

STUDY NOTES

FLOURISH

A Series At New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "A Vision For Flourishing" on 11/10/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this study guide effectively, you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these notes for group study and reflection should read the biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 4:23; 6:9

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

When Jesus started His earthly ministry, He began showing us what the Kingdom should look like. He heals the sick, feeds the hungry, and calls us into these activities with Him. We participate by living as disciples and making more disciples. But how do we know how to do these things? Before Jesus returned to the Father, He gave us the answer in a command. **Read Matthew 28:18–20.**

God uses the Church to teach the ways of Jesus. He uses the Church to care for the least of these and to live in love, mercy and generosity toward others. The way that the Church does these things should be a light to Jesus.

- *Why is planting other Gospel-teaching churches the strongest way to reach more of the city for Jesus?*

A PLACE FOR PEACE?

One of the clearest ways that we can make more disciples of Jesus is to reach people in cities with the Gospel. Cities are a place to influence culture. Even though cities come with their share of issues, most cities still are seen as:

1) A place of justice — where laws are made, protected, and adjudicated.

2) A place for cultural development — where museums, operas, and various other forms of sports and entertainment take place on a daily basis.

3) A place for spiritual seeking — where places like churches, synagogues, and mosques are available for people to seek spiritual truth. (Of course, as Christians we believe that Jesus is the truth and there is no truth outside of Him.)

- *While a city should be the above things, that isn't usually our experience. How do you see these three things perverted under sin in our own city of Phoenix?*
- *In what ways do you see the need for Phoenix to have more Gospel-teaching churches?*

NEITHER ASSIMILATING NOR ISOLATING

Read Jeremiah 29:4–9. Jeremiah told the people that God wanted them to move into the city, yet to keep their identity as His people. By doing this, they could seek the shalom—or peace—of the city. But this was the hardest option. They would constantly be tempted with other ways to live. Instead, they were tempted to stay outside the city and stay completely separate from the city's inhabitants. It seemed like the most comfortable way to be in exile. But, God had called them to seek the peace of the city, and that means that they would have to live among and interact with its people. Another temptation was they could assimilate into the city and take on the values and practices of the people there. But if they did that, God's people would have lost their distinctiveness as a people set apart by God for good works. This is why our mission statement as a church is:

We exist to make disciples who take the message of Jesus to the places they live, work, study, and play. WHY? Because we believe this will bring flourishing to our homes, neighborhoods, and cities.

- *Why is it the more difficult option to live in our identity as disciples of Jesus without isolating from the city? In what area of your life is the Holy Spirit challenging you on either side of this principle?*

JESUS IN HIS CITY

In Luke 19:41, Jesus came upon the city that was about to kill Him. He wept over it because He loved the city. Just like the instructions for Israel, Jesus went into the city and kept His distinct identity. He experienced the city under sin, but also sought their peace.

Under the influence of Jesus, cities can flourish and fulfill their God-given purpose.

- *How should Jesus' model of interacting with his city challenge you to seek justice and flourishing in your city?*
- *Pray for direction as New City Church plans to plant another location.*