

GAME CHANGERS

Ps. Waweru Njenga – 30 August 2015

Imagine Me Series

Sermon Notes



Hey Everyone! Great to see you all back in here!

Ndoa launch this coming Thursday

Genesis 12:1-3 (MSG)

God told Abram: "Leave your country, your family, and your father's home for a land that I will show you. I'll make you a great nation and bless you. I'll make you famous; you'll be a blessing. I'll bless those who bless you; those who curse you I'll curse. All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you."

Everyone has a story

A couple of weeks ago I was having a chat with my family about why we are moving from Malawi. We normally will sit down and talk about major family changes before we fully engage. My daughter will be 9 next month. She's been part of this conversations since she was a little girl, but recently they are making more sense because she is growing up and getting attached to people and places. So she asked me one night after I tucked her into bed. "Dad, why do we always have to keep moving?"

Evie and I have had this sense that God has a job for us to do in Africa. That job is to help mend the brokenness in our continent. Interestingly I never really wanted to be a Pastor, but I was stirred to reach my continent. What I found out is that the church is the agent of God's solutions to Africa, and if anything was to be done that was significant to impact these nations, **the church was going to lead it**. So when we said yes, we had no clue the price we would pay to see that dream fulfilled. When we came to Mavuno in 2011, we had been part of a great church that had an incredible vision to reach Africa. The problem was the church had stopped sending out missionaries and leaders to start churches and instead had focused on growing itself into a Mega church. Well, like we said last Sunday, God has no problem allowing a good 'Christian party' to be broken up if there is work to be done to win lost unreached people like he did in Jerusalem. So we came from leading a church and started a journey to help young African's that didn't know, like or want to be in church discover their purpose in Christ. And so in the last 5 years, we moved churches, houses, formed new relationships, learnt a new way of doing ministry, and fund raised to live. We served in 3 different Mavuno campuses within a year, separately at times, while Evie was heavily pregnant during one of those. We first came and lived in Kampala for about 2 months during one of those seasons. We have lived in Kenya, Malawi and back to Uganda in 2 years, been detained at airports, have missed friends life events, been far from family, have been taken advantage of financially, Had Ayden sleep in a suitcase at 5 months while trying to set up house in Malawi, have felt alone and weary and tired and thought of quitting and settling for a 'normal' life. Yet in those times, countless people have become Christ followers, children have come to faith, marriages healed, couples encouraged to join ministry, pastors

encouraged not to quit, churches started, businesses set up, leaders sent out, and purpose found by young lost urbanites.

But it's not just Evie and I that have paid the price to have the stories of other people rewritten. Our very own Church here has been built purely on the sacrifice and devotion of people who year's back saw a church in Kampala reaching Ugandans and turning their lives around for Christ. Our leader Pastor Mureithi and the leadership at our Nairobi campus, began to seriously get churches planted that would impact our generation in African cities like had happened in Nairobi and committed resources and his best leaders to plant those churches in cities like ours. That commitment has cost him dearly, both personally and ministry wise. And many on the leadership team there.

Words would fail me in expressing how Lawrence and Sumeet (Regular businessmen) who formed a Mizizi group, and out of their own pockets funded trips every weekend to come and facilitate and teach Mizizi from Nairobi. How can we forget our beloved Pst Kevin Nderitu. Newly married, yet took up the challenge to start the church here, having to work an incredibly difficult travelling back and forth with his dear wife who was held up by work in Nairobi, yet many of us are here because of his willingness to pay such a personal price. How can we not talk about Pst Vince and his wife Ciiru, who incredibly led our community in those early days, as a single young man, serving tirelessly while planning and getting married smack in the middle of growing our community here. And how about Pastor Njoro, the man himself & Miriam, who God has used to take us to the next level. Growing us, challenging us to serve, moving us to the cinema, and eventually here at KPS. Giving of himself year after year, teaching, leading, while raising a family, sorting out issues and countless other things involved to help have a community like ours. **And not to forget the many of you that have given sacrificially, served tirelessly, prayed endlessly and many times simply asked,** 'Pastor, what can I do? I'm ready and willing' and it's because of these men and women, many of them nameless and faceless. Who some of us may never get to even hear about. Who have paid the price, some incredibly so, that we are here. We are HERE!

Marriages have been healed, hope has been restored, purpose found and lived out, addictions broken, and ministry spread out to many countless people in our city and beyond and continues to do so.

As I look at our story, one thing that strikes me is the amazing sacrifice of the many that have made possible what we are celebrating today. It's clear to me that it's one thing to say you are a fearless follower of Jesus, but being fearless is costly! One of the most influential leaders of all time, Paul of Tarsus, understood what it meant to pay the cost for something he believed in. Unlike what many would imagine, following Jesus had not resulted in an easy life for him! From a human perspective, things actually seemed a lot worse in his life after he started following Christ than before! In **2 Cor. 11:23-28** he described some of the things that had happened in his life because of his decision to obediently follow Jesus...

²⁴ Five different times the Jews gave me thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. ²⁶ I have traveled many weary miles. I have faced danger from flooded rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the stormy seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be Christians but are not. ²⁷ I have lived with weariness and pain and sleepless nights. Often I have

been hungry and thirsty and have gone without food. Often I have shivered with cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.

Paul was describing the challenges he'd faced not because he'd done the wrong things but because he'd chosen to follow Jesus. With a scorecard like that, it would be very hard to blame him for giving up/throwing in the towel! These are more than enough challenges for one person to bear! Even if you picked up just one of the things Paul went through, say, "pelted with stones" or "3 shipwrecks"—I'm not sure how many of us would still want to keep following Jesus after that! I mean we'd be like *'What? God? If this is what serving You means, hasta la vista daddy!'* And yet Paul just kept moving on. **How** did he push through challenges that would have made most of us pack our bags and go home?

Unlike many Christians today, Paul knew that following Jesus does not guarantee that your life will get easier. Being fearless is costly! Many of you know that only too well! You started so well; you came to Mavuno, found amazing acceptance, committed to follow Jesus fully, did Mizizi, and maybe even began to get a sense of your purpose. But then you hit the wall! Life happened! In fact some of you are in trouble right now because of following Jesus – your business isn't growing as fast, your relationship with your spouse is tense, some close friends have abandoned you... and you've found yourself thinking – if I'd known how hard this thing was going to be, I might never have started at all!

But you need to understand, that you will never be everything God created you to be, just by coming to Mavuno – just by saying 'I am fearless!' or just by repeating after the pastor 'this is my year to position myself!' You will face challenges. **2Tim.3:12** says, *'in fact everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted'*! You will face opposition to finishing strong. And you will only make it if you cultivate the perseverance to overcome your opposition. Tell your neighbor, **every great goal requires great sacrifice!**

Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**, *'Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.'*

Ever heard the saying - 'no pain, no gain!' Don't you wish you could just wake up and have a 6 pack? Have some ripped biceps and perfect proportions the more you sleep? But looking good and feeling good takes work! You have to make it regular and sustainable. You wake up and do it when it's fun and when it's not fun. The same is true for anything of godly value. I don't do it because it is fun or easy but because I know that what is gained in the end will be worth the sacrifice. **Every great goal requires great sacrifice!**

It's fashionable nowadays for preachers to focus on the benefits of the gospel but not on the costs. But the result is that people easily get disillusioned when trouble comes. Jesus said in this world you will have trouble but take heart because I have overcome the world! In other words, hang in there -

you will overcome it too! Listen - a pain-free Christianity is a Jesus-free Christianity. **Every great goal requires great sacrifice!**

It always humbles me to realize that everything that's happening here at Mavuno – the incredible growth and transformation and impact we've seen - is as a result of the prayers of those few who prayed, gave, started Mizizi, served and endured incredible challenges while being faithful to God. Because of them, we are all blessed.

... And so, that night I looked at my daughter and said, "As long as there are people who still don't know Jesus, we will keep going."

My question as I end is 'What part will you play in this adventure? What stake will you claim in Mavuno's story? Someone sacrificed for you to be here and blessed today. What are you willing to sacrifice that thousands of others will in turn be blessed? Remember, **every great goal requires great sacrifice!**

After all these years of walking with God and seeing Him at work, I can truly say this...

Start claiming a stake... there are people who gave so you could be here. Tell God I too want to be used as a blessing to others. Because of me and with your help, my family will never be the same. My school/workplace will never be the same. This city will never be the same.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=386auSWaamI>

LET'S PRAY

- for those who've almost given up/found it hard to follow Jesus but encouraged now to press on/persevere
- For those committing to give, serve in ministry here as part of this family (Sign Up for serving)
- for those who've not even began this journey of purpose – focused on the wrong things - want to accept Christ.