



IMMANUEL
BAPTIST CHURCH

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Enjoying and Proclaiming Good News in Our Great City

Luke 8:16-18

August 25, 2013

Fall Kick-Off

Nathan Carter

Text

"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. 17 For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. 18 Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

Introduction

I generally hate doing what I'm about to do, which is: preach a 'topical' sermon; which means: have something you think God wants you to say and then go find Scripture passages to back it up. I don't think this is generally a good idea because it's easier to end up preaching your own ideas. I like to just take what God has said and exposit it.

And today's sermon is not just a topical sermon, but one unpacking our church's mission statement. Those kinds of sermons I've found can easily turn into, "Yay! Us!" Yuck! Sermons should lead us to say, "Yay! Jesus!"

If you're just joining us, normally what you'll find here is preaching through books of the Bible. We're in the middle of a long-term plan to preach through the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) interspersed with NT books. So in 2007 we started going through Genesis. In 2009 we began the book of Ephesians. Later that year we journeyed through the second book of the Bible – Exodus. We finished that in 2011 and then preached through Matthew. Two Sundays ago we just wrapped up going through Leviticus (there are still some one-sheet summaries in the back on the Information Table). We're now half-way through! Next week we launch into the NT book of Hebrews. I'm looking forward to that.

So today is kind of a transition Sunday. It marks the beginning of the Fall Kick-Off. Summer is winding down. CPS starts back tomorrow (remember our students tomorrow, especially Lawrie as she starts high school at Whitney Young). Many of our college students are back. This is the time of year we usually get a lot of new visitors who just moved to the neighborhood and are looking for a church. I'm encouraged and excited about the year ahead and expectant to see what God has in store for us. It's a good time to pause and review what it is that God has called this church to.

We were on vacation in Iowa the week before last and we were sitting under a shade tree sipping iced tea and eating cookies with Andrea's grandparents at their farm. It was a glorious 75 degree, late summer day with cicadas providing the sound track.

Life was good. Then I happened to take off my glasses and I noticed that they were all smudged up and had little speckles all over them (what is that? do our eyes squirt secretions out of them during the day?). So I cleaned my glasses on my shirt and put them back on and the view was even more glorious, more crisp and clear. That's what this is: church is going well, neat things are happening, we're plugging away at being and doing what we're supposed to be and do. But every once and awhile it's good to clean our glasses, to renew our vision, to step back and be reminded of what we're all about so that we can continue to see clearly.

The mission of Immanuel Baptist Church is **to be a multiplying community that enjoys and proclaims the Good News of Christ in the great city of Chicago**. We believe that encapsulates several biblical ideas contextualized to our setting. And I just want to walk us through it.

But first, let's pray...

Multiplying

The first part of our mission statement declares that we are to be **multiplying**. Everything else we're going to talk about concerning what we're about here we want to see reproduced and replicated in new churches. This is God's desire and design for churches – that they multiply. The early church that we see in the book of Acts was multiplying – sometimes unintentionally like when people were spread due to persecution (cf. Acts 11:19-21) and sometimes intentionally like when the church in Antioch set apart Paul and Barnabas to go start new churches (cf. Acts 13:1-3).

We are called to continue to be part of this movement. The movement is happening. Christ's church is in multiplication mode. And it's best for us to be part of that intentionally and do it cheerfully.

We do this by being connected internationally. We have partners around the world working to engage unreached peoples with the gospel and plant churches. We support Dave & Rose in East Asia, a local persecuted pastor in Southeast Asia, a couple from our church – Peter & Lydia – working in Thailand, a family we have a long history with heading up a strategic seminary in Sri Lanka, another family who spent many years planting churches in Taiwan and now work on missionary mapping around the world, and a family who has planted churches in West Africa and now a suburb of Detroit among Muslims. Matt is putting together an International Missions bulletin board on the back wall that will keep these partnerships more visible to us.

So we're part of the multiplication that way, but we also do this by being engaged in church planting here locally. We've started a pastoral development program aimed at supplying leaders for a movement of church multiplication in our city. It's called *GOSPEL for Chicago*. After the service I'll be giving a certificate of completion to Brandon as we've just finished up another year of it. Through this we've been able to train and coach church planters like Qusai Mahmud at Pilsen Community Church, now in their second year. We helped launch Church of the Beloved that meets right here on Saturday nights and has grown to have another location in the River North area. In October, Dave Johnson and his fledgling church – Grace Covenant – will be launching up in Northcenter/Lincoln Square neighborhood. Next year an historic church in the city – Edgewater Baptist Church – will be joining *GOSPEL for Chicago* and running several

men through our process. By God's grace it's growing. There are many more connections in making. We are called as a church to be part of multiplication in our city in this way and many other ways.

But ideally, we ourselves will be regularly multiplying. Not just growing, but multiplying. It's the difference between addition and exponential growth. In 2010 we sent out some people to start Christ Redeemer Community Church in the West Loop. That church plant unfortunately didn't take root, and we've learned a ton of lessons from that, but that's still the goal – to fill this place up and keep skimming off the top and sending people out to seed new churches in different neighborhoods throughout the city for the glory of Christ. So **multiplying**...

Community

And the next word is **community** – a **multiplying community**. Also embedded in this statement is an emphasis on community. We are called to be a body, a corporate entity. Community is a buzzword these days. I don't think most people who use it really know what it means. We, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are seeking to swim against the individualism of our culture. Church isn't a dispenser of spiritual goods and services for consumers; or social club for people in your niche demographic; or just a loose collection of individuals actualizing their own personal dreams who just happen to be voluntarily associated with each other for a brief time, as long as it's convenient for them.

We spent our whole Summer Retreat this year on this topic of *What is Christian Community?* I won't rehash it all now, but if you weren't there for that, please, please, please go online and look at the material from that weekend.¹ I think it was a Spirit-guided time and I'm praying that the things discussed there translate into real life back here and we continue to build on that momentum and grow deeper in our community life as a church this fall. Cyndi heads up a ministry called Koinonia that seeks to catalyze community with stuff like the Retreat and Men's and Women's Nights, and Care Calendars, etc... And I've very excited about Small Groups starting back up in a couple weeks. More details on that later...

I read this verse last week from 1 Peter 3:8 that encapsulates many of the other verses we studied at the Retreat and I believe is a good word for us – “Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.” May it be, Lord!

Enjoying and Proclaiming

Immanuel's mission is **to be a multiplying community that enjoys and proclaims**. I want to kind of talk about these two verbs together. But to do it, first I want to look at a particular passage of Scripture. I just can't escape expositing a text altogether. Otherwise I feel phony and will get sick of hearing myself talk pretty quickly.

So let's look at that section in Luke's Gospel that Matt read earlier. Luke 8:16-18. Here Jesus has been telling parables. Parables are stories with a meaning. But contrary to popular belief, the meaning of a parable is not always on the surface, immediately obvious. They require some thought, some effort that those who are drawn by the Holy Spirit will put into it and be rewarded with greater insight and those who are not will be put off by it and walk away, to their great harm.

Then in v. 16 Jesus gives another slightly enigmatic, parabolic saying – “No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light” (v. 16). Now, what do you think this is going to be about? What’s your first reflex, gut response to what Jesus is going to be talking about here? If you were raised in church, you’re probably thinking right now about the children’s ditty – “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine; This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? No! I’m gonna let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? No! I’m gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. Shine all over Chicago. I’m gonna let it shine...”

We’re bracing ourselves for a call to be salt and light in the world, to share Christ, to do evangelism. And this *is* the way we see Jesus using this metaphor in Matthew’s Gospel. In Matthew 5:14-16 Jesus says to his disciples, “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” That is a call for the Church to be on mission in the world, proclaiming the Good News, testifying to Jesus Christ, the true and ultimate Light of the World (Jn. 8:12).

But that’s not how it’s being used here in Luke, is it? Jesus quotes the same proverbial phrase – no one lights a lamp and then puts it under a bushel basket; that’s insane. Light is made to be let out, to fill a room, to dispel darkness. That goes for the message of Christ ringing out *from* Christians, but it also goes for the message ringing true *in* Christians. And that is what’s in mind here in Luke 8. This message of Christ, the gospel, is designed to flood into our own hearts. It’s silly to try to shade it or keep it under wraps.

The message of Jesus is meant to reveal, to throw light on our souls, to illuminate more and more of the crevices of our inner being and give us greater and greater insight into the true meaning of existence and the world we find ourselves in. God is in the business of shining light, giving revelation, illuminating, enlightening, bringing clarity. Think of a person carrying a lantern, slowly turning a corner of cave and coming into a dark cavity. Light fills the space and exposes the contours of the walls and rock formations. God is in the business of doing this in our minds and hearts, of unveiling mysteries to us, of giving knowledge and understanding to us, of showing us who we really are and who he really is; what he’s really done to meet our deepest needs and what really lays ahead for us in the future. His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps. 119:105).

“Therefore,” v. 18, “consider carefully how you listen,” Jesus says *to his disciples* (v. 9). That’s the main thrust here, because “whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him.” So this is about how we listen to Jesus’ teaching. One person writing on this section summarizes it this way: “The need exists to respond with care to Jesus’ teaching, which comes with a promise: response brings more spiritual blessing. But a threat also is made: lack of response means losing spiritual insight. Neutrality is not possible.”² So this is an exhortation to Christians to be constantly growing, pressing in, walking in the light, expanding your view, seeking to see more. Light leads to more light.

In John 3 it says, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light...” (Jn. 3:19-31). You either cringe at the light of the gospel and run away into further darkness, preferring blindness; OR you are strangely drawn into it, where one view opens you up to have others. It may hurt your eyes at times, but you relish having the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2Cor. 4:6). In his light you see light (Ps. 36:9). The world starts to make sense to you and you’re set on a path of continual discovery.

And being in that situation is like exploring a cave. You don’t stay at the entrance but go further down and further in,³ finding more and more sights, some breathtaking. “Whoever has will be given more.” It’s an adventure of discovery. If you’re content with where you are in your knowledge of Christ, truly content, no drive to move on, no hunger for more, just flatlined, satisfied to stagnate, you only think you’re a Christian. You don’t have the light of Christ.

But if you have had your eyes opened to the glory of God in the face of Christ, if you have had your sins exposed and seen Jesus as your Savior and Coming King, you will always be gaining new insights, seeing more. And that happens by a deeper listening to the Word of God, the message of Jesus, the gospel. New insights. Putting more pieces together. Seeing more of the big picture. Greater clarity on the details. Fuller self-understanding. More robust theology. The Christian life is a progressive unfolding of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians – “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father... give[s] you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better [and better]... the eyes of your heart [are gradually] enlightened in order that you may know [more and more] the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe” (Eph. 1:17-19).

So to be a Christian is to see, to have light, to not be in the dark. And that light leads to new light. Insight builds upon insight. We progressively see more and more. We cannot remain static. So here’s my main encouragement to us as a church today – pay careful attention to how you hear. Don’t be content to be static. Grow in understanding. Press on to know Christ. Study his Word. Let his Spirit search you. Do whatever it takes to get fresh insight, new knowledge, deeper appreciation of the truth of the gospel. May this Fall be a time of renewal in your pursuit of God. Revived energy to press on.

This process is what’s described in the word enjoying in our mission statement. **A multiplying community that enjoys and proclaims the Good News in our great city.** Immanuel: let’s grow deeper, together, in our enjoyment of God, luxuriating in all he is for us in Christ. Don’t be content with yesterday’s levels of enjoyment. Pay careful attention to the Word. Seek to apply it to your heart. Repent another layer deeper than you ever have before. Let the unconditional, total, passionate love of Christ penetrate another level deeper than you ever have before. Let’s keep pressing on together to enjoy Christ.

My daughter’s school is a Language Academy. From Kindergarten through 8th grade she will be learning Mandarin. Others are learning French or Japanese or Italian or Spanish. And the goal is not necessarily that they will learn some skill to help them in

the emerging global marketplace, although that can be an added benefit. But the principal explained it this way: he said that teaching kids foreign languages from an early age opens up more neural pathways in the mind that in turn facilitate the learning of all kinds of other things. It helps rewire the brain so that there is even greater capacity across other disciplines. The brain is kind of cool, isn't it?

This is like how our spiritual life works. "Whoever has will be given more." There are a kind of soul synapses that you can exercise. You can stretch your heart to increase your capacity for joy. Brothers and sisters, let's intentionally seek to expand our capacity for joy.

How do we do this? There are many ways.

It starts with building the weekly rhythm of work and worship into your life. Program your soul along these lines. Gather with the church to hear the Word preached every week and eat at the Lord's Table. It's no immediate guarantee of explosive experiences with God, but neglecting it is almost a surefire way to squelch such things.

Then build other similar rhythms into your life: family worship (or if you don't have a family, then set-aside times to gather with your roommates for Scripture, song, and prayer). Personal devotions. Be reading through the Bible every year. Immerse yourself in the story and the worldview. Let it seep into you. Meditate on particular texts. Memorize verses of the Bible, hiding it in your heart so that it's there to come out at appropriate times. This is opening up the neural pathways of your soul.

Read books that stretch you to think. Read literature that make you feel feelings you didn't know you were capable of. Don't be afraid of awakening longings. All your longings find their fulfillment in Christ. Let the floodgates open.

Discuss the Bible, ideas, dreams, failures, struggles with fellow believers and receive rebuke, care, push back, empathy. This can be scary but it will lead to greater enjoyment of God.

Pray. Pray until you pray. Jack Miller once said, "I am convinced that prayer, effective praying, is a divine gift that comes while praying."⁴ Pray with other people. Come to prayer meetings.

Repent. Receive forgiveness.

There are many more ways that we can press on, pay careful attention to how we hear, expand our capacity for enjoyment of the gospel. Please share them with each other.

"The kingdom of God is... a matter of... righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). To know God is to know what's true, good, and beautiful. We are called to be a joyful church. A people that have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation (Ph. 4:12). A people who are truly happy, not because we have nice stuff and sanitized lives, but because we know God and his love in Christ. It steadies us. It gives us a peace that passes understanding (Ph. 4:7). It allows us to be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing (2Cor. 6:10).

Now I'm not saying fake it and put on a happy face. I'm saying in our struggles, in our suffering, in our disappointment, in our confusion we let that drive us to wrestle with God more, to ask deeper questions, to trust more sincerely, to hope more desperately, to love others more compassionately, to enjoy more fully. To say with Charles Spurgeon – "I have learned to kiss the wave that strikes me against the Rock of Ages."

God is great. God is glorious. God is good. God is gracious. God is to be enjoyed.

I know that some periods of life don't seem that enjoyable and that God can seem distant and your light dim. But you can trust God. I loved this piece of writing by Mark Galli that I read awhile ago:

Like exploring a dark cave with a small flashlight, we discover the contours of this grace slowly. Once in a while, we come upon a huge cavern of mercy, where the stalactites and stalagmites of grace overwhelm us with their beauty. We realize that this grace has been dripping into our lives for years, creating something beautiful when we only knew darkness.⁵

Keep listening carefully to God's Word; keep, to use John Piper's phrase, fighting for joy;⁶ keep pressing on to enjoy God more and more. He will sustain you to keep on asking and it will be given to you; seeking and you will find; knocking and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened (Lk. 11:9-10). Brothers and sisters: we are to be a church that truly **enjoys** the Good News.

And as we do that, we will **proclaim** it. Luke 8 is the prerequisite to Matthew 5. The light that cannot be hidden, that floods into our souls and opens up more and more of the excellencies of the Triune God will light us up like a phosphorescent glow toy and we will "shine like stars in the universe as [we] hold out the word of life" (Ph. 2:15-16). Evangelism. Missional living. Loving the lost and sharing the gospel with them. Proclaiming the Good News.

I believe there's an order here, a kind of linear progression. As I look at my life and our church, I think this may be one of our biggest areas of weakness. We didn't baptize any new converts in the last year. We can be a bit timid and insular. We're not on mission the way I believe our Lord wants us to be and I want to see that change this year. But I know it won't change through added demands, quotas, challenges, and commands. "The beatings will continue until morale improves." If we are weak in proclaiming Christ, what we need is to enjoy Christ even more. Two British pastors, Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, write:

Enthusiasm for evangelism does not begin with evangelism at all. Exhortations to evangelize just leave us feeling useless. Driven by guilt we try turning the conversation at work around to spiritual things with horrible, crunching gear changes, or we knock on a few doors to little effect. So we give up. Again. And feel guilty. Again.⁷

This isn't to say that there can't be a kind of symbiotic, cyclical relationship between stretching yourself in evangelism and actually cherishing more deeply the message you share. It can work that way. But by and large, if we don't share Christ powerfully we aren't seeing Christ presently. I want to see us becoming so enraptured with Jesus that revivals spill out from us and onto the neighborhood surrounding us. So I will keep seeking to make him known more vividly in our church.

Wouldn't it be fun to see many more people in the UIC Area hear the gospel this year and some of them getting baptized and joining the church. This is our mission. To not just hoard the light, but spread it. To enjoy and proclaim.

Good News

A multiplying community that enjoys and proclaims the Good News of Christ. Good news is the literal meaning of the word gospel. Another translation could be happy news, glad tidings. It's the report that the God who made us, against whom we have rebelled and became arch enemies of, so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son to come and take on our flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth who lived a perfect life in the first part of the first century in northern Palestine, then was crucified under the Roman ruler Pontius Pilate as a sacrifice of atonement, paying for our sins, exhausting the righteous anger and judgment of God, reconciling us to God. And he rose from the dead, proving the efficacy of his life and death and the validity of his promise that one day we too shall rise to live immortal with God forever when he comes back.

This is the gospel. And this message is what's of first importance. It's the organizing theme of the whole Bible. And it is the heart beat of our church. It will be the main point of every sermon. It will be the theme of every song we sing. It must be what stands tall over every counseling conversation, the background of every prayer, the flavor of our community. Grace. It's not about you and what you must do, but Jesus and what he has done. This is why we're a community. This is what brings us joy. This is the message we proclaim. It can never be a cliché. We are a gospel-centered church. Our goal is that nobody should be able to visit us and think, "Oh, that's that church for young people;" or "Oh, that's a church with this political persuasion;" or "Oh, that's the church that _____." They should be able to tell very quickly that the main thing around here is that we have GOOD NEWS!

Great City

Finally, God has called us to be **a multiplying community that enjoys and proclaims the Good News of Christ in the great city of Chicago**. We are a city church. Not because it's cool to be a city church. Not just because 50% of the world now lives in cities (after all that just means that 50% do not and they need gospel-centered churches too). But we are explicit about Chicago because that is where God has placed us. "He determined the times set for [you] and the exact place... where [you should live]" (Acts 17:26). We are called not just to be a generic church, but a church in and for Chicago.

So why do we call it "the great city of Chicago?" First off, because it is huge – big, dense, diverse, influential... somewhat like the ancient city of Nineveh that Jonah in the Bible was called to go to. In the book of Jonah, the city of Nineveh is described as that "great city." Chicago is great in its size.

But we also call it a great city because we love it. We are city-positive, city-affirming. We love Chicago and find it energizing. We don't disparage it or complain about it or always talk about its downsides, though there are some. Yes, last week someone was shot on the front steps of one of our sister churches – Uptown Baptist Church. But we don't let that kind of stuff taint us against the city. We don't react in fear or self-preservation, but it stirs our compassion and pushes us to further engage in the

city. Sure in a city we are going to find sin accentuated. Cities take everything – the bad and the good – and magnify it. It’s called ‘agglomeration’

So yes, there are things about cities that are bad or hard. But there are many, many things about cities that are great! We were camping in rural Iowa two weeks ago. The county seat – Hampton – has an attractive courthouse on a square downtown. But we have the Monadnock and the Rookery and the Trump Tower and the Aon building that scrapes the sky. I love the country. Camping was fun. Nature is cool. But what is even more cool than nature is culture. I love cities. Jesse even posted an article of Facebook a few weeks ago citing the statistics that per capita it’s actually safer to live in cities than it is in the country.⁸ Think about it: there are eyes on the streets, there are world class hospitals minutes away. If you get your arm caught in a grain auger in Iowa, you have to wait a long time for someone to find you, then drive you 50 miles to the nearest hospital staffed with doctors that don’t really know what they’re doing.

Cities are great. Chicago is great. I went to the beach this week and Andrea and I walked out a ways into the lake, enjoying the view of the expansive horizon, but then we turned around and faced toward the shore and found that this view was even more grand. All the people, the diverse people. “Cities have more ‘image of God’ per square inch than anywhere else.”⁹ All the architecture. All the infrastructure. This week I was driving Mary around after our eight day vacation. And she said out of the blue, “Dad, I love it that we’re back in Chicago.” I said, “Why is that Mary.” She paused and replied, “Because this is where my home is.” This is our home. We love it. We want to see the masses of people here come to enjoy God through the gospel in true community with us.

Conclusion

There’s much more that could be said about all of this. If you’re not a member of our church, you can pick up a copy of *Joining the Mission* which explains in further detail a lot of this stuff. If you are a member, just a reminder that Wednesday, September 4th, is a membership meeting where we’ll be talking together more about *how* we actually go about living on the mission, practically, what it looks like – ‘Vision’ stuff. Should be good. God has called us to be **a multiplying community that enjoys and proclaims the Good News of Christ in the great city of Chicago**. It’s an exciting mission. I’m encouraged by what I see God doing among us to accomplish this and the possibilities ahead this year and thrilled to be on it with you.

Lord’s Table

Let’s continue our celebration of the Good News together by eating at the Lord’s Table...

Benediction

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21).

This sermon was addressed originally to the people at Immanuel Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois, by Pastor Nathan Carter on Sunday morning, August 25, 2013. It is not meant to be a polished essay, but was written to be delivered orally. The mission of Immanuel is to be a multiplying community that enjoys and proclaims the Good News of Christ in the great city of Chicago.

End notes:

¹ <http://immanuelblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/summer-retreat-session-1/>
<http://immanuelblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/summer-retreat-session-2/>
<http://immanuelblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/summer-retreat-session-3/>
<http://immanuelblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/summer-retreat-session-4/>

² Darrel L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 743.

³ A play on the words of C.S. Lewis in *The Last Battle*.

⁴ C. John Miller, *The Heart of a Servant Leader: Letters from Jack Miller*, ed. Barbara Miller Juliani (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004), 21.

⁵ Mark Galli, "A Terrifying Grace," in *Christianity Today* (June 2013), 35.

⁶ John Piper, *When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004).

⁷ Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Everyday Church: Gospel Communities on Mission* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 93.

⁸ http://www.governing.com/topics/urban/mct-new-study-shows-cities-safer-than-rural-areas.html#.UfEm6b_X_0I.facebook

⁹ Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 170.

Luke's a 'good kid.' He plays drums in the school band and makes fair grades, though they've dropped lately. At school he's not part of the popular clique, but he does have a few good 'mates'. So what brings him here? In the past few months Luke has grown increasingly sarcastic and sullen. He slammed doors and kicked a hole in his bedroom wall. His mother was stunned by the violent outburst, his father was livid, but they left him alone to cool off. The next morning Dad left early for work, Luke had a headache and took a sick day off from school, and his mother called in at the school to see if anyone there might know what was troubling him. Luke's advisor suggested the counseling visit. As we talk, my questions cruise the perimeter of his life: academics, music, friendships, family.