

Kingdom Vision: Broken and Redeemed

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Date: 05 August 2012

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[0 : 00] Good morning. If you have been here with us the past few weeks, you know that we have been going through a series on Proverbs. And in this series on Proverbs, we've been talking about what does the book of Proverbs tell us as we go through life living with a kingdom vision.

And we've had an analogy running throughout that series, if I can get the slide up. We've talked about an oriental rug and how from the backside of the rug, you see lots of knots and loose strings hanging there.

And you see somewhat of a picture, but not a clear picture. You see a partial picture, enough to tell you that there's something there, that there's a picture being formed, but not enough to show you exactly what that picture is.

And we've said that as we live in the world, our vision of God's kingdom is like this. We can see parts, we can see glimpses, but it's incomplete. It's stained by our sin and the brokenness of our world.

And we said that as God views history, he sees the completed picture. He sees the other side of the rug, the front where the picture is completed. And we've looked through the book of Proverbs from this perspective, saying what does it mean for us to go through life living with this perspective.

[1 : 07] And this week, we wanted to sort of take what we've been talking about over the past few weeks and put it on the ground level. So we're going to talk about what it means to live with a kingdom vision. And to start us off, I'm going to ask Lincoln and Stephanie and Aldrin to come up.

And they're going to share testimony with us about the brokenness that they see in the world around them. And later on, they're going to come up and share about the ways that they see God at work to restore and redeem that brokenness.

So if you guys can come up now, that would be great. Good morning, everyone. My name is Aldrin Teresa. I am from the Philippines.

And I am working with the Filipino community in Watermark. And a couple of Sundays ago, we talked about the Proverbs of work.

And I'd like to share the brokenness that I found out from the perspective of the Filipino domestic helpers and related to the Proverbs of work.

[2 : 08] And my observations is based on my conversations with Filipino pastors, Filipino domestic helpers, and some professionals.

And my question to them is simple. What are the challenges of Filipinos in Hong Kong? So that was my question. And all of them told me the same things.

So I'd like to share it to you today. And I'm going to use a story to summarize everything that I found out. So I'm going to use a fictional character, if that's okay.

And I'm going to use Teresa. That's actually my last name. So Teresa went to Hong Kong to work as a domestic helper.

And upon her arrival, she felt overwhelmed because of the busyness of the city and also because of the tall skyscrapers in Hong Kong.

[3 : 13] And she thought to herself, if she's able to adjust well to her new home. But this did not discourage her because she believes that her sacrifices and her hard work will eventually pay off.

So several years had passed, and Teresa experienced working with different kinds of employers. She worked with good employers and even those who are not so kind.

And she's able to overcome the mistreatment of her employers. But I think the worst of all is when she felt lonely and helpless.

She also felt guilt because she's able to take care of her employer's children. But she can't take care of her own.

And sometimes she will just hear the employer's child say, Mama or Mommy. And she will just cry, remembering her child.

[4 : 26] But again, she's helpless because she needs to work in Hong Kong to provide for her family, to give them a better future. And the time came when Teresa had an opportunity to go back to Philippines and visit her family.

But when she came back, she found out that her children had grown cold towards her. Some of them became rebellious, not even acknowledging her hard work and all her efforts.

And she also heard rumors about her husband sleeping with another woman. And this is because probably she stayed in Hong Kong for too long.

Others would say it's because of insecurity. Because you see, in a developing country like Philippines, we look at family, the family structure as, in a very traditional sense.

Mothers are the nurturers. Husbands are the breadwinners. And if the mother is producing more money, more income than the husband, there's a tendency for the husband to feel so insecure.

[5 : 46] And he will look for another woman just to fulfill or satisfy his egos. So those are possibilities. But either ways, Teresa felt very hurt and very betrayed.

And this is not just true to the lives of Filipino domestic helpers here in Hong Kong. This could also be true to all of us. And even true to myself.

There are times that I felt lonely. I felt culture shock. I just got here a month ago. And at times, I feel I forget that I'm a child of God.

And there are also times that I feel empty. And I think this is why it's very important for us to go back to God's word, to be in a community like this, because we all need each other and we all need Jesus to move forward.

Thank you, everyone. Thank you, everyone. My name is Stephanie. And I'm specifically talking about the brokenness in families in Hong Kong today, that particularly in the Jordan area where I live and in a demographic of South Asians.

[7 : 03] And so after you came to Hong Kong, just a bit about me, a year and a half ago on a journey to just figure out who I am, what's going on, and what's next after graduation.

And when I decided to come to Hong Kong, I actually asked God to confirm with me for three different things. Like one is that my parents be supportive, and I have a job and I find a place to live. And hopefully all, you know, just for his kingdom. And God provided. And I got all three answers and my parents were supportive.

I started working at International Care Ministries. And through a series of events, my good friend actually invited me to live with her. And it happens to be she was living across the street from my boyfriend.

And so it worked out really well. And so it also happens to be that in our neighborhood, there is a ministry called Inner City Ministries that work with the South Asian population.

[8 : 03] But there's not just South Asian population, just all different ethnicities, but majority Nepali. And Lincoln happens to be the board of, I was sitting on the board of directors there.

So I was inevitably introduced to what they do, the needs of the neighborhood, and what is Inner City trying to do, and how the gospel can impact this community.

And so by no means am I actively involved in the ministry. I work full time at another ministry. But I have, I think, I've made myself available in some sense.

I think my mentality going in, moving in this neighborhood was, I hope that I can serve in some way or another. But even before we get to thinking about serving, God picked me up and was like, you know what, I need to show you what my heart for this community is first.

And so in the past year and a bit, I've been really learning about that. And so there was, at the same time, I was contending Watermark. And there was one time that Tobin did a sermon, and he brought out a stretcher with, it's just basically a piece of cloth with two sticks on it, and told us to write the names of people we want to pray for.

[9 : 17] And that was one of the first services I attended at Watermark. And so in that experience, I remember Lincoln and I writing a couple of girls from the community and their names on the stretcher.

And, you know, just a bit about the girls. By then, I didn't really know too much about them, but I did know that they're neglected.

They're extremely vulnerable to peer pressure. Their parents and their fathers in particular are not the most responsible, I would say. And moms won't really trust their fathers for providing at all, so they work long hours.

And they don't come home until maybe 12 or 1 in the morning, and they could find their kids just hungry. I remember a story of two brothers holding each other's arms because they're so hungry waiting for their mom to come home, but they fell asleep.

And, you know, and the father, of course, are alcoholics or drunkards or addicts. There are sex workers on the street, and it's just an environment that's not safe to be in for little children. And so that's what I knew about them, but I was still new to the city.

[10:24] So I've decided, okay, I'm going to write their names, and we're going to write their names, and I'm going to commit to praying for these girls. And in that, since then, God provided opportunities for me, just blessings, really, for me to be a part of their lives.

And there's three girls in particular, and one of them I actually had to go and be their guardian for picking up their report cards or representing them at parents' night for school.

And it was really weird to have a sticker on me, on my, you know, saying parent. And I'm 22 years old. This is weird that I would be a parent of a 13 or 14-year-old.

And so I sat there, and it was really, it was a third-band school. If you know anything about Hong Kong school system, there are three bands, and so they're the lowest band. And I was there and just observing.

And, but while I was there, you know, it wasn't supposed to be me. I shouldn't be the one that's sitting there that day. And that night, you know, their parents should have been there.

[11:27] And it just seems to me that actually a lot of these children don't have parents to represent than my parents' night. And so, when I saw the report card the other time, I was even more shocked.

How can someone fail with such a low mark? I was just completely shocked. And I just didn't know what to do about this. It really broke my heart that this girl was so smart, but she couldn't express that in the school system.

And so then we started tutoring. And for about a month's time, we started tutoring these girls. And that, I mean, it helped a little bit, I hope.

But one time, tutoring ended late, and I was walking the girls home. And so, in this community of drug addicts, I don't think it's safe for them to walk home alone.

And usually, we walk them home. So, there's one time that the girls that we were tutoring, they came up to me and they're like, Auntie, we don't want you to walk us home.

[12:28] And I said, why? Right? Like, what's going on? And he's like, oh, I need to go get something. And I was, you know, continuing festering them. I'm like, why? Why are you not letting me walk you home?

He's like, oh, I need to buy something for my father. Just let me go home by myself. And my girlfriend and I, who were both tutoring these girls, were like, what do you have to buy for your father that we can't just go with you?

And she said, you know, it was a silence for a while. And then one of the girls, the girl's friend, there's two girls, the girl pointed at her friend and said, oh, she needs to buy alcohol for her father. And these girls are 13 years old. And I was wondering, first of all, who's going to sell you alcohol? And what is going on here?

Why are you buying alcohol for your father? Who's a drunkard? How come he can't just go and do it himself? And there's a lot of questions going through my head.

[13:24] And there's something really wrong with the picture. And I insisted that I go with them. So two minutes later, I found myself outside of this shop. And of course, down the street from where I lived, there would be somebody that would sell them alcohol, right, to 13-year-olds.

And so I was just completely shocked. My girlfriend and I were just really shocked. We walked her home. And you know what? We ended up really well. And we had a really good time. She invited me into her home, into her room, into her personal space.

Her parents, of course, at 11 o'clock weren't home. But it was a really good time of bonding. But walking back and looking back, I was shocked.

And I was partly angry that this is happening in our city. It is illegal. It is wrong. It made me angry. And so I think that night, God really opened my eyes to a bit of the brokenness in families in Hong

Kong, especially in this area.

And so I always knew I didn't have to look far for brokenness. But I mean, I can just look into my own home, and I can see that it is imperfect. But at one point, where does it cross the line to say this is wrong completely?

[14 : 33] This is injustice. This is not just imperfect. This is wrong. And we need to do something about it. And so I think this year, God has been showing me just glimpses of his heart and how sad it is for the city of Hong Kong and in parts and pockets like the inner city of Jordan.

So this week, I was talking with a friend on Tuesday. And my friend mentioned to me that her sister has diabetes. And she said it really bothered me for a long, long time.

My sister has to wear an insulin patch, and it really bothered me that she couldn't live life to the fullest. And that phrase of living life to the fullest really got me thinking about the fact that the world we live in really is a broken place, that really none of us are living life to the fullest as it was meant to be.

And about how, if we look at the Bible, that's not the way that God designed it to be. And if we look at the Bible, we see in the beginning is God. Perfect and complete in himself.

Not needing anything, not lacking everything, but out of an abundance he creates. God says, this joy and love that I have in a perfect relationship with myself is so amazing, so wonderful.

[15 : 50] I want to share this with others. So he creates the universe. He creates the world. He prepares it and gets it ready for habitation by man. And then he creates a man and a woman, and he puts them in this garden on the earth that he has created, so that they can know this joy and love of knowing God.

And when he puts them there, the Bible says that they are naked and they are not ashamed. And yes, that's talking about physically, but also emotionally, spiritually. They had nothing to hide. No shame, no fear, no guilt. It was them with each other and God and the rest of creation in perfect harmony, perfect relationship. And they lived in this garden, and the Bible says that God would come and walk with them.

And he gave them one rule, not to eat a fruit from one tree in the middle of the garden. And things were going really well. They were living this good life.

They were working with God in his work, and they were helping to name the animals and being part of that process. Until one day, they decided that things as they were were not good enough.

[17 : 05] They decided that being made in the image of God, that having this relationship with God, was not enough. That instead, they wanted to be God.

And they rebelled. Now, the exact action that they did doesn't seem like a big deal when you just sort of look at the story. They ate a fruit. But the thing about it is that it's not about the action itself. It's about a heart attitude behind the action. A heart attitude that says, God, I don't want you. God, I know you're the one that made this place. That made me.

That has the right to rule. But I don't want that. I want your place. I think that you're holding out on me. That there's something better out there for me. That you're not giving to me.

And so I'm going to stand up and take it for myself. And they rebelled. They disobeyed God. And into the world came brokenness. Shame.

[18 : 07] Guilt. Fear. Sin. Death. And this good world still had this goodness in it because of the fact that it had been made good by God.

But there was a brokenness introduced. A brokenness that is carried down throughout the ages. The good news about the Bible is that when this brokenness came into the world, God didn't just sit back content to let us suffer what we rightfully deserved in our brokenness.

But from day one, when man sinned, God stepped in. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit in the garden, God came to them. And he made a promise.

He said, The snake, the one that lied to you, the one that told you that there was something better that I was holding out on you. Its descendants and your descendants will be enemies.

And there will be a cosmic battle between the two of them. And the snake will injure your descendant. It will bite him in the heel. But your descendant will crush the snake in the head. And throughout the Old Testament, God continually enters into human history and gives us glimpses of this great salvation that he has coming.

[19 : 21] In the book of Exodus, he gives the Israelites, his people, the law. And tells them, Here are the keys to living the good life. Here is the way that I intended for the world to operate.

Now you know. Now you can live in this freedom. Later on, he sends prophets. And these prophets tell about one who will come one day, who will set everything that is wrong with the world right. Who will take all of the injustice and crush those who are responsible for it. And as the years go by, the picture of what this coming Messiah will look like, what this coming great Savior King will be, get clearer and clearer and clearer until one day a baby is born.

And in this baby, God himself steps into human history as a man, the man Jesus. He enters into all of the brokenness of this world and lives for about 33 years surrounded by sin, by hurt, by pain, by death.

But again, he's not content to just watch from a distance. He enters in and he starts to make an impact. He starts to make a difference. He starts healing people. The lame can walk.

[20 : 43] The blind can see. The deaf can hear. The dead are being raised to life. He brings the message of a kingdom, the kingdom of God that is coming. And then, in the lowest point of human brokenness, they take this God-man Jesus and the sinful broken humanity nails him to a cross, murdering the creator, murdering the one who loved us, who stepped in to heal our brokenness, hanging him on a tree till his lungs filled with blood and he suffocated and died.

The lowest point of the brokenness of humanity. The good news of the Bible is that the story doesn't end in brokenness. That three days later, Jesus, after being nailed to this cross and crucified, came back to life.

And that in this resurrection, he inaugurates the kingdom of God and he brings this hope, this greater hope than just a temporary physical healing, but a hope that the sin that is at the root of all of our problems can be forgiven.

He gives a hope that one day he will return and he will right all of the wrongs that are in the world. And he commissions a group of his followers to go out and be his lights within the world to share his message and bring this hope and this good news to all around them.

And that's where we find ourselves today. We find ourselves in this place that the theologians call the already and the not yet. There's an already. There's this amazing thing that has happened.

[22 : 29] Christ has raised from the dead and because of that, we have hope. We have forgiveness. We have joy. And God is working in our world today and he heals people and he changes and transforms lives.

But there's also this not yet. The fact that people still need to be healed because people still get sick. The fact that there is still great, great injustice in the world.

And part of living in this kingdom vision is learning what it means to embrace the already of the kingdom and live in this hope and this joy that has been brought, has been inaugurated by Christ's resurrection and yet recognizing the fact that we're not there yet, that we still have to wait for this day when Christ returns, when he finishes what he has started, when he makes all things new.

And until then, we live in a world where people get sick and die. We live in a world where just this week one of my friends that I grew up with had her father die suddenly, leaving a mother a widow and four daughters who no longer have a father to walk them down the aisle when they get married.

But we can see glimpses of God's kingdom breaking through. And so, I want to now invite Aldrin and Lincoln back on stage to share the second part of their stories, the ways that they've seen God's kingdom breaking through in the broken situations that they're involved in in the world.

[24 : 05] The story that I told earlier about Teresa is actually, you know, it could be true to any Filipinos here in Hong Kong.

And as a Filipino, I can't really relate to, relate well to other Filipino helpers. But, I actually came from a broken family as well.

So, I really know how hard it is to grow up in a broken family. But, when someone shared to me the gospel and I became part of a community, that's when I became stronger.

And, my problems didn't, went away, but I have more strength to face it because of the people around me and because of Jesus.

And so, I really believe in the gospel and I really believe that as a community, as a church, we can make a difference. And, what I'd like to share to you is a continuation of the story.

[25 : 26] But, this is how I would envision all of us in this community opportunity to, you know, to, to be part of God's redemptive work, especially to people like Teresa.

So, every Sunday, Teresa would go to Central. I'm sure many of you have seen Filipinos hanging out in Central. so, she went to Central and, you know, she played, she played cards, she, she

drank, and she made friends with other Filipinos who also go there every Sunday. And, on one occasion, there's this person from Watermark who came to her and invited her to join the community group. And so, she, she was quite hesitant because she doesn't know what to expect, but still, she gave it a try. So, she came with the person, joined the community group. And when she's in the community group, she just, she's just quiet, you know, observing the people around her.

[26 : 47] she saw them praying for each other, eating together, sharing the gospel to each other. And she thought to herself, this is like a family.

They're like brothers and sisters to each other. And eventually, she learned that the reason why the people are that way is because of Jesus Christ. And that in Jesus Christ, no one is alone because they are part of God's family.

community. And so eventually, Teresa was invited to attend the Watermark Worship Service. And she felt love from the people, from the community. It transformed her. This made her experience Christ in a fresh, new way. personality. And there are changes in her personality, in her character.

She began to have a healthy sense of identity, knowing that her worth is not based on her job or even her socioeconomic status, but it's because she's a princess, because she's a child of God.

[28 : 06] And so she also felt encouraged to talk to other people, even to other nationalities.

And she also got involved in the life of the church. She offered her talents, which the Lord gave to her to make the church stronger.

And Teresa's problem, her problems didn't go away when she became part of the church. They didn't go away when she followed Jesus Christ.

But she now has a stronger motivation, a stronger resource to face all those problems. And it's all because of Jesus and the life lived out by people from Watermark.

And that's how she became stronger in facing her challenges. And she is very hopeful for her future, not because of her job in Hong Kong, but because she knows that Jesus has secured her future and that one day Jesus will come back and be with her eternally.

[29 : 28] And you and I can be part of God's mission. God's mission of redeeming Hong Kong, specifically people like Teresa, by being a family, a brother, a loving neighbor to people like her.

So my prayer is for all of us to really extend an arm to those who are being looked down at and just to love and be a neighbor to one another through Jesus Christ.

And we look forward to the day that Christ will come back and make everything new again. all right. Hi, everyone. It's a bit different being here without a guitar. It really is. It's a great privilege for me to have an opportunity to share with you all a story, I guess, of how we see light shining in the darkness that we live.

And I'm sure there's tons of examples within this congregation of how the kingdom is coming forward. But there's one particular story that came to my mind when I thought about sharing with everyone this morning.

[30 : 48] And so like Steph shared earlier, we are in a community that is very disadvantaged. We have a lot of families that are very, very broken. And we have a lot of children that kind of run around all night with parents that neglect them, parents that don't love them.

And we firmly believe that God's heart really breaks for these kids. kids. And so there was that one service where Tobin brought up the stretcher and he talked about how it's an analogy of us bringing people that we love, people that we know are broken in front of Jesus and laying them before him in hopes that he would save them.

And I remember writing down these names and so I'll continue on a story of actually one of the girls that we wrote down. the story actually is really crazy and some of it happened on the rooftops in Jordan and I can tell you the whole story later.

We don't really have time this morning but basically what happens, we lost two of our girls. Two girls that are about 14 years old disappeared for about two weeks and the parents called our family minister and so she called us and it was basically me and a friend, two guys about 20-something and we were running around Jordan area searching the roofs for these girls that we couldn't find. We finally did find them and what we realized at the same time was that there's actually a lot of different gangs that hang out on the rooftops. Hong Kong is such a strange place where we don't

really have space to spread out all of this stuff and so it just kind of gets condensed and so the rooftops were where all these guys hang out and it's quite dangerous, there's a lot of people with knives and things like that and we finally brought down these kids and one of the girls after a lot of convincing we brought her back home and they don't want to go home because they're scared of their parents and then there's this one girl while we were talking with her and trying to get her to go back home we realized there's no way we can let her go back home and it was the first time that she told us her whole story but we realized at that point that she had all these welts under her hair and her father would hit her with this metal pipe when she doesn't come home on time and so we had in front of us this girl that had just open wounds under her hair and at the same time we just figured out we found out the whole story of what was happening in her home and in what was an absolutely incredible 72 hours I think we found that we took this girl that was registered in a school in Hong Kong she hadn't been to classes for about two weeks she was running away from home she was hiding from her parents and within three days she was registered in a school in India and she was living with a very godly and loving family and we had taken her out of

[33 : 43] Hong Kong and moved her over there and it's an amazing story every single step of the way God was working the mother was really on board with us and she really cried out for help legally everything seemed to be covered within hours and people came through from left and right and so we had this girl that was in such a dark situation and somehow through the body of Christ we had taken her out of out of the darkness out of the danger and into somewhere that was what she wanted and I mean the miracles I can't even count about how amazing everything was set up but the coolest thing was that our minister who works for us full time was on vacation at that point in India waiting for her and so everything worked out very very smoothly and it was quite amazing but I think in that craziness as we were taking her out my impression of her was that she knew the gospel she had heard about Jesus and she knew about the fact that the Lord died for her and loves her and laid his life up for her sin but it felt like it was like a head knowledge thing it felt like she had heard the stories and it didn't really sink in yet she's from a non-believing family as well but during the whole time I think it impressed upon her heart of how real

God's love can be how practical it can be to help her and what we all prayed for her and we sent her out and so eight months later after one full school year in India she came back to Hong Kong and well we brought her back to Hong Kong for a quick break and she came to Watermark for one Sunday she was only we brought her here and we were just sitting actually in those seats and it was me the girl and Steph and for some reason that was the one Sunday that Tobin decides to bring the stretcher back up and I still remember the stretcher coming out and my eyes lock on because I knew I wrote her name down and I'm feeling kind of like oh no like what's gonna like is she is this gonna be really awkward because I wrote her name down and what does she think and but my eyes locked onto her name and I think I started to feel a little bit overwhelmed because it was amazing how we brought this girl in front of the Lord and he really did save her you know he really did take her out from the difficulty she was facing to somewhere that was safe for her and when I saw her name on that stretcher she nudged me and they call us uncle and auntie because that's just what they call us but she nudged me and she said she's like uncle is that my name up there and of course I'm like yeah that's that's your name and I'm trying to like wipe away tears and it's the yeah that's your name we we wrote your name there because we love you and we've been praying for you and she she asked me she's like so do we we write down the names of people that we want to bring to God and we want Jesus to love and yeah that's what that's what we did and she leans over and she whispers to me and she's like uncle I want to go and write my father's name and I think that's when we lost it so I don't know if any of you guys remember but there was Steph and I sitting there and we were just bawling and watching this girl that that understood Christ that understands Christ's forgiveness and that has forgiven her father for for the fear that she lived under for the abuse that she faced and we watched her as she walked up and wrote her name father's name on this treasure and I think for me it was such a beautiful picture of the redemption that we see when Christ really touches someone's heart just how it was beyond our expectation that she would forgive him and then plead for his salvation and over the week that she was here we were praying with her constantly for her parents that they would come to Christ that our goal isn't that we'll just save people and protect them but our goal is to bring the gospel to every single person and so I hope that's just a reminder for for us as a watermark family that you know within our church journey we've seen something so amazing happen and that

redemption is something that is really real and the love of God is something that is so beautiful so thank you so father we thank you for the fact that the brokenness is not the end of the story and that you are working in the world that you have not abandoned us to what we deserve in our brokenness but that you have entered into our story that you have come down that you have spoken that you have lived in our world and that you have brought hope to our world through your life we thank you for the promise that one day you will return and the work that you have started you will bring to an ultimate completion and that we will be able to be free from all of this brokenness from all of the injustice and the pain and the sickness and the death and so we pray that we will be faithful in living right now as we ought to in light of this truth and that your name would be glorified through all that we do and in
Jesus name amen