



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

"I Can Be Missional"

Ps James Lowe – October 26, 2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What's the farthest you have ever traveled from home?
- What's the most unusual thing you have ever purchased?
- Who is the person you admire so much that you would like to imitate what they do?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, if it takes root in a human heart, will change a person's outlook on life and on other people. It will cause a person to care about others, even people who are strangers. A person changed by the Gospel will ask if they should be the "need-meeter" for a person in need.

The Gospel calls us to a mindset of overcoming, of being victorious, of being able to do all things through Christ. The context for this belief and attitude is centered on doing the things that please God, that are consistent with his values and with his will for each of us.

The biblical language of "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" is true when we are doing what Christ has called us to do. In particular, God has called all of us to love others, to serve them in ways that promote goodness and righteousness, and to communicate the Gospel of Jesus to them.

In conjunction with this theme Pastor James interviewed two people whose lives have been changed by the Gospel of Jesus, and who subsequently have gone on to step out and do significant things with their lives for the sake of others. The first was Mark.

Mark was born and raised as a Muslim in Iran. Given the relatively closed cultural context he experienced, he grew up with a negative view of the West and of Christianity. He eventually married a Filipino, who became involved in a church in another Persian Gulf nation. Mark visited the church and was interested in the teaching on prayer from Jesus in the Bible. The pastor talked with him afterwards and prayed with him. Mark was surprised as he experienced the presence of God. At first he thought it was magic. It wasn't long until Mark realized the truth of the Gospel and became a follower of Jesus. Back in Iran Mark began a Bible study in his home and began leading others to Christ. This was considered illegal activity, and eventually led to Mark's arrest. Mark was charged with apostasy, which carried the penalty of death. He was placed in solitary confinement for four and a half months. His case eventually came to the highest court in the nation for this alleged crime. At the final hearing the judge asked him three general questions about God, which Mark was able to answer to the judge's pleasure even though Mark was now a Christian. The judge told him that even though Mark said he was a Christian, the judge believed he was still a Muslim in his heart, and decided to acquit him. It was a miracle.

Since then Mark has moved here to Nashville. He leads a ministry that educates Christians and empowers them to love, serve, and communicate the Gospel to Muslims. At present his ministry is expanding into other nations, as God expands his influence around the world. Mark said "I can!" to God's

will when he first encountered Jesus through the Gospel. He said "I can!" to God's will when he remained faithful to Jesus when he was under arrest. And he is saying "I can!" to doing God's will to love, serve, and reach Muslims with the Gospel.

The second person Pastor James interviewed was Mike. Mike was raised in North Carolina. Although he grew up in church, he was far from God by the time he was in college. In college he was challenged with the Gospel, and in response repented and began to learn what it really meant to follow Jesus. Mike married, and together with his wife began to serve in Christian campus ministry. They also began to reach internationals with the Gospel. This in turn led to them moving to the Ukraine in order to plant a church. That first church has since grown into six churches led by Ukrainians. While in the Ukraine, Mike and his wife became involved in combatting human sex trafficking. Their effectiveness brought them into significant spiritual warfare, which eventually led to their wise decision to relocate back to America. At present they are preparing to move to New York City to provide oversight for the development of our Every Nation New York congregations' leadership development programs.

Mike said "I can!" to God's will when he was challenged with the Gospel as a college student. He said "I can!" to God's will to become a campus minister. He said "I can!" to God's will to go to the Ukraine, and to make a difference by combating sex trafficking.

Both Mark and Mike were living average, normal lives in their cultural contexts. Neither of them would have been thought of as some sort of superstar. Because they said "Yes" to God and have continued to say "Yes," God has used them to make a difference. God will make a difference in your life as well, if you too will say "I can!" to God's will and keep on saying it as you follow God's will for your life.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What are you willing to do for the Gospel?
- Do you have a burden to help others? Who are the people God has called you to reach?
- Name somebody you would like to share your faith with within the next few weeks.

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- That God would open our eyes to the needs of others, especially their spiritual needs
- That God would expand our vision for how he wants us to serve and reach others with the Gospel
- That God would give us wisdom and boldness to put an action plan into motion to walk in God's will