

The Hope of Mission: Matt Schvaneveldt

Psalm 96

April 29th 2018

Sermon Reflection

What did you find helpful or meaningful from the sermon this weekend? What stood out to you? [Note this is a question we are not putting in the bulletin, but we feel could be a good practice for groups do start with on a weekly basis. It gets people talking and helps bring people who missed up to speed.]

1) How did this sermon encourage you or stir you to think more deeply about the role of missions in our church?

If you've attended Evening Services at all, you've probably recognized our prayers for God to grow us into a mission sending and supporting church. This sermon unpacked Psalm 96 for us, but Matt did so in the context of global missions. What stood out to you from his message personally or in regard to the church as a whole? How can you or your CG help build a culture of cross-cultural missions at our church? How aware are you of God's work across the globe and why is it important to be aware of such things? Seeing what God is doing in Uganda, the UAE and Italy helps us see ourselves in the right perspective: we are not alone, nor are we the most important. God is building his church and this should be a humbling encouragement for us when we face our own trials in evangelism and ministry.

2) Read Psalm 96:11-13. What aspects of the gospel give you emotions similar to the ones this psalm portrays? Why?

How many words can you find in the text which portray emotion? Why is this repetition so important? Notice that the emotions in this text are not flippant or fickle. They are all responses to the glory of God. We serve this same God and have seen an even greater salvation than the Psalmist ever hoped for! Spend time with your group discussing which aspects of the gospel stir the most emotion in them. The question becomes most helpful when you force people to articulate what specific aspect of the gospel causes them such a response. We can often speak of such experiences in vague generalities, but it is helpful to ask ourselves: "What am I responding like this and what is at the heart of it?"

3) Many of the cultural and political events of our day surround the issues of unity and equality. How did this text and sermon turn our eyes towards those around us in a God-glorifying way? How does a clear view of God (Psalm 96:3-6) correct your thoughts of self-importance and spur you to mission?

The greatest unity will only come through the gospel (Gal. 3:28). This Psalm helps us find unity as it calls all men from all nations to unite themselves around the greatness of God (vs. 3-4). It could be a good discussion to talk about how (while still good) all other movements towards unity will ultimately fall short (it never solves the permanent problem which divides us all, see Ephesians 3:13-22). Commands to "love one another" are essential, but without this motivation of the glory of God they can often become neglected or burdensome. But when we see all our relationships and all people as potential worship givers, we gain a long-suffering and eternal mindset. As for the second question, if we are only thinking of ourselves, it is impossible to think well of God and to think highly of others. But the greatness of God humbles us to see his glory and his plans as ultimate

in our lives. It is so easy for our lives, our goals, our careers and even our families to be primarily about us. But this Psalm places the glory of God at the center of everything. This doesn't destroy those other tasks, but instead it allows us to see them as places which God has given us to worship him and make him known to others.