

## **Life Group Topic #7: The Relentless Pursuit of God**

February 22, 2009

### **WELCOME:** (15 minutes)

Have you ever lost something that was so valuable to you, that you hunted for it relentlessly until you found it? Tell the story!

### **WORSHIP:** (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, or other art forms.

### **WORD APPLICATION:** (45 minutes)

Briefly read the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

Take a careful look at that title: **The Relentless Pursuit of God**. Do you take that to mean **our** pursuit of God? The truth is that from the very beginning of time it has been **God** who is relentlessly pursuing us!

#### **Our tendency is to run and hide from God.**

Left to our own inclinations, the natural man moves away from God. Like Adam and Eve, we see our failures and look to find cover in the darkness, far away from the light of God's presence. **Romans 3:10-12** says...**There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away...** But from the very beginning of creation it is God who takes the initiative to search after us.

**Genesis 3:8, 9: Then the man and his wife...hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"**

From the beginning of time, God has been relentlessly pursuing a world that has lost its way. From the Garden of Eden to the cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, God is still calling, "Where are you?"

First we see God in a search for Adam. Finally, we are given the supreme example of Jesus coming into our world to find us. ( **Read John 1:9-14**)

#### **God's pursuit is relentless.**

Let's not kid ourselves. Scriptures make clear that the only reason this world is still in motion is that God is not done his pursuit of man. In fact he is after everyone, and longs to see that **NOT EVEN ONE PERSON** on earth spends eternity without Him.

God could shut down the earth in a moment, and that time is rapidly coming. But for now he is still actively in pursuit of every man's heart.

**God's pursues the lost through us.** When local churches truly reflect the character of God, **they take on** His pursuit for a lost world. As nice as it might be to focus on their own well-being and leave it at that- they simply can't shake God's pursuing nature in them. **2 Corinthians 5:18-20** <sup>20</sup> So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through

us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” We are his hands. We are his feet. We are his voice. It is through us that he penetrates the very dark and hidden places of the world.

**The scope of God’s pursuit is worldwide.** Life would be a lot easier for us, if we could just restrict our search to our own surroundings. The challenge of reaching Abbotsford is daunting enough. But God invites us into a mission far broader in scope.

**God is in relentless pursuit of the nations. And he puts the nations in our heart.**

That is why the Apostle Paul could never be satisfied with bringing the gospel to just his home town. **Romans 15:20** (New Living Translation) <sup>20</sup> My ambition... has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else.

We are asking God to show us his heart for the city of **Abbotsford**. Next weekend will be dedicated to this theme (Feb 28/March 1) But we are asking him also to show us his heart for these five cities- **Montreal, Guadalajara, Dandong, Chonburi, and Delhi**. We are asking Him to show us how he can use to see his kingdom expand in these places.

There will always be a tension within us between the needs around us locally and the needs around the world. We often feel overwhelmed with what is already on our plate. As individuals and as a church we need constant wisdom to know what our part is in God’s plan. Clearly there are limits and boundaries that we must set.

But like Oskar Schindler cries out in the gripping movie “Schindler’s List, **“I could have saved more, one more Jew!”** This reflects the ever-expansive heart of God.

### **Word Application Questions:**

**Please keep in mind that these questions are meant as catalysts designed to get the group talking about life application.**

- 1. Read Genesis 3:8-9. What does this tell you about the character of God?**
- 2. Looking back on your life before you knew Christ, who were some of the people God used in his pursuit of you?**
- 3. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. God chooses to make his appeal to the world through us. Through us he calls out, “Where are you?” What does that look like in your life?**
- 4. When you think of the needs in the world today- what effect does it have on you? Are you apathetic? Overwhelmed? Focussed?**
- 5. With so many opportunities to serve the Lord locally and internationally, how do we discern what our part is? (As an individual, Life Group, church).**
- 6. As a church we are committed to growing partnerships with 5 Key Cities: Montreal, Guadalajara, Delhi, Dandong and Chonburi/Chiang Rai, Thailand. What might be your part as a Life Group to champion one of these cities or partner with one of our missionaries there?**