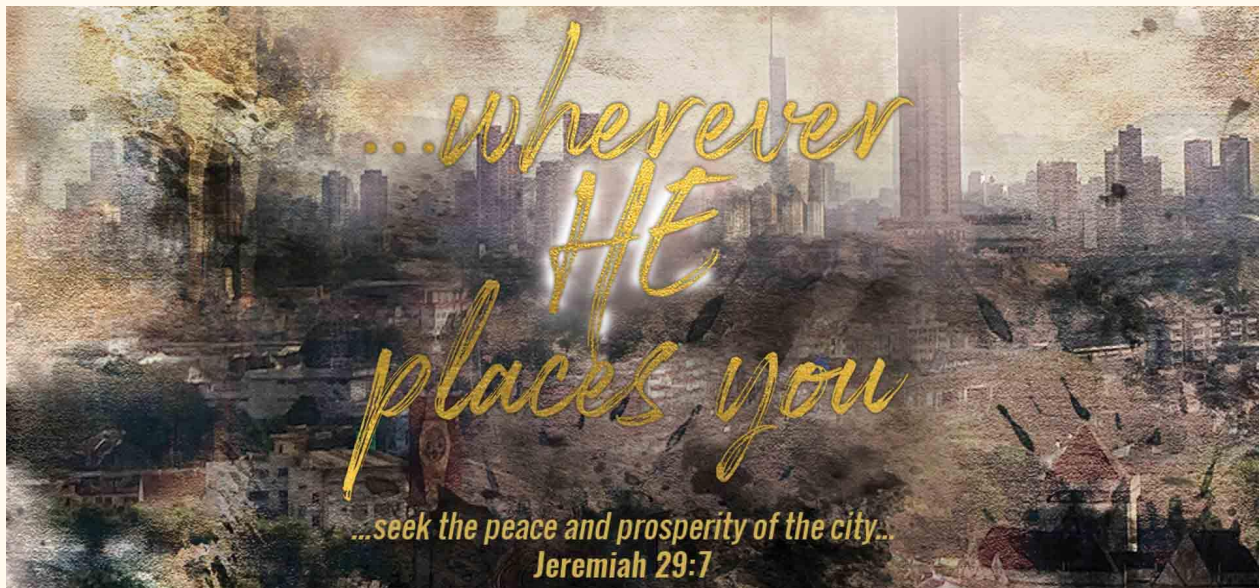

Engage

Dear Lord, we pray that our hearts will always seek to follow You. Open our eyes to see the flock in which You've entrusted to us. Thank You for the high calling of being a shepherd in our respective influences. Help us to lead those You have put under our care with compassion, humility, patience and mercy. In Jesus' Name, Amen.





SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

A Shepherd's Heart

Pastor Dr Bill Wilson

Amos 3:12

This is what the Lord says:

“As a shepherd rescues from the lion’s mouth only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites living in Samaria be rescued, with only the head of a bed and a piece of fabric from a couch...”

Introduction

We have the privilege to be inspired by Pr Bill Wilson as he shares how God moves in powerful ways through his life and ministry. He is a long-standing ministry partner and founder of Metro World Child - operating the largest Sunday School across the world, providing hope and care for some 320,000 children.

He flew directly from Ukraine to share the painful realities of the war while still nursing several broken ribs and fingers from an earlier drone attack. Around 20 to 40 thousand children were casualties of the war: fearful and lonely since being separated from their family. Some have lost limbs or were mutilated and tortured by Russian soldiers. He and a ragtag team of transporters were continuing the efforts to evacuate these children to Ukraine and back to their families.

Pr Bill was confronted by a person after a similar sharing. This person could not understand why he continues to put himself in harm's way. The situation escalated despite him stepping away to avoid confrontation. At some point, an elderly gentleman intervened and told this person to back off. He said that Pr Bill does what

he does because he has a shepherd's heart. This successfully diffused the situation but as both the confronter and the elderly gentleman walked away, Pr Bill was left dumbfounded. What did the man mean by a shepherd's heart?

Perhaps, one way to understand this is to dig into the prophetic vision Amos saw of three characters - the shepherd, the lion and the lamb.

1. It was an Instinct

In this vision, the shepherd instinctively reached over to grab one of the lamb's legs from between the lion's jaws. He only had a split second to act. He doesn't know what to do but decides he has to do something.

Similarly, Pr Bill's trip to Ukraine was to gather information to share with the war crime tribunal in The Hague. But he was presented with a dilemma - to leave after completing his fact-finding mission or to stay and help the suffering kids. He decided to step in and do something.

Likewise for us, when God presents us with a situation of need, we are faced with the decision to walk away or to do something. If we see things through the eyes of the Spirit, our heart will lean towards doing something by instinct. A true shepherd does not walk away.

2. It looked Hopeless

The shepherd's initial efforts to pull on one leg seemed hopeless since the lamb was well within the jaws of the lion. In spite of that, he reaches over to grab another leg. He did not give up.

Once we decide to do something, we often find ourselves asking "What's the point?". The situation seems daunting and looks hopeless. A true shepherd does not give up easily but trusts in God to enable and sustain his or her efforts.

3. Now, it is about a Personal Sacrifice

The shepherd decides to go back a third and final time to save whatever he can of the lamb. He is aware that this may be a vain attempt and once the lion is done with the lamb, it will turn on the shepherd next. The shepherd did whatever it took and managed to pull a part of an ear.

How far are we willing to go? Would we do whatever it takes to save something or someone even if it requires a personal sacrifice or it comes at the

expense of our lives?

Conclusion

The prophet Amos was given a glimpse of just how high, wide and deep our great shepherd's heart is for us. So great that He saved us from sin even at the cost of His only Son, Jesus Christ's life. Perhaps if we are Spirit-enabled to see the immensity of His love, it will stir our hearts to beat as one of a true shepherd. A true shepherd does not walk away or give up easily. Instead, he or she leans ever more heavily upon God to chase the impossible lions.



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficiently. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.

Suggested Icebreaker Activity/Questions

- Have you ever been attacked by animal(s) before? Share if you have.
- Which animal scares you the most? Why do you feel that way?



Photo by Patrick Schneider on Unsplash

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- Define what someone with a “shepherd’s heart” looks like in our daily setting.
- Suggest the Big Idea for this week’s sermon.

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- When faced with a difficult situation, what is your first instinct? Would you choose to walk away from the situation or deal with it first hand?
- Reflect on the statement: “It is not so much what you accomplish in life but what you put into motion.” What is a recent need that you sense God is putting in front of you but you are thinking: “I am just one person”? How does this now spur you on to take up that challenge?
- Are you a sponsor for a kid or two under Metroworld ministry? What stirred you to make the decision? How has your giving inspired you? How would you encourage others to do the same?

Question Bank *(Extra questions that you can use to bring your discussion further as you see fit):*

- What does “reaching out to the least and the lost” look like in practical ways?
- In the past 3 years, you would probably have seen more people in need than you have before. How has that changed you? Did you do anything about what you see? Do you still see such situations now?
- Describe a time or situation when all you felt was hopelessness. Did you think “what is the point?” even as you prayed about it? Was there a twist/turn in the end when the situation improved? Share your experience.

- Have you ever seen children working instead of being at school? What can and should we do in such situations?
- How far will you extend your help before drawing the line? Would you dare to risk your life in the face of persecution or worse, in war?

Suggested Activity linked to the Sermon:

- Consider how the Cell Group can corporately give towards Metro World Child, to either support their ministries or programs. Perhaps you could run a fund-raising activity and donate to the organisation or plan a mission trip to visit and serve at the slums of the Philippines next year or perhaps support a missionary, ambassador or intern.

For more information on Metro World Child, click [here](#).



SERMON REFLECTION

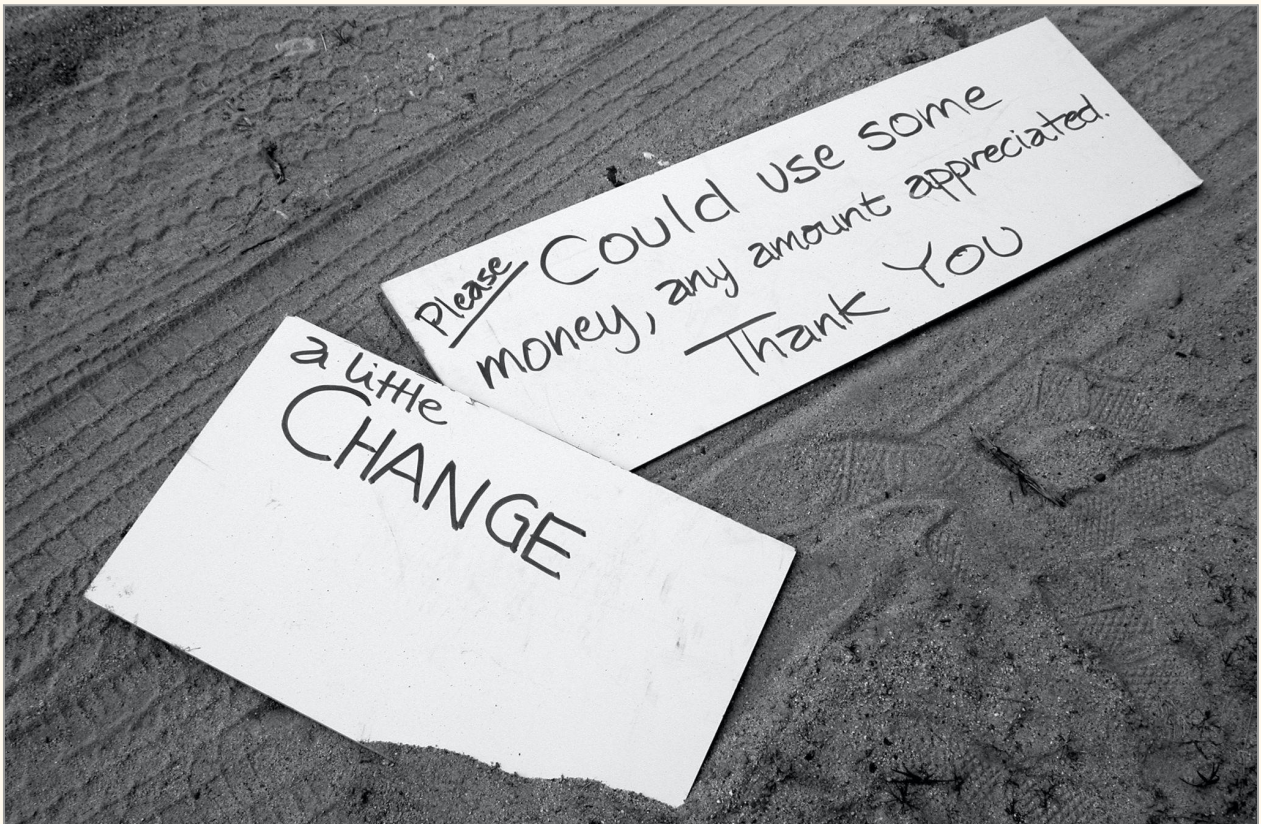


Photo by Matt Artz on Unsplash

Have you ever encountered strangers coming up and asking for handouts? Over the course of the past year, I have been experiencing it more and more with increasing frequency. Oftentimes, it is unexpected and I am forced to wrestle with the dilemma on whether to give or not to give. In that split second, multiple threads of thoughts course through my mind: *Is it legitimate? Are there other ulterior motives? Could I be mugged? Am I doing more harm than good?*

Most of the time I would choose to ignore and avoid eye contact. Sometimes, as the Spirit leads, I do give a token sum. Be it yay or nay, I am left always with a sense of unease that plaques my mind for the rest of the day. However, there was one particular incident which recently happened that continues to be vividly etched in my memory.

It was a dark and rainy evening... (as cheesy as this sounds, it really was pouring outside) and my eldest son L and I were headed to our car which was parked at the basement of a 3-story complex housing eateries, grocery stores and other convenience shops. It was new and had a typical rectangular design built to serve the needs of the local residences.

A lady in her mid 50s called out to us as we were midway down multiple flights of escalators. Seated on a bench within the narrow glass enclosure overlooking the car park, the dark-skinned lady (clearly non-Malaysian) called out with fairly fluent English: "Hello sir, can you help me?". Over the years, I have been conditioned to tense up whenever someone addresses me as "sir". What is normally a sign of respect usually never quite ends well.

She called again and motioned us to stop. My son and I stopped in our tracks some 8 paces away from her. As she was explaining her predicament, my eyes darted to the outside car park just to ensure that no one was outside waiting or approaching us. I was worried that this lady might be part of a syndicate planning to pounce on us when we least expect it. So far so good, the coast was clear with us facing the only glass door leading in or out. I gently pulled my son back slightly behind me when I realised he had taken a half step ahead of me before we were stopped dead in our tracks.

It took awhile and several back and forth questions to piece her story together. Apparently, her motorcycle broke down and she then took it to a nearby workshop. While assessing the damage, the workshop foreman gave her an estimated ballpark to replace some faulty parts. All that was standing between her and getting home was her coming up short of RM80. So she asked if she could borrow and promised to pay me back if I would just give her my number.

I ignored her request for my number but instead quickly fished through my wallet. I only had RM100 and gave it to her... all the while keeping one eye on the door and one hand on my son's left shoulder to keep him behind me. She kept assuring me

that she would return my money and insisted on getting my number to which I promptly refused. I told her to keep the money.

She thanked me profusely and maintained that she would donate the money to her church. She caught me off guard by asking if I was a Christian to which I replied yes. She started pronouncing blessings on the both of us and we promptly went down another flight of escalators. As we were approaching our car, L was puzzled and wanted to know what made me give the lady money. "How do you know she really needed the money Daddy?", L asked me. I told him that I have no idea but that I sensed the Spirit leading me. I told L that if she was lying, then that is something she is answerable to God for but if she really was in need, then we have helped her get out of a difficult situation by giving her the benefit of the doubt. Someday, we may find ourselves in such a situation with our only hope being that somebody trusts us and cares enough to lend a helping hand. Later that evening, L related the whole incident to his Mom and even ended with him sharing the "moral of the story" like it was his idea all along.

Contributed by Darren Lim



PRAYER



Photo by Tep Ro on Pexels

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

Kenya

On the week of 15 July, Metro World Child Kenya had a Sunday School attendance of 206,000 children. God continues to open doors across the entire African continent. Nevertheless, national demonstrations against the cost of living are turning violent, closing schools in Nairobi and Mombasa this week.

Pray for:

- The children and for Metro staff as they continue the work on the streets.
- God to stir the hearts of the national leaders towards greater urgency and compassion for the needs of the children.
- Good health for Metro's full-time and volunteer staff in the middle of a sporadic outbreak of malaria in several villages they serve.

Janine – Director of Metro Africa

Pray for:

- Favour with authorities in the African countries where Metro is starting new Sunday Schools.
- Fundraising tour in the U.K. from 28 July to 15 August which is going to be critical for the development of these Sunday Schools.
- Wisdom and discernment.



MISSIONAL

Note to CGL: Inspire and encourage the Cell Group members to participate in the activity suggested below (from our CrossFields, Missions department) together to cultivate a culture of being a missional church.



<https://www.metroworldchild.org/sponsor>



Short-Term Mission Trips

Nepal	6 - 14 October 2023
Sri Lanka	16 - 22 October 2023
Cambodia	31 October - 7 November 2023
Laos	9 - 16 November 2023
Thailand	10 - 16 November 2023
Vietnam	8 - 13 December 2023

Register here



bit.ly/cfstm2023

CrossFields