



SERMON BASED | SMALL GROUP NOTES

FALL 2017

Message Series: Unlearning Religion

Message Title: Aim Higher

Speaker: PK

Date: October 29, 2017

Icebreaker

1. What is one thing you learned in your past church experience that seems more "religious", and less about a relationship with Christ? (examples: appearances, behavior, by-laws, etc.)
2. What is something you have been battling for a long time, or perhaps something you once wished for "more" in your life, but have just settled for in life?

Message Overview

"Half of learning something new is unlearning something old. Often, we have to backtrack on what we thought was right; avoiding wrong turns, and following the path laid out in Scripture, so that we may know the truth in God's Word."

Today, PK's conversation focused on God whispering to us to "AIM HIGHER". Jesus Christ gave the Sermon on the Mount, not just for information, but for transformation. While the Pharisees of today and the world have dangerously raised and removed the bar God has set for how we should live, the power and grace of God through Christ lifts us over the bar. Instead of settling for less than, we aim higher to reach a place of blessing, growth, and healthy relationship with God.

PK offered some key thoughts for today that centered on this discussion point:

Religion about God is ARRIVAL.
Relationship with God is IN FLIGHT.

Discussion

In order to aim higher, you have to GROW through stuff. This starts by digging into areas that may feel uncomfortable to face.

1. Are there areas in your marriage, parenting, health, finances, career, or faith that you feel "stuck" in?
2. What do you think about when you hear the word "settle"? Do you perceive "settling" to be more positive or negative when applied to some of the life choices you have made?
3. Do you have secret areas of struggle where you feel angry, hurt, resentful, bitter, sad, lonely, ashamed, etc. whenever circumstances bring you face-to-face with them?

4. What changes are you willing to make moving forward to aiming higher and being set free in God's grace from these struggles?

The role of the Church is not to judge people, but to introduce people to Jesus Christ. It is not a place for the ARRIVED, but for the IN FLIGHT.

1. Have you ever felt pressure to "have it all together" when you get around other church folks? What are some ways we can help remove this idea?
2. What are some ways that you see the world has dismissed God's bar for how we should live and instead substituted their own standard?
3. Where do you believe the line is between relying on God for righteousness but not becoming like the Pharisees who only value rules, not relationship?

Most people IN FLIGHT with a relationship do all they can to build it until it has ARRIVED. However, the danger of having an ATTITUDE OF ARRIVAL can lead us into settling with a spirit of complacent. This destructive spirit stagnates our growth, and we stop building and nurturing God's whisper for us to aim higher.

1. What are some of the positive and negative thoughts you may have regarding being in a constant process of "in flight"?
2. Do you recall a time where you embraced the attitude of arrival (*aka: I've made it and now I can finally relax!*)? What was the outcome of that circumstance? Spiritually? Relationally?
3. God desires for us to hunger and thirst for righteousness. This requires us to tackle and clean up the stagnant areas in our lives for breakthrough. Why do you think it can be so hard to begin this process to break-through the areas in our life that we have become comfortable with?

Church is the Cross Fit gym for faith. It is where our character, marriage, parenting, and relational areas get help in becoming spiritually fit. Instead of being a place of judgment, it is a place of encouragement and godly love. It is a place where everyone shares being IN FLIGHT, and through tender grace, help one another to AIM HIGHER in growing in their relationship with God and living above the bar where Jesus points us.

1. Small groups are a great way to connect and grow. How much of yourself do you pour into really embracing the benefits it has for you?
2. Do you share your hardships with your small group? Why can it be hard to share the things with your group that require going deeper and being fully open?
3. Have you given God pushback on areas of your life where He is digging in to help you aim higher?
4. In order to keep from settling below God's bar, we have to learn, grow, and be challenged. Which of these three is the hardest for you?

Wrap Up / Close

Take time this week to think on areas in our life where you may have settled for less than God's best for you. Whether it be in your marriage, parenting, career, health, finances, or your relationship with God, pray for discernment and direction to begin working on these things. Ask God to reveal any areas where you may have developed a spirit of arrival, and where He specifically wants you to aim higher in this season you are in. Remember, as Christ followers, we are always in a constant state of growth. We are not perfect on our own, but we have a perfect Christ that dwells within us. It is through His grace and love that we grow in His image and live the holy lives He gifted to us through His sacrifice on the cross for us. Christ did not pay the ultimate sacrifice for us so that we could live lives of simply "settling", but rather – he died so that we could be lifted above the bar and break-through in every area of our life.

Throughout the Week (Optional)

1. Read and reflect on **Matthew 7:1-5**, **Luke 18:9-14**, and **Galatians 6:1-2**.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you fresh eyes and an open heart to really hear the verses. Pray and reflect on the thing that stands out to you the most.
3. Pray and ask God to give you the strength and right setting to begin sharing something that you have been struggling to be open about.