

Beyond the Horizon

Week 2

Pastor Mandy Barkhaus

Imagine raising your kids to wake up every morning, look in the mirror and say I am no longer my own. All right. It seems a little bit, opposite of what we actually tell them to say. We tell them to take charge of their lives and to be independent and to make choices and deal with the consequences that they make to chase their dreams.

We tell them to. And we also celebrate self-sufficiency and hard work. We encourage our children in our lives to dream big and to take, charge of their lives and make something for themselves. And yet, the very first line of the Wesleyan covenant prayer shakes all of that up, and it says, I am no longer my own, but yours.

That is the first line of the prayer, and it's a radical statement and a declaration of surrender. Okay, God, here we are. I am no longer my own. Jesus invites us to consider something very similar in Luke chapter nine nine. Verses 23 and 20 through 25 says, Jesus said to everyone, all who want to come after me must say no to themselves.

Take up their cross daily and follow me. He says, all who want to save their lives will lose them, but all those who lose their lives because of me will save them. What advantage do people have if they gain the whole world for themselves, yet perish or lose their lives? So on this Gratitude Sunday, we recognize that the first step of gratitude is recognizing to whom we belong.

Our perspective starts to shift when we acknowledge that our lives and our resource is, and even the very breath in our lungs, our gifts from God. Now, God gave us instructions at the very beginning of the Bible. We read about them, and God gave us instructions that we are to be stewards of all creation. Now stewardship is grounded in gratitude.

Again, we tell our children right. Aren't you thankful for your toys? You should take care of them, right? That's what God is telling us. But stewardship is grounded in gratitude, and it's revealed to us through prayer. And it's lived out in our faith. It's lived out in, in, in our life. So by stewardship, I'm talking about our time and our money and our gifts.

All of those things reflect our faith. Now, this is why Jesus's words in Luke chapter nine verse 23, that's why they're so powerful. Jesus says, all who want to be to come after me, all who want to follow me, right? Everyone who wants to be a follower of Jesus must say no to themselves. And if we're honest, being self-centered is not just a kid thing.

Many adults spend far too much of their lives living that way because we don't like to say no to ourselves. But according to Jesus, true life isn't, it isn't found in gaining more for ourselves. But it's about actually surrendering ourselves to God's purpose and God's mission for the world. Now, this idea of being less self-centered and being more grateful, it connects deeply to the themes that we've been talking about for the last six months or so.

Think about it. We talked about how God multiplies what we surrender, whether it's generosity or faith or time or money. We can cause a ripple effect when we when we give. We talked about the Lord's Prayer. We're part of the pray. The prayer says, give us this day our daily bread. And this is in a demand from God, but rather it's an act of trust.

To God is because God is the one who provides. Then we talked about, recently, we talked about this outward focused mission of ours because if we are no longer our own, then our focus shifts from inward to outward into our families, into our neighbors, to our cities, and to the ends of the earth, so that God's love might be known through us, through our actions as we witness to the ends of the earth.

Now, ultimately, surrendering is not about losing ourselves. It seems like it when we say, okay, I surrender, right, I give in. But surrendering to God is about finding our true identity as followers of Jesus. It's about trading, self-supporting efficiency for a deeper, richer life that's full of trust and gratitude and purpose. It's about finding purpose, both as individuals and collectively as the church.

When we live like we belong to God, we experience true freedom, not fear. And then our our lives begin to overflow with gratitude. Now, our experiences, our own individual life experiences as the ones that we control and the things that we don't control in our lives. Those things shape what we are grateful for. Now, if you have faced a serious illness, you probably have a deeper appreciation for doctors and medications.

If you've struggled with food insecurity, you probably, view and value community food pantries and little free pantries in a little bit different way, right? Our our our experiences shape what we are grateful for. But when we let go of just focusing on ourselves and we truly connect with Jesus and others that Jesus cares deeply about, which is the world, everyone in the world, our gratitude begins to grow more so when we walk alongside others, through their joys, through their hardships, through the things that are happening in their lives.

And we open our hearts up to them, all of a sudden we can find a deeper sense of thankfulness. So I want you to keep that in mind as you listen to this story.

Patricia Delgado

Hello, horizons. My name is Patricia de Lago. I have been attending horizons for about three years. I get the privilege to serve on the steering team and I serve on daily special needs ministry. When my family and I were relocating to Lincoln, we were church searching for a while. Had to visit about 7 or 8 churches before we found horizons.

So there was this weekend and we were searching for an outdoor playground for our daughters of Bella, who was three years old at that time. And when googling for nearby parks, we came across the border park, which is nearby the church here, right on Broome on Drive, and we decided to take our daughter there to play. And on our way we drove by horizons without knowing nothing about it.

That was a church or anything, and when we realized it was a church building, we Google the name and checked out the website and decided to visit. And to me, I felt that I had found the church I was looking for on their very first time here before really welcoming and friendly and really open arms, environment and the sense of community and belonging felt right through me.

I'm grateful for Horizon's dedication and mission to lead our kids in all to Jesus. I see the lifetime impact of children's ministry here at my house. When I see my girls singing praises to Jesus goes beyond words. I grew up in a very small town in southern Brazil, and our church had very limited ministries and resources. I had a brother with special needs, Marcello, who passed away almost 25 years ago.

He is in heaven and did not have the opportunity to attend the special needs ministry at our church. Need to experience using an inclusive playground, and I'm so excited that horizons is launching the Beyond campaign to potentially extend the outreach into the neighborhood and community. My heart goes to those families with kids with special needs that eventually visit Horizon's park, and may experience a sense of belonging and inclusion when bringing their kids to play in the inclusive playground that could be invitational to those families that don't have a home church and feel isolated and disconnected, we have an incredible opportunity to transform the world, starting here in our campus to serve our community.

My hope is that families with kids who have special needs out there in our community feel welcomed and find that sense of belonging and inclusion, and that we connect with those families to leave God's love together. God created us to live in community and united, not isolated. Thank you. Horizons for supporting my faith journey. So church, we will you step out in faith with me.

Pastor Mandy

Patricia's life experiences give her the passion and her purpose in life. It's why she's committed to supporting not only the beyond campaign, but, she has a very special place in our in our wave ministry. And I know that many families are so thankful that their child has an opportunity to be a part of the special needs ministry here.

And I would just want to say, if you if you have a passion for working with kids with special needs, two of our very awesome, dedicated, wave volunteer leaders, they actually have a job, job transfer and and moved last weekend to Casey. So if you are passionate about working with special, kids with special needs, please let us know and we'll tell you more.

Patricia's story is now our story. That's that story, her story and the story of of others, those that we haven't even met yet is what our beyond campaign is all about. And when we share our stories and give ourselves to God, we begin to think about what if. What if surrendering me means that I get to be a part of what God is doing?

Now, I want to share a little bit of my story and how gratitude toward God has changed my life. So Tom and I, we don't have little kids anymore. Many of you have never even met our sons because they live in in different cities. But for about ten years, both Tom and I worked in a church when our kids were growing up.

So everyone knew our kids, they knew the good sides of our kids, and they knew, you know, the other side of our kids. So it's kind of weird for us for for you guys not to know our our kids. I mean, our church family. You guys are our church family. So I remember one time when our kids were little and the lead pastor that I served under at the time, he witnessed, one of my young children have this major meltdown, like a major meltdown.

I couldn't get him into the building. He's running from me. He's screaming like I'm on the verge of of screaming. But I also wanted to cry. Right? I was embarrassed, like, had all the emotions. You've you know it, right? You've experienced it or you've seen this before. And I remember later on in that day, it was hours later after this happened, this pastor that I served under, he said, hey, you're a really good mother and kind of walked out of my office.

Now, this pastor, was not always really quick to say kind of those kind of words. But I really I remember that moment so well, I felt supported and loved, and I felt like, okay, I can keep doing this mothering thing, even though I felt like I didn't have it all figured out. And I think back to that moment and how thankful I was that he said something.

And I and I think back to that moment now, this pastor was old, right? And I think I didn't know his kids either. Right? They were grown and they lived in different parts of the world. But now Tom and I are the old ones. Right now we get to support the parents of the next generation. Like that's what the church is about.

And so my gratefulness for the church goes beyond my children. So I know many of you don't have children. So maybe you're like, I can't relate to this, but I can tell you just as many more stories about how that my church family was, was here for for me personally. So supporting the church with our finances was just, is really important to, to us.

It's always been something we've done since the since we were very first, first married. We always gave to the church, but for different reasons over the years. When we were first married, we gave to the church because that's what our parents did. And and we gave because we were supposed to. We thought. And so back then, our strategy for giving was pretty simple.

Whatever was left over at the end of the month is what we gave. And that's after bills and after all of our needs were met. And then most of our wants. Right. And then, and then we gave, you know, what was left. It wasn't much. And then we started pledging during the general campaign, the annual stewardship campaign that came up.

And we started pledging. So our amount increased a little bit and our consistency certainly increased a little bit. And we slowly started increasing what we were giving, working on our way to tithing or giving 10% of our income. Now, somewhere along the way, it wasn't just the amount that changed it was the mean, the meaning behind why we were giving.

Tom and I struggled, for quite a few years through some really tough things in our marriage. We almost gave up. We almost didn't make it, but we decided to explore God's forgiveness together. We were both on the same page, and we wanted to see what God's forgiveness could look like in our marriage. And we came out, thankfully, very much stronger on the other side.

And so giving tithing to the church became something we were excited about because we were so, so very thankful for what God did in our family. And we think, what if more people could experience God's love and forgiveness and grace? What if more people could experience the church? So now, we continue to give ties to the general fund every month.

We also support a little extra to project Hope and another organization we love. But now we knew that this beyond campaign was starting up and we had to decide, okay, how much are we going to give to that? So Tom and I use a very sophisticated method for, making big financial decisions. Like, you know, when we're choosing how much to give to a major church campaign versus going on an extravagant, extravagant, vacation.

So what we do is this we count to three, we both get a number in our head, we count to three, and then one, two, three. We both say the number out loud. We do it almost for every decision, right? This is what we do. We like to play games. So for the beyond campaign

we're like, okay, over the next three years, how much are we going to give to the beyond campaign?

One, two, three we blurted out the numbers 8007 thousand, and we high fived each other because, hey, we thought, that's a pretty good amount. Plus, we're really close. We're really similar. Sometimes we're way, way far, far farther apart. And so we were like, we were excited for that. But we decided to pray and decided to look at our budget, and we decided to really consider what this beyond campaign was all about and what it means for to us, to be a part of it.

So the more we thought about it, the more we realized how much the church has shaped us. It has helped us raise our kids. It has helped us grow and deepen our faith. It has given us friendships and community, that still surrounds us today. And we also believe that the church is making a real impact, not just on our lives, but on the lives of others and in the city and even all the way around the world.

So Tom and I, we regrouped, we we looked again at our budget, we continue to pray, and we landed on \$20,000, to, committing to the beyond campaign, above our regular tithe to the general fund. And I'm saying this, that's not an easy number for us. This is not, this is this is a sacrifice for us.

And there are some things that we will have to give up because of this. But because we thought, you know, what about kids like Marcelo, Patricia's brother, kids who deserve to have, a place where they feel included. And we thought about a church where every person, young and old and, is welcomed and loved and feels like they belong.

Now, if you decide to make a commitment to the beyond campaign, your number is going to look different than our number. And it's not about the number, right? Your situation is different than our situation. It is not about the number. It's actually so much more than that. It's about people's lives transformed by Jesus. So whether, it's this decision, to, to support the beyond campaign or any other aspect of your life, what does it look like to say no to yourself?

What does it look like to take up this cross that Jesus is asking us to take up? And when we think about that, I invite you to to consider, these questions. What is God done in your life and what my God do next through you? Now, I think about this, often I wonder if we if we ask from God more than we thank God, right?

Have we thanked God more than we asked of God? And I think that I'm constantly asking for for the protection of my children and for my church family and for my parents and all of these things. And of course, I'm I say, prayers of of gratitude and thankfulness. But I'm like, I wonder which is actually more in my life.

There's this concept called, *Diane, you* and *Diane, you* is a Hebrew word, and it means enough. Or it would have been enough. And it's a song in the Jewish tradition where it's sung during Passover, and it's a song of gratitude. The song is they are thinking about they are expressing gratitude for all the things that God has done for the Israelite Israelites along the way.

And the song goes something like this. This if God brought us out of Egypt, it would have been enough. If God parted the Red sea, it would have been enough. If God provided for us in the wilderness, it would have been enough. Right in the song goes on and on. And we can apply this to our own lives, right?

If if God had had. If only the thing, the only thing God gave me was wonderful, faithful parents, that would have been enough. But yet God continued to bless, to bless me. Now, all throughout Scripture there are poems in, Scripture about thankfulness to God, right? Giving praise and gratitude to God. First Chronicles chapter 16 says this sing to the Lord all the earth.

Share the news of his saving work every single day. Declare God's work God's glory among the nations. Declare his wondrous works among all people, because the Lord is great and so worthy of praise. He is awesome beyond all other gods, because all the gods of the nations are just idols. But it is the Lord who created heaven. Greatness and grandeur are in front of him.

Strength and joy are in his place. Give to the Lord all families of the nations. Give to the Lord glory and power. Give to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring gifts. Enter his presence. Bow down to the Lord in his holy splendor. Give thanks to the Lord because he is good, because his faithful love endures forever.

Gratitude means action. In this passage, it talks about the responses, sharing and singing and declaring and giving and bringing gifts and bowing down right action. And so today we are going to take action and be thankful. Being thankful is something every single person can do, young and old. In fact, we have asked, you guys all have triangles on your seat, but we have asked our, our, kids in the DZ and fusion arise to to write down what they are thankful for.

The last couple weeks we did that. So you'll see this, picture here up front with different triangles. They have yellow and orange triangles, and you'll see what they are thankful for. I read some of them, there's thankful there's there's a lot of kids who are thankful for donuts. I mean, there are pictures of donuts. The word donut, it's like it's yours.

You come up here, you will spot the donuts. There are kids who are thankful for their friends. Their kids are thankful for their teachers and family and friends. One one kid wrote,

baby God. And I don't know if it's like they're thankful for baby and God or they're thankful for baby God. I don't know. Either way, it's it's adorable.

So in a moment, I'm going to ask you to, to write what you're thankful for on this, this triangle, on this symbol that we are going to bring forward. And if you're watching with us online, you can text, the number 5125700. And you can text what you're thankful for. And there should be pens on the back of the chairs in a, in the triangle.

I am grateful for the church staff. I am grateful for this church community's outward focus. I think it is so incredible. So as you are thinking about that, I'm going to say a quick prayer and then I'm going to just invite you to come forward. Gracious God, we pause to give you thanks. God, you have blessed us over and over and over again as people of faith and as individuals.

And we pause to say thank you. We're going to we're going to lay these at the altar. We're going to say, God, you are good. You are great. You are holy. You are with us. You are guiding us. You are the light of the world. So God bless all of the things, these things that we write down and the things that can't fit on this triangle.

God, we give you thanks and praise. In the name of Jesus. Amen. So as you come forward, as you finish, you can put them in the little pots or the little baskets on the tables, and just come up forward and, give, give thanks to God.

Mary Kinning

Good morning. Horizons. I am Mary Kinning, and this is Chris Burger. And we are the Beyond the Horizon Capital campaign chairs. We have had a wonderful team of 23 volunteer leaders that have been working on this campaign for several months, plus many other teams at horizon has also also been helping in the background. Just prepare for this the Beyond the Horizon campaign.

It's a generosity campaign over and above your regular giving to the general fund. It's a three year commitment you can give towards this commitment over the course of 36 months, which runs from May of 2025 through May of 2028.

There are three different benchmarks that this campaign may reach. The steering team is committed to completing the projects that correspond with the level of commitments that we receive during this period of time.

The first benchmark is called the ground level. This benchmark is set at \$1 million and includes resurfacing our entire parking lot, replacing which sounds like that may start soon. Hopefully, and replacing all of the building's 20 year old Hvac systems. There is also an

automatic electronic accessible door button for the front door that is going to be added, and a few small cement repairs.

And I'm excited to say that that project has been funded due to a grant that we received. So that's really awesome. And then we have the missional space. And that's going to be so cool with more inclusive playground equipment and surfacing the front field

and all of that's exciting. We have two other levels that we're going to be, trying to hit.

Chris Burger

So the next level is going to be the 1.3 million level, which is going to be the horizons benchmark. So this is going to include everything that Mary mentioned, but it's also going to include, replacing a bunch of speakers in here. So these speakers that you're hearing stuff on are 20 years old. And Brian is clapping behind me because he's really excited at the prospect of that.

It's also going to include some worship center lighting and stage upgrades. It's going to include a children and youth wall raps, similar to the one that you see out in the atrium. And then it's also going to include some, some reserves for, the building and property. The third level or. Sorry. It also is going to include additional landscaping, for the inclusive playground, a walking path, and then adding a picnic shelter and picnic tables and benches.

The biggest level that we can reach is going to be 1.6. And this is it's it's going to be a big reach to hit this 1.6. But if we do, it includes everything else that we talked about. And then it's going to have the big one which is the atrium flooring, that atrium flooring. And then the flooring in here is exactly as old as the building is.

And carpet in some of these places would help a lot with the sound as well as the speakers, which would be fantastic. It's also get include, additional kitchen appliances, window blinds, security cameras, and then also some electrical additions to the outdoor and the Bob area. You know, let's keep going. Here you go. All right, so, we've been at work with this and having early conversations with families and with this, you know, we had the 1,000,001.3 and 1.6 and with just, commitments, commitments from 11 families.

We are already at \$425,000. So we are we are well on the way to this project, but we are going to be asking for commitments from you all for this project to get this started. The other thing is because that number is already so high. We are going to be starting work on the parking lot like, I talked to Derek about this on Friday and he said like, maybe this week.

So if you come next week and there's already work happening on the parking lot, that is is exactly what's going on here. So we can't wait to see what happens as we go beyond the

horizon. If you have any questions during this. Just go ahead and reach out to me and Mary. Talk to Mandy, talk to the staff.

Everybody here can answer questions for it. So we just thank you very much for this and are excited for where this is going.