.

“ I am here to serve.

In my work as a physician in the pediatric emergency department, I think that one clear way I show Christ’s love is through direct patient care. During each shift, I see children who have been abused or neglected, or are struggling with a chronic illness. I see teenagers who are suicidal, and I have to break bad news to families that their child has a life-threatening injury or illness. Though my clinical work reminds me of the brokenness in our world, it also reminds me of the eternal hope that we have that God has redeemed and will restore what He created. Being there to listen when someone is going through a trying time in their life is an act of love.

For a year and a half, God also called our family to foster an 18-month-old boy. Deciding to foster meant a willingness to open our home to a child for as long as it takes—whether it was a couple days or many years. Through this experience, God showed our entire family what it means to love someone without expectations of what we may receive in return. To me, that’s what it looks like to be here to serve.”

Dr. Manish Shah

Member since 2005



2

HERE. For Our Neighborhood

Our strategic location is both a responsibility and opportunity to use our space to share the love of Jesus.

God has placed us in this neighborhood—among big thinkers and change-making institutions—to engage with culture as a voice of grace and truth. By making our campus more inviting, we serve not only our own congregation but we open the door for our neighbors and guests to encounter the love of Jesus on our campus.



OUR GOALS:

- Improve Guest Experience
- Create Community Spaces
- Make Necessary Facility Updates

COST: \$13 MILLION



Improve Guest Experience

To help people feel welcome from the moment they arrive, we need to improve the guest experience—from the parking lot to the front door.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Rearrange the North Parking Lot

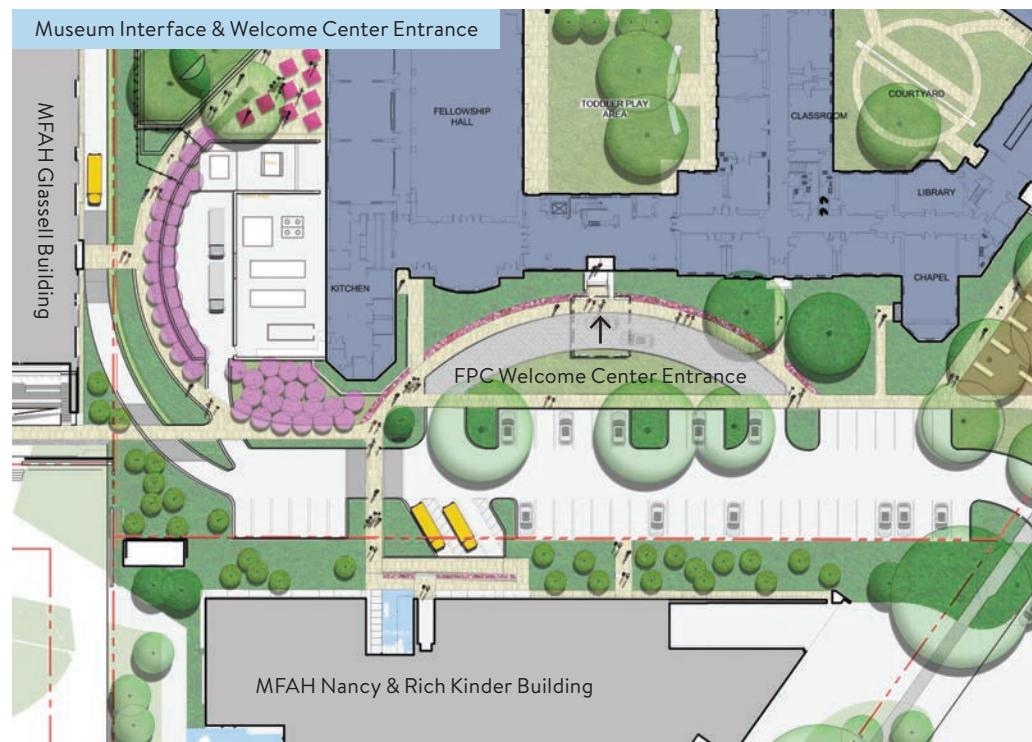
We will redo the North parking lot, rearranging the flow of traffic and parking direction for a better parking experience and to ensure the safety of those walking through it.

Improve Walkways

To aid pedestrian traffic flow, we will build a walkway from the North parking lot that angles toward the front door of the sanctuary. We will also repave the sidewalk leading to Palm Court.

Enhance the Welcome Center Experience

We will rearrange parking currently located near the Welcome Center to provide for easier entrance to the building. We will also create a more welcoming experience and better navigation for those who utilize the museum parking garages.



North Parking Lot and Walkway



Create Community Spaces

We want to share our space. We can make our campus grounds about more than just “us” in how it looks and how it welcomes all into what God is doing here.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Introduce a New Fellowship Space

We will expand our hospitality spaces next to the sanctuary to encourage community building on Sundays and for special occasions, and allow for better flow between services.

Build an Outdoor Fellowship Space

On the Main Street side of the campus, we will build an outdoor deck where people can gather between services and throughout the week. Connected to the new fellowship space by glass doors, it will also allow our neighbors to see the life happening within our church.

Create a Shared Walkway

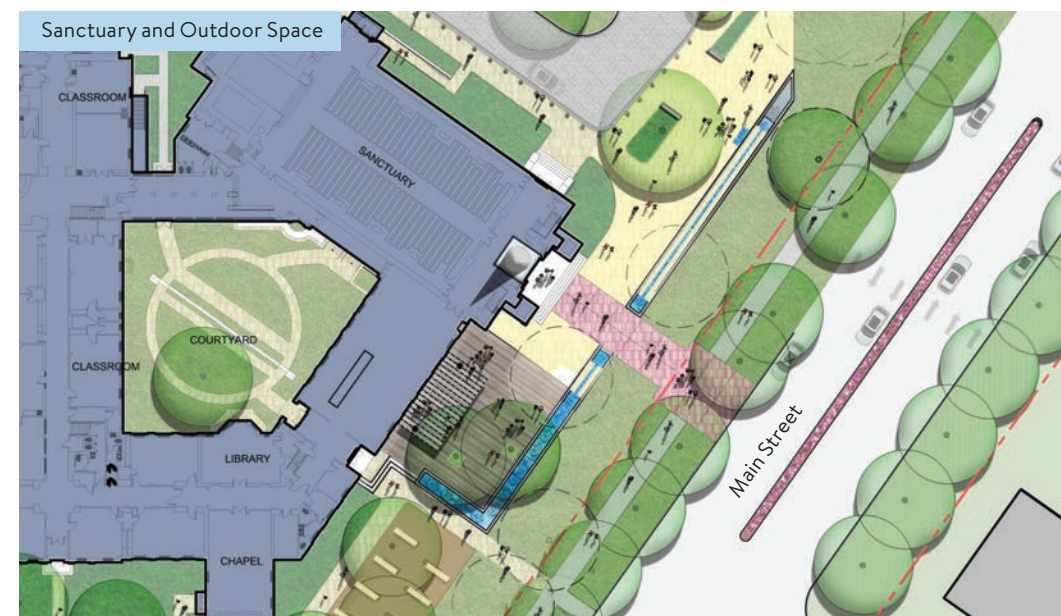
Along the south side of the campus, we will build a shared walkway for those leaving the Museum of Fine Arts, helping to integrate our two spaces.

Relocate Playground

We will improve and relocate our playground for young kids, placing it right outside the new children’s space and next to the big kids’ playground.



Outdoor deck and fellowship space





Make Necessary Facility Updates

To steward the gift God has given us through this building, we need to make facility updates that will aid in creating a more welcoming environment.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Refresh and Repair Our Building

Parts of our building are in significant need of routine maintenance and repair. To continue offering members and guests the best possible experience in our building, we will perform necessary building maintenance and updates, including:

- Replacing part of our roof
- Trimming trees and addressing overdue landscape maintenance
- Improving signage around our campus
- Refreshing paint, doors, and hardware





“ I am here to serve.

I used to think that ‘serving others’ was something that other people did. People who were more experienced, more talented, had more time, more money, less stress—you name it. But that’s not it at all. Mostly, God calls me to just do everyday things for people. Nothing big or grand, just helping out as I can—carpooling to and from events, making dinner for someone who’s having a rough week, taking photographs. These are things I would be doing anyway. So, they’re nothing special in that sense. And I think that’s part of the beauty of it. God’s not asking me to do something I can’t do. He shows me a need and prompts me to move. That’s how it was when I met Brenda. I just heard about a co-worker’s baby who was in the hospital and felt prompted to visit them and bring them a meal. It wasn’t a huge gesture—but it impacted Brenda and started a meaningful friendship.”

Jane Champion

Member since 2005



Jane and Brenda with their children

“ **My daughter was born with** congenital heart disease, and for the first several months she lived in the hospital—and I was staying with her 24/7. At the time, people were falling off our world. How does one comfort a mother who has a child fighting for her life? But Jane didn’t let that stop her. She didn’t even know me, but she heard about our situation through a co-worker. She just showed up, shared a meal, and joined in prayer. After that first visit she asked if she could do it again. Week after week she visited. It’s not like Jane knew how to say or do all the right things, but she showed up anyway. During a time when everything was so uncertain, Jane gave me reliability. She made the loneliness less lonely. Today, 15 years and three open heart surgeries later, Jane continues to show up. Our kids have become friends and we continue to support each other. It’s a gift that reminds me of what I can do for others.”

Brenda Bravo De La Rosa

Friend of Jane

3

HERE. For Our City

We want to see the Gospel impact every corner of our city—for the flourishing of Houston and the Church.

Impacting every corner of our city means intentionally reaching out to the unchurched and de-churched in their everyday settings. Through these efforts, we hope to see the Church grow and our city thrive.



OUR GOALS:

- Plant New Churches
- Expand Evangelism Efforts
- Invest in Redemptive Entrepreneurship

COST: \$3 MILLION



Plant New Churches

We are committed to planting churches across Houston so those who would never come to our campus can know Jesus and find a church home.



TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Embrace Innovative Church Models

To reach non-believers in Houston, we can't just do church as usual. We believe in creating contextualized church models that are tailored to specific neighborhoods and people groups.

Train More Church Planters

Through our Church Planting Residency program, we will continue to mentor and train church planters to ensure that they have the plan, training, and resources they need to start a new church.

Financially Support New Churches

The goal is for each of our church plants to become self-sustaining within three years of launching. We are tailoring the financial investment for each plant to reflect the unique needs of that church.

Plant 10 New Churches by 2024

As part of Vision 2020—which launched in 2014—we committed to plant 10 new churches by 2024. *Here to Serve* will position us to complete this goal, allowing us to reach neighborhoods and groups of people who would never come to our campus.

FPC HAS A RICH HISTORY OF CHURCH PLANTING:

- From 1839 until the 1970s, nearly every Presbyterian church planted in Houston was directly or indirectly planted out of FPC.
- In 2013, we helped create the foundation for the Houston Church Planting Network, through which 20+ churches have been planted so far.
- Since 2016, FPC has planted two churches in our city—with two more in the pipeline through our Church Planting Residency.



WHY CHURCH PLANTING IS IMPORTANT:



Reach More Non-Christians

People who don't attend church are more likely to visit a new church than an established one. New churches attract three to six times more non-Christians than older churches.



Connect With New Generations

Young adults are drawn to new churches over old, established congregations.



Serve New People Groups

By intentionally integrating into new neighborhoods, we can organically build relationships with people of many ethnicities and cultural experiences right where they live.



Energize Our Congregation

As we hear stories of people coming to faith through our church plants, it is exciting to see how our congregation can share in the joy of God growing His family.



Expand Evangelism Efforts

We will intentionally reach out to those wrestling with the truths of Christianity by creating welcoming contexts for the unchurched and dechurched.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Add More Alpha Locations

Our Alpha classes currently meet at a local YMCA, but we are reaching max capacity in that space. We would like to expand our offerings to multiple locations—potentially partnering with other churches.

Mobilize the FPC Community

We want to train our community on approachable evangelism—including how to listen and respond to people who have questions about faith and how to invite people to Alpha.

Hire a Full-time Staff Person

This person would oversee FPC's evangelism efforts—using Alpha materials and approaches to build bridges between FPC and people outside the church.

WHY USE EVANGELISM MODELS LIKE ALPHA:

- They offers an accessible explanation of the basics of Christianity.
- Their relational structure creates a sense of community among attenders and facilitators.
- They create a safe space where skeptics can dialogue around matters of faith, getting comfortable asking questions and searching for answers.



Alpha is a discussion-based introduction to Christianity, typically run over eight weeks. Each session looks at different questions around faith and is designed to foster conversation. Since launching the Alpha program at FPC, over 200 people have attended.



Invest in Redemptive Entrepreneurship

We live in a city that has a heartbeat for innovation. We want to join in this movement, investing in innovative community ventures that help Houston flourish.



TO DO THIS WE WILL:

Mentor Gospel-Minded Entrepreneurs

We want to connect Gospel-minded entrepreneurs to the social, intellectual, and financial capital of First Presbyterian Church.

Focus on Projects in Houston

The first round of Project Flourish welcomed ideas with both city and global impact. This round will focus on projects that are specifically for the good of Houston.

Create 100+ Volunteer Opportunities

Project Flourish gives our members with business expertise the opportunity to mentor and serve the next wave of our city's leaders. This is a unique opportunity to use gifts and skills in a different context, serve the city, and further the Gospel.

Award \$250,000 in Seed Money

We are increasing our seed money by \$10,000 to support even more ventures and leaders.

WHY REDEMPTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP MATTERS:

- It promotes Gospel-minded values like faith, mercy, justice, love, redemption, and reconciliation in community ventures.
- It is an opportunity for more people to experience the love of Christ—both through the mentorship of rising community leaders and through the launch of new ministries and non-profits.



Project Flourish is a social impact initiative within FPC that aims to accelerate the impact of entrepreneurial activity by cultivating new ideas for the good of the city. Our first round was a success with 80 applicants, six community partners, and over 100 FPC volunteers.



“ I am here to serve.

I used to work in the logistics industry, but I now manage the non-profit side of my company’s business, helping companies create opportunities for their employees to engage with needs in their own communities and around the world. Through this, I get to unite people, capital, and ideas to see lives impacted and flourishing in our communities and world, which I love. In whatever situation we find ourselves in—whether it be our church, family, workplace, community, or world—we can each seek to be the aroma of Christ where we have been placed.”

Jamie Hampton, Pictured with his wife, Meaghan, and son, Will
Member since 2018

HERE. TO SERVE

Devotional Guide

Here to Serve is an exciting moment in FPC's history. As a church, we have the opportunity to deeply engage with God's calling for each of us individually and as a body of believers.

As we do our part to lean in by praying, reading, listening, reflecting, and discussing, the Holy Spirit will unite and empower us as people sent by God to share His love with those around us.

USE THIS GUIDE OVER THE NEXT FIVE WEEKS:



We are Here to Serve.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

This guide is broken up into five weekly sessions, to be used on Sunday mornings at church and during the week with your small group, family, and/or in your personal reflection time.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

-  **Companion Podcasts**
A link to a five-minute companion podcast that delves into the sermon text to deepen your study during the week. (heretoserve.fpchouston.org)
-  **Sermon Notes**
Space to write notes during the sermons on Sunday mornings.
-  **Reflection Questions**
Questions for your small group, family, or personal reflection based on the weekly sermons.
-  **Personal Study**
Devotional content for Monday through Friday based on related Scripture passages, using the H.E.A.R. method of study, for your personal use each day.
-  **Family Experience**
A Family section with interactive activities and thoughtful questions for parents to engage with their children.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING STARTED:

- If you are not yet in a small group and would like to join one during this five-week experience, please contact Catie Smith at csmith@fpchouston.org. Otherwise, you can also use this booklet on your own or with your family.
- These brief five-minute podcasts are most helpful when listened to *prior* to going through the questions. If you are discussing these questions with a small group, your group may want to play the podcast beforehand or together at the beginning of your meeting. Even better would be to individually play each week's podcast *prior* to the sermon, as they delve into the story behind the text. (heretoserve.fpchouston.org)
- Each week, we suggest a verse to memorize. If you want help memorizing, try downloading a Bible memorization app, such as The Bible Memory App.
- The Family Experience section is meant to be a helpful conversation starter for parents as they engage their children about the sermon each week and how the message impacts each of their lives.

Using the H.E.A.R. Study Method

The *Hear to Serve* Devotional Guide uses the H.E.A.R. method as a tool to help you position yourself to better discern God's voice through His written Word. Before you begin your reading, pray that the Lord would reveal Himself to you during your study.

H → The H stands for Highlight.

After praying, read the assigned passage of scripture and then highlight and write down a verse or verses that stick out to you (Include the book name, chapter and verse for easy reference in the future).

E → The E stands for Explain.

Explain what the text means. Use this section to summarize the main point of the verses you have chosen. If it is not obvious, take time to read some surrounding verses and chapters to know the context of your chosen passage.

A → The Letter A stands for Apply.

Once you know the main point of your chosen passage, write down how it applies to your life and/or how it is relevant for a disciple of Jesus in Houston today.

R → The Letter R Stands for Respond.

Your response to a given passage can vary from day to day and person to person, but ask yourself the question: "How will this truth change my actions, words, thoughts, and deeds *today*?"

Note: Your response to a given passage could also be a prayer of repentance or thanksgiving, as well as a call to action.

WANT TO DIG DEEPER INTO YOUR PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE?

Check out the resources below

- **Biblegateway.com:** This site allows you to look up verses online, compare various translations side-by-side, and listen to the text read aloud.
- **Thebibleproject.com:** This website offers short videos for every book of the Bible that give a grand overview of your selected book.
- **How to Read the Bible Book by Book by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart:** This book is a great resource to have on hand to read more about the historical, literary, and cultural context of each book of the Bible.
- **The FPC Adult Library:** Our library, located on the first floor of our building, has many resources for further study.

Want a more specific resource? Contact Catie Smith at csmith@fpchouston.org and she can direct you accordingly.



You Are HERE.



WEEK 1 Companion Podcast

Play the podcast at the link below to learn more about this week's scripture focus.

→ heretoserve.fpchouston.org/week1



WEEK 1
Sermon Notes

Date: September 29, 2019
Sermon Title: You Are Here
Speaker: Pastor Jim Birchfield
Key Passages: Acts 17: 24-28a
Other Passages: Esther 4: 12-16

PREPARING FOR THE SERMON:

Paul has been on a journey preaching the Gospel in various cities and has just left Berea where many people accepted Jesus Christ. Jews in Thessalonica heard about this and came to Berea angry, causing the believers to send Paul to Athens. Athens was not just another city: it was a place of history and culture, filled with playwrights, scholars (inheriting its rich philosophical tradition from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle), medical advancements, literature, architecture, and human liberties. One could say Houston is very much like Athens, where places of worship, law offices, studios, businesses, gymnasiums, theaters, galleries, shops, universities, and hospitals are all offerings in one city. The major difference between Athens and Houston is

the location of these various entities within the cities. Without technology and ease of travel at the time of Paul, these entities would have been in one localized place; whereas in Houston, everything is spread out.

This sets the scene for our story. Remember, Paul did not choose this location. He was sent here, causing Athens to be his present "mission field." For all we know, Paul might have hoped for rest upon entering Athens, but right away we see he is "deeply troubled." Immediately, Paul realizes he has been sent to Athens for a very specific purpose: to share the Gospel with those who are worshiping false gods.



WEEK 1
Reflection Questions

GETTING STARTED

If you have not already, play the *Week 1: The Story Behind the Text* podcast at heretoserve.fpchouston.org/week1 and read the "Preparing for the Sermon" text on the previous page.

READ

Acts 17:16-34; Esther 4:12-16

ANALYZING THE TEXT

1. Paul realized upon entering Athens that he had been sent to serve God in a particular context. Describe Paul's context.
2. There are four parts to Paul's reaction to his context: what he saw, felt, did, and said. In verse 16, **what did Paul see** and **how did it make him feel**? In verses 17-22, **what did he do**? (You will notice three subgroups of people.) In verses 23-34, **what did he say**? How did he introduce his argument? What is the point of his speech?
3. Read verse 26 again. Discuss this verse in relationship to Paul's current scenario.
4. Read verses 32-34. Do you think Paul was obedient to his assignment in Athens? Was there fruit? Explain.

APPLICATION

1. God often sends us to places we never imagined we would go and allows us to form relationships with people we never thought we would know. What is your current "here" location (think about where you live, work, rest, study, and play), and with whom does God have you currently interacting?
2. Have you ever been disappointed, felt ill-equipped, or even fearful about your current "here"? Explain.
3. Paul could have easily ignored the task before him in Athens. What are some ways you might try and ignore or easily lose sight of your "here" and your "assignment"?
4. Paul gives us a model of evangelism: contextualization. Think about two different industries or people groups with whom you regularly interact. How would you contextualize the Gospel for each group? How would you take into account the idols these groups may worship without even knowing it?
5. Paul was faithful to his "here" in Athens. In Esther, we see this same call to be faithful to her "here" in the royal court in that fateful moment in history. Take some time in silence to pray about how the Lord wants you to be faithful in your "here" in one or all your life spheres. Share as a group what the Lord has spoken to you.
6. How can your small group encourage you to be obedient to God's individual and corporate "here" assignments?



WEEK 1
Personal Study

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE:

“From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.” **Acts 17:26, NIV**

Monday, September 30

Scripture: Psalm 139

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Tuesday, October 1

Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:6-18

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Wednesday, October 2

Scripture: Matthew 6:24-34

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Thursday, October 3

Scripture: Genesis 45:1-11

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Friday, October 4

Scripture: Romans 8:28-39

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____



WEEK 1
Family Experience

READ

Read Acts 17:16–34 together. Feel free to give occasional summary statements to provide younger children with context for where Paul is and what he is doing.

DISCUSS

While Paul was in the city of Athens, he met with many different groups of people and told them about God.

- How did the different people react?
- What groups of people do you see each day? Each week?
- When is it easy to talk about God with others?
- When is it hard or scary to talk about God with others?
- What are some ways we can talk about God to people we know?

MEMORIZE

Memorize **Acts 17:24** together.

“He is the God who made the world and everything in it.” (NLT)

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.” (NIV)

DO

Each person share a story about a time they told someone about God OR someone told them about God.

PRAY

Pray together, thanking God for all the places you go and all the people you see every day or week with whom you can talk about God.



HERE. For Others



WEEK 2
Companion Podcast

Play the podcast at the link below to learn more about this week’s scripture focus.

→ heretoserve.fpchouston.org/week2



WEEK 2 Sermon Notes

Date: October 6, 2019
Sermon Title: Here for Others
Speaker: Pastor Andrew Stepp
Key Passages: Mark 10:35–45
Other Passages: Mark 9:33–37;
Philippians 2:1–11

PREPARING FOR THE SERMON:

The kingdom of God has come! is essential to Jesus’ message and ministry. Implicit in this proclamation is that the King, Himself, has come. And Jesus is that King. The Jews were expecting a king like David, one with great power to conquer other nations. Jesus, however, did not demonstrate His kingship in this way. Jesus chose to sit with the poor and the oppressed, the marginalized and rejected. Prior to our passage, Jesus uses two encounters (one with children, the other with a rich young man) to instruct His disciples that entering the kingdom of God does not happen according to the ways of the world. Instead, it happens within a posture of humility and servanthood.

Jesus then predicts His imminent death to the disciples for a third time, speaking about how He is to suffer. James and John then ask if they might sit on either side of Him—positions of honor and authority—when

He ascends to the throne. Jesus asks if they are ready to drink from the cup from which He will drink. They answer with a self-assured “We are able” even as they are completely unaware of the nature of the cup they have arrogantly asserted they are able to drink.

In Scripture, a cup often conveys an assignment by God—we do not choose which cup God assigns to us, but only if we will be obedient in taking it. As the only sinless King, Jesus chose to drink the cup of wrath, God’s just punishment for our sins. Sacrificially, the servant King restores us into fellowship with God, freely and fully forgiven, to enjoy a relationship with Him, now and forever.

As we dive into our text, we will see that as Christ-followers, our cup is often one of servanthood—our life calling is one of humility. And this can only be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit.



WEEK 2 Reflection Questions

GETTING STARTED

If you have not already, play the *Week 2: The Story Behind the Text* podcast at heretoserve.fpchouston.org/week2 and read the “Preparing for the Sermon” text on the previous page.

READ

Mark 10:33–52

ANALYZING THE TEXT

1. Why do you think James and John made their request in verses 35–37? What does this reveal about their knowledge of who Jesus is and what He stands for?
2. Reread verses 42–45. Then read the poem at right. What do both Jesus and this poem convey about following Him?
3. When James and John, and then later Bartimaeus, approach Jesus, He asks all three the same question: “What do you want me to do for you?” Compare the disciples’ response to Jesus to Bartimaeus’ response to Jesus. Who embodies the attitude of a true disciple?

APPLICATION

1. God’s kingdom is one of service; therefore, following Christ means serving others. What makes this appealing, unappealing, or a little of both?
2. Take one to two minutes to reflect silently on your last week. Was it characterized by service and sacrifice? Or was it characterized by desire for power, prestige, and/or authority?
3. Read 1 Cor. 10:31. How do we balance living in the “rat race” with serving the King who has heralded a Kingdom of servanthood? Discuss some practical ways to live this in your everyday spheres of influence, whether that be at home, the workplace, school, gym, or coffee shop.
4. God asks us to serve Him in ways and places that may not be our first choice. Where is God currently asking you to lay down your own comforts and desires to sacrifice for Him and serve others? If you are in a small group, share how others can encourage and keep you accountable to obey the Lord in this area.

HAST THOU NO SCAR

by Amy Carmichael

Hast thou no scar?
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,
I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star.
Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?
Yet, I was wounded by the archers, spent,
Leaned me against the tree to die; and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed me,
I swooned:
Hast thou no wound?

No wound, No scar?
But as the Master shall the servant be,
And pierced are the feet that follow Me.
But thine are whole,

Can he have followed far
Who has no wound, nor scar?



WEEK 2 Personal Study

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE:

“And whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” **Mark 10:44–45, NIV**

Monday, October 7

Scripture: Philippians 2:1–11

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Tuesday, October 8

Scripture: Mark 9:33–37

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Wednesday, October 9

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:1–11

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Thursday, October 10

Scripture: James 2:14–26

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Friday, October 11

Scripture: Isaiah 53

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____



WEEK 2 Family Experience

READ

Mark 10:46–52 together.

DO

Act out the story of Jesus and Bartimaeus several times, taking turns to do each part: Jesus, Bartimaeus, crowd, and narrator.

DISCUSS

- How did it feel to be each person?
- Why did the crowd tell Bartimaeus to be quiet?
- What did Jesus do that the crowd did not expect?
- How did the crowd treat Bartimaeus after Jesus called to Him?
- What kind of leadership does Jesus teach us by this example?

MEMORIZE

Memorize **Mark 10:43** together.

“But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant.” (NLT)

“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.” (NIV)

PRAY

Think of one person that you see every day or week that you could serve by giving time, attention, and/or help. Pray for that person.



HERE. For Our Future



WEEK 3 Companion Podcast

Play the podcast at the link below to learn more about this week's scripture focus.

→ heretosome.fpchouston.org/week3



WEEK 3 Sermon Notes

Date: October 13, 2019
Sermon Title: Here for Our Future
Speaker: Pastor Andrew Stepp
Key Passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-8
Other Passages: Deut. 6:20-25;
Judges 2:6-13; Psalm 145:3-7

PREPARING FOR THE SERMON:

Tracing the history of Israel reveals how the Israelites repeatedly fail to trust God despite His demonstrations of faithfulness. In Numbers 10, Israel sets out from Sinai as God leads them toward the Promised Land. However, instead of trusting the goodness of God, they complain and reject the Lord's plan, refusing to follow Him into the land. By Numbers 14:4, they have decided to choose a leader to bring them back to Egypt, the land of their enslavement, preferring bondage over God's plans for them. Yet rather than letting them return to bondage in Egypt, He has them wander in the wilderness for 40 years until a new, faithful generation can be raised up to enter the Land. In Deuteronomy, Moses gives his last words to the people before they enter the Promised Land, reminding them of God's faithfulness and their repeated faithlessness.

Deuteronomy 6:10-15 and 20-25 address the people's history and the importance of remembering that God is the one who has brought them this far and will carry them forward.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is called the *Shema*, a prayer that Jews would recite aloud every morning and evening. Shema means "hear" and is usually connected with the ear (Proverbs 20:12), but also means "pay attention," "focus on," or "respond" (such as in Psalm 27:7). In ancient Hebrew, listening and obeying are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, to recite the Shema is to profess that one will not only hear the words of God but will also obey them. This idea of hearing *and* doing is something the Israelites continue to struggle with throughout their history, causing them to later lose their claim to the Promised Land.



WEEK 3 Reflection Questions

GETTING STARTED

If you have not already, play the *Week 3: The Story Behind the Text* podcast at heretoserve.fpchouston.org/week3 and read the "Preparing for the Sermon" text on the previous page.

READ

Deuteronomy 6

ANALYZING THE TEXT

1. According to Deuteronomy 6:4-5, 6-9, 10-12, and 13-25, what four ways are the Israelites supposed to be obedient?
2. According to verses 7-9, how are we to raise our children—our own or the children that have been entrusted to us as a church family at FPC?
3. Reflecting on this chapter, what will cause people to forget God?
4. Read Judges 2:6-13 and discuss the grave error of forgetfulness found in Judges and Deuteronomy.

APPLICATION

1. In many ways, we have been given a Promised Land here in Houston—a flourishing city that has been passed on from generations before us, ripe with opportunity. How easy is it to forget about God in our wealth, prosperity, and ease of living (See Deut. 8:11-18)? Explain. How can we battle against forgetting?
2. If we do not teach our children the way they should go, what will influence them in our current culture in Houston? How can we practically combat this?
3. Who in your life showed you God's goodness and wonders growing up? Who reminds you now?
4. What people or children has God placed in your life to remind you of His goodness? How can we regularly remind each other? Think practically through Deut. 6:7-9 and consider how we can visually and verbally remind each other of God and His commandments.



WEEK 3 Personal Study

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE:

“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-5, NIV

Monday, October 14

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Tuesday, October 15

Scripture: Psalm 145

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Wednesday, October 16

Scripture: Judges 2:6-19

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Thursday, October 17

Scripture: Matthew 18:1-14

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Friday, October 18

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:4-12

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____



WEEK 3 Family Experience

READ

Deuteronomy 6:1–9 together.

DISCUSS

- Why do we memorize Bible verses?
- What would it look like if we did all of the things verses 7–9 say to do?
- Why should we spend so much time thinking and talking about God?
- What are some things that distract us from thinking about God?
- What are some ways we can remember to think about God during the day?

DO

Listen to the song “Love the Lord” by Lincoln Brewster.
(You can search it on YouTube or find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAbEfffqLdc>)

Work together to create hand motions or movements to go with the song.

MEMORIZE

Memorize **Deuteronomy 6:5** together.

“And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.” (NLT)

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (NIV)

PRAY

Sing or say the lyrics to “Love the Lord” together as a prayer.



HERE. To Give



WEEK 4 Companion Podcast

Play the podcast at the link below to learn more about this week's scripture focus.

→ heretosome.fpchouston.org/week4



WEEK 4 Sermon Notes

Date: October 20, 2019
Sermon Title: Here to Give
Speaker: Pastor Jim Birchfield
Key Passages: 2 Samuel 24:18–24a
Other Passages: John 12:23–26

PREPARING FOR THE SERMON:

David has sinned once again. This sin has something to do with taking a military census—possibly taken out of pride and self-preservation. The irony is profound, as it comes on the heels of David praising God for His providence and covering. After nine months of census-taking, David is seized with conviction and punished for his sin. Conscience-stricken, David begs God to take away his guilt. Through the prophet, Gad, God extends three options for David to experience the holy God’s righteous judgment for his sins. David, having failed to be the ultimate king who obeys, chooses to have all the people fall into the hand of God. In doing this, David decides to have the people pay for *his* sins with *their* lives. But, along with God’s just punishment, we also see God’s mercy. God forgives David and relents in the extent of His punishment. Through this ordeal, we see that although

David is an appointed king, he is not the *ultimate* appointed King, highlighting our need for the one true Messiah, the King who sacrificed His own perfect, sinless life to pay for the sins of His people.

Thank God the story doesn’t end here—for David, the Israelites or for Jesus. When they sacrifice and give up something of great value on behalf of their people, God shows mercy and restores His relationship with His people, and with His kings. In fact, God generously and abundantly magnified David’s sacrifice; Solomon later builds a temple where God, Himself, would dwell on that precise sacrificial location. And so too has He blessed Christ’s sacrifice by creating us to be temples of the Holy Spirit, as He not only dwells among us, but moreover, within us.



WEEK 4 Reflection Questions

GETTING STARTED

If you have not already, play the *Week 4: The Story Behind the Text* podcast at heretoserve.fpchouston.org/week4 and read the “Preparing for the Sermon” text on the previous page.

READ

2 Samuel 24

ANALYZING THE TEXT

1. Reread 2 Samuel 24:18–24a. What has David decided to do?
2. Why do you think David wanted to **buy** the land?
3. Read 1 Chronicles 21:16–27 (which also recounts this event). What caused God to cease His punishment against David and the Israelites?
4. In what ways did David experience freedom when he personally sacrificed in order to honor God?

APPLICATION

1. Why does God call us to give sacrificially (with our tithing, time, and gifts)?
2. Having seen how Christ sacrificed Himself for us, Christ-followers are called to live radically generous lives. How could what keeps you from giving sacrificially—or living a radically generous life—potentially be traced back to a sinful mindset or attitude?
3. Have you ever given sacrificially or lived with radical generosity and been set free in some way? Explain.
4. David’s repentant heart positioned him to receive God’s grace, which restored his relationship to God and brought beauty into brokenness. Has there been a time when God’s kindness has led you to repentance? What restoration did you see that God brought into your life and the lives of others?
5. Read John 12:23–26. What in your life are you scared to sacrifice or truly give up to God? What makes you afraid of fully surrendering it to Him? How might God use your sacrifice in the present and/or for future generations? Explain.
6. Take some time as a group to boldly pray that the Lord would show you what He would like you to sacrifice as an act of worship **so that** His name is glorified and **so that** His Kingdom comes here on earth.



WEEK 4 Personal Study

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE:

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” **Romans 12:2**

Monday, October 21

Scripture: Romans 12:1–8

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Tuesday, October 22

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Wednesday, October 23

Scripture: Acts 4:32–5:11

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Thursday, October 24

Scripture: Philippians 4:10–20

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Friday, October 25

Scripture: Psalm 84

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____



WEEK 4 Family Experience

READ

2 Samuel 24:17–25

DISCUSS

- What does the word “sin” mean?
- How do we know the difference between right and wrong?
- Why is it hard to avoid doing “foolish” or wrong things?
- Why is it hard to admit when we have sinned?
- What happens when we confess our sins to God?

DO

A sacrifice is giving up something we love for something we love more. David sacrificed (gave up) something that was very valuable to show God he was sorry for the wrong thing he did. Jesus sacrificed His life for us because He loves us so much. Try giving up something you love—a toy, a game, a food, a TV show—for a week to see what it feels like to make a sacrifice. During the week, pray to God when you miss the thing you sacrificed to remind you that God is more important than anything you have.

MEMORIZE

Memorize **1 Chronicles 21:8** together.

“Then David said to God, “I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.” (NIV)

PRAY

Pray a prayer of confession together, out loud or silently, admitting to God something “foolish” or wrong that you have done. Thank God for the sacrifice that Jesus made and the forgiveness we receive from it.



HERE. To Surrender



WEEK 5 Companion Podcast

Play the podcast at the link below to learn more about this week’s scripture focus.

→ heretosome.fpchouston.org/week5



WEEK 5 Sermon Notes

Date: October 27, 2019
Sermon Title: Here to Surrender
Speaker: Pastor Jim Birchfield
Key Passages: John 12:23–26
Other Passages: 2 Samuel 24:18–24a

PREPARING FOR THE SERMON:

Chapter 12 comes on the heels of the riveting chronicling of Jesus' earthly ministry: calling disciples, performing miracles, and preaching about the Kingdom of God. We find in this chapter that Jesus' earthly ministry is ending. This passage covers three events: Mary washing Jesus' feet, Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem, and Greeks requesting to "see Jesus." Each of these accounts relate to the significant change that is coming in Jesus' ministry, which will culminate in the cross.

Mary's act of washing Jesus in oil is symbolic of His death. At that time, a body would be "washed" in oil during embalment. In a costly and sacrificial act of worship, Mary anointed Jesus with a pound of expensive ointment worth a year's wages for the average worker. Next, we see Jesus' procession into Jerusalem. To the Jewish people, a palm branch represented their political liberation. Thus, when the Jews waved palm branches,

they were publicly affirming their belief that Jesus would liberate them from Rome. However, Jesus was riding into Jerusalem to win a much greater battle than a political one—He was coming to win a cosmic battle to liberate all who would believe in Him from bondage to sin and death.

Our last story, though seemingly unimportant, is quite extraordinary. These Greeks were God-fearing men but not Jewish. The reality behind their question was that they wanted to *know* Jesus and *follow* Jesus—something that the Jews had a hard time accepting. Jesus was supposed to be *their* king—not the world's. Thus, this request from Gentiles brings forth "the hour." The fact that Gentiles have now asked to see Jesus—to believe and follow Him—initiates Jesus' final earthly act: His death and subsequent resurrection *so that all* (Jews and Gentiles alike) may come to know Him.



WEEK 5 Reflection Questions

GETTING STARTED

If you have not already, play the *Week 5: The Story Behind the Text* podcast at heretoserve.fpchouston.org/week5 and read the "Preparing for the Sermon" text on the previous page.

READ

John 12:1–28

ANALYZING THE TEXT

1. Reread verses 23–24. What is Jesus saying about Himself? And what is His pathway to glory?
2. Read verses 24–26 and discuss the four hard things that must happen in order to follow Christ's example.
3. Now discuss the four glorious aspects of following Jesus (verses 24–26).
4. Finally, read verses 27–28. Discuss Jesus' vulnerable conversation with God.

APPLICATION

1. If you are a Christian, you have already died (Galatians 2:20) and been crucified, buried, and raised to life (Romans 6:3–5). Yet you are still being sanctified and are fighting against your flesh (Luke 9:23). Take some time as a group to praise the Lord for His saving power. Then, spend time individually asking the Lord to show you if there is something He is calling you to die to so that you might more fully experience the fullness of life in Him.
2. If comfortable, discuss what the Lord revealed to you.
3. Dying to our flesh and our desire to be the lord of our own lives is hard and often scary. Giving up what Pastor Tim Keller calls our "counterfeit gods" (what we have idolized) is painful precisely because we have made these idols into our source of comfort, security, and significance—in lieu of the one true God. How can we combat this fear of "death" as a small group community?



WEEK 5 Personal Study

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE:

“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

John 12:26, NIV

Monday, October 28

Scripture: Philippians 3:7-14

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Tuesday, October 29

Scripture: Luke 9:18-27

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Wednesday, October 30

Scripture: Mark 10:25-45

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Thursday, October 31

Scripture: John 15:9-17

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____

Friday, November 1

Scripture: Proverbs 3:1-10

HIGHLIGHT: _____

EXPLAIN: _____

APPLY: _____

RESPOND: _____



WEEK 5 Family Experience

READ

John 12:23–28 together.

DISCUSS

- What do we lose when we follow Jesus?
- What do we find when we follow Jesus?
- Where is Jesus?
- How can we be where Jesus is?

DO

Jesus showed us that we serve Him by serving others. Make a list of ways you can serve the people in your family this week in small ways and big ways. Keep track of how many of the things you do and how often you do them. At the end of the week, gather to talk about all the ways you served Jesus by serving each other. Celebrate your discipleship!

MEMORIZE

Memorize **John 12:26** together.

“Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.” (NLT)

PRAY

Pray together that Jesus will help you see ways to serve people everywhere you go!

Together we are
answering the
Gospel call to give of
ourselves—starting
right where we are.

“ I am here to serve.

I think it's important to realize how your gifts and passions can be employed to serve the church. In 2014, I saw an ad in the bulletin that the worship team was looking for a bass player. Seeing that opportunity and knowing the gift I'd been given, it felt like a clear 'DO IT' from God. That simple answer of 'Yes, I will serve,' was the beginning of an incredibly enriching and rewarding journey. In the last five years of serving on the worship team, strong friendships have been formed—and being able to serve with great friends each week is an incredible joy for me. It's my prayer that the people of this church have the same experience and feel the same joy in serving. If you see an opportunity to serve that aligns with your passion, the call is already there. You never know the impact you can have on someone's day or life just by a simple act of service.”

Zach Goodrick

Attendee since 2002





“ I am here to serve.

When Jesus sent His disciples to minister and serve people, they were not given any special training. They just had to be obedient and show up. I am wired to hang out at coffee shops, and I treat every coffee shop I go to as a mission field. I was recently at a coffee shop, and there was a guy reading the book *Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James. I went up to him and started a conversation about what he found interesting about the book. After that initial connection, every time I saw him at the coffee shop, I would stop to say hi and chat about books. The other day he had a book studying the meaning of mythology. In the course of talking about the book, God provided me an opportunity to share why Jesus died on the cross, and he said as I was talking, he got goose bumps. My current prayer is that I will be able to continue to build trust with him and invite him to the next Alpha session. When we prayerfully show up, we become the healing presence of Christ to different communities.”

Emmanuel Paulpeter

Member since 2014 and current Church Planting Resident

We need you— because our goal for *Here to Serve* is 100% participation.

Here to Serve is a two-year campaign and guiding vision to strengthen the ability of First Presbyterian Church to amplify the message of the Gospel for the sake of our future, neighborhood, and city. And it will take all of us who call FPC home—sacrificially giving and serving where God has placed us—to carry out this vision.

HERE. TO SERVE

FUNDING THE *HERE TO SERVE* VISION:

For the next two years we are adopting a **One Fund approach**. This means that the total sum of the campaign goal includes our budget for two years of operating expenses to cover the ongoing ministries that are the backbone of this church.

Total Cost for All Three Initiatives (**\$22 million**) + Two Years of Operating Expenses (**\$16 million**)
= **\$38 MILLION**

WHERE THE MONEY WILL GO:



HERE. For Our Future
COST: \$6 MILLION



HERE. For Our Neighborhood
COST: \$13 MILLION



HERE. For Our City
COST: \$3 MILLION

INVESTMENTS NEEDED:

Prayerfully consider what financial role you can play in this campaign. Below are investments needed at different levels. This reflects a total giving commitment over a two-year period.

INVESTMENTS NEEDED	LEVEL	GIFT LEVEL TOTAL
1	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
2	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000
4	\$1,000,000	\$4,000,000
6	\$750,000	\$4,500,000
8	\$500,000	\$4,000,000
15	\$250,000	\$3,750,000
30	\$125,000	\$3,750,000
45	\$75,000	\$3,375,000
60	\$50,000	\$3,000,000
90	\$25,000	\$2,250,000
120	\$10,000	\$1,200,000
120	\$5,000	\$600,000
120	\$2,500	\$300,000
Many	Under \$2,500	\$500,000

Will you take time to reflect on how you can sacrificially give to *Here to Serve*?

Prayerfully consider these questions before giving:

- Am I willing to be open to being changed through participation in this campaign? How can I step outside my comfort zone and let my heart and life be impacted by *Here to Serve*?
- In what ways can I think creatively as I put together a comprehensive giving plan? What assets and resources could I tap into to increase my gift?
- What are things I can choose to reduce or limit in my financial commitments during the course of this campaign in order to accelerate this vision for a cause much greater than myself?
- How am I willing to be uncomfortable as part of a selfless sacrifice toward this vision? What can I release so that I can open myself up to the unexpected joy in this process?

Consider taking a step forward to increase your giving.

We're each at a different place in what we give and what we're capable of giving. Identify where you are today and pray about taking a "step up" to the next level to increase your giving and stretch your generosity—and see how God changes your heart in the process.

Initial Giver

You are not yet giving. You can take your first step and start giving.

Occasional Giver

You give occasionally. You can take a next step by giving intentionally and proportionally.

Intentional Giver

You give faithfully and regularly. You can commit to giving the first 10% of your income as a tithe.

Surrendered Giver

You consistently give 10% of your income. You can consider ways to give above and beyond your tithe.

Sacrificial Giver

You give above and beyond a tithe. You can ask God to guide you into a new place of joyous generosity.

Think creatively about how you can give more:

A few lifestyle changes over the next two years may have a larger impact on your ability to give than you would imagine. Here are some ideas of changes you could make:



Cut down on eating out.

The average Houstonian eats lunch or dinner out 5.7 times per week. Consider packing lunch 1 or 2 more days per week and eating dinner at home one additional day. With the average dinner out costing \$36.40 per person, you could cut down on spending \$3,785.60 over two years, just by skipping one dinner out per week.



Make coffee at home.

Cut down on buying two gourmet coffees per week, and either make it at home or drink the office brew. You'll save an average of \$8.48 per week, which adds up to \$881.92 over two years.



Reduce a movie, music, or TV streaming service.

While it's nice to watch a TV show or movie to unwind, maybe you don't need subscriptions to multiple streaming services. Cut down to one TV/movie and one music streaming service and roll the savings into the *Here to Serve* fund. Per streaming service, you'll save an average of \$200 over two years.



Reduce memberships, season tickets, and annual passes.

Whether it's a club membership, a zoo or museum membership, or season tickets to the Houston Rockets, these costs can add up. By cutting back on these memberships over the two years of the campaign, you could save thousands of dollars and redirect that money toward *Here to Serve*.

Now is the time to do this—together.



Pray

Ask God to show you how to respond to the *Here to Serve* vision. Ask that He would guide your actions and give you joy in the process.



Serve

Look at where God has placed you—in your workplace, your neighborhood, your home—and consider ways that you can serve, big and small. Commit to spending intentional time serving those in your circles of influence, both in formal volunteer opportunities and through simple acts of love and service. Check the *Here to Serve* site for new opportunities.



Give

Commit to giving financially to *Here to Serve* over the next two years. Our goal is 100% participation. This will take intentionality and sacrifice from all of us—but we believe God will transform our hearts as we pursue this together.



Answering the Gospel call starts right where we are.

Next Steps:

Pledge Card

Pledge cards will be available throughout the month of October, as well as online at heretoserve.fpchouston.org. Take time to review it, pray, and complete one.

Commitment Sunday

Commitment Sunday is October 27. Bring in your pledge card that Sunday and join our congregation as we continue this journey together.

Questions?

If you have any questions about *Here to Serve* or how to set up your gift, contact HeretoServe@fpchouston.org.

“I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God that which costs me nothing.”

2 SAMUEL 24:24

For even the Son of Man did not come to
be served, but to serve, and to give His
life as a ransom for many.

MARK 10:45



FPC HOUSTON

Here to Serve Campaign

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