

Strengthening Stakes

Isaiah 54

Expand your tents - The call from God is to move forward

- He's not done with us or with you
- There's more for us and more for you
- I'm at work here for My glory and your good
- Profound promises in times of change, when struggling with relationship to God and the world around them

Strengthening Stakes

- Keeps the chaos from forming and destroying
- What you don't want is to have opportunities that exceed character – that's a recipe for not finishing well

4 Stakes

1. Bible
 - a. It's the primary reason people stay in the faith
 - b. It's the sole way we come to know who God is
 - c. Don't need less but more because it shapes us instead of the culture shaping us
 - d. Don't need less but more because it gives to us nourishment instead of sucking life from us
 - e. Don't need less but more because it has the best possible answers to the most important questions
2. Evangelism
 - a. World needs to know the good news
 - b. Beautiful feet - Isaiah 52 -> Messiah Isaiah 53 -> Promises of Isaiah 54
 - c. Three-tiered approach
 - d. The Gospel still changes people radically (KKK Convert from Charlottesville)
3. Vocation
 - a. If what we say on Sunday doesn't impact your Monday, then we have probably not done what we are supposed to have done (Col. 3.23)
 - b. Plausibility, proclamation of Gospel are diminished and discipleship in the everyday context in which Jesus meant it to impact you and others doesn't happen
 - c. Worship is reduced to a song on a screen rather than a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God with its transformational power producing a renewed mind
4. Joy
 - a. For believers, Joy is the soul-level response to the promise and supernatural movement of God around us

- b. Joy is what He's after in His commands (John 15.11)
- c. Joy is what's attractive to others
- d. Joy of Lord is strength to serve (and continue to) - Jesus for the joy set before Him (Nehemiah 8.10)

Security – 54.10

- We don't expand tents and strengthen stakes because we want to impress God with bigger tents and stronger stakes
- We are loved – therefore we expand our tents and strengthen our stakes

Questions for Discussion

1. What's your most memorable / hilarious family vacation story? Any chance it involved a tent?
2. When it comes to strengthening the stakes that Trent mentioned, which one do you personally need to give the most attention to? Which one do you think our church needs to strengthen the most? Why did you answer the way you did?
3. If you were to speak to a younger person who was new to following Jesus, what's the best advice you could give them about "strengthening the stake" of the Bible? How would you encourage them in their Bible intake? Is there any part of your Bible intake that you need to change or strengthen? What's your first step for doing so?
4. If you sat down from a person who didn't know Jesus tomorrow at lunch, how would you explain the Gospel to him or her? What do you think is the most critical factor that keeps you from sharing the Gospel more? (fear, don't know many lost people, etc.)
5. In light of your vocation, whatever it may be, reread Colossians 3.23. The context is about masters and slaves, but the principles can be analogous to our present-day employer-employee relationships. What is one way that you "work heartily, as for the Lord" right now? What is one step you can take to grow in this area?
6. How would you measure your level of joy right now? What is your greatest hindrance to having greater joy? How have you seen joy be attractive to unbelievers? How have you seen joy strengthen people for work and service?