

## **Unleashing a Prophetic Imagination**

Let us enter the text  
Ephesians 1 (read aloud)

I spent the past few days w/ Jerome Mammen (Area Director in Orange County, CA)

We took our families to Disney Land  
Our little ones talk non-stop  
Together, they had running commentary on our whole life  
Especially as we were with our families at Disney Land.  
They were so excited and talking sooo much!

Paul reminds me of our little kids  
Paul is pretty excited. Check out all of his run-on sentences!  
Use a period. Geez, Paul.  
Stand to read the text  
Pray and be seated

### **INTRODUCTION**

Our topic is "Unleashing a Prophetic Imagination"

#### **"Prophetic"**

Depending on your church tradition, you may have various interpretations on the word, "Prophetic".

I am pentecostal. Prophetic, prophecy, prophets... it can cause me to shudder. I think of being called out in public, the creepy end-times, and being left behind. I thought I was "left behind" on avg about twice a year... that was usually a good year.

Any time a "prophet" came to my house, I got a tad scared...

Yet having said all that rather humorously, let me be serious.

#### **Tonight I do believe that the Prophetic will happen:**

1. Individually - tonight there will be divinely inspired truth/encouragement for you
2. Corporately - tonight there will a word of knowledge regarding the future of our AA movement
3. Cosmically - tonight there will be a deeper revelation of His plan to renew all things

Let us be in eager expectation to hear from the Lord.

## "Imagination"

This is a rich chapter, and I must bring **all of myself to this text, my heart, my imagination**

1. As a musician, I hear the overture of His Symphony
2. As an engineer, I see the grand schematic of His Will
3. As a movement leader, I read the manifesto of His Kingdom

**I am inspired on all levels.** I am honored to preach from this text.

Tonight, I hope you hear it, see it, read it, feel it...

Our triune God... the awesome splendor, the majesty, of our God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... diversity and unity.

It is this divine community that is at work in us, around us, and through us

Tonight's road map is simple!

1. The Father
2. The Son
3. The Spirit
4. The Prayer for this conf/lives

## **GOD, THE FATHER (v. 3-6)**

1. *The Father has blessed us... w/ spiritual blessings*
2. *The Father has a plan*

*Words like*

*"chose us, predestined, adopted, according to the purpose of His will..."*

You are not a mistake, this is not happen-stance

This is not time + matter + chance... but this is planned. -- Ravi Zacharias

This is ordained. This is pre-destined.

Yes, I said "pre-destined" -- don't get super theological on me!

No matter what stream of church you hail, we can all agree on one thing

Our God is not taken by surprise.

Our God has a plan for you, me, our community, the universe.

To some this is comforting, to some this is frightening.

**I guess it depends on your relationship with the father.**

Son, I can't wait to see you come home from college, I've got big plans.

Son, I have rec'd your grades from this past semester, come home, I have a plan... someone is going to get beat... someone!

**It depends on your relationship with the father.**

**Let's pause. Some of you may have to do some business with the Father.**

You do not believe that HE has a good plan for you.

I encourage you to lean into this tension. God is good. His plans are good.

God has a plan, and He has spiritual blessings for us.

**Sovereign foundations was a new idea** - I first heard about it at Daniel Project.

Paul Tokanaga and Nikki Toyama-Sietzo, James Choung, and others

SO I started to dig into my past to see what God was up to before I was born.

Did He really have a plan?

My Appachen (Grandfather) was a church planter in South India

My mom itinerated with my Appachen and it was a difficult life

My mom often recalls with tears in her eyes... of nights of being hungry, sleeping

My Appachen would tighten his belt, and give his left over rice to my Mom

Yeah, we didn't have many earthly blessings, but we were rich in spiritual blessings

Father was a UESI staff worker in North India

UESI is the IFES work in India... uhh, what are the chances of that?!

Now, here I am... planting IV chapters in North Texas

God knows what He is doing... This, right here, right now, is not a surprise... it is His Sovereign purpose, He is setting it up...

I remember hearing at the last AASC that the AA movement started with about 7 AA staff

At the time, all the SA staff looked at each other and saw 7 of us gathered around one table at AASC

We all smiled... Haha, We knew God had a plan!

There are over 500 students involved in the movement, close to 20 staff, and multiple chapters in the nation... ya'll we just getting started. Why? Because God has a plan.

To my brothers/sisters in the Kapwa movement, I know **God has a plan for you** I pray that the upcoming Kapwa Leadership Institute sparks revival in this new generation of Filipino students -- I pray that it is unparalleled and unprecedented... I pray that you will truly become the premier para-church ministry reaching Filipinos... why can I say that? BECAUSE GOD HAS A PLAN!

My brothers/sisters reaching Southeast Asians, Hmong students, Do not give up... because **God has a plan**. There are students still to be reached on every

corner of our campus...! The Father's heart breaks for them, and He longs to give them EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING.

To all of us,  
God sees your work among AAs -- ethnic specific ministry is in His Plan  
He sees you incarnating among non-AAs -- ethnic general ministry is in His Plan  
He sees you moving to obscure parts of the country w/o community, w/o friends like you...  
He sees you wonder about your future longings, ambitions, and hopes...

My friend, God knows... He sees... He will provide.  
Like God showed Abraham in the midst of his suffering and sacrifice... w/ Issac. Jehovah Jireh... on the mount of God it shall be provided.  
He gives us spiritual blessings...  
He has a plan.

### **GOD, THE SON (v. 7-12)**

1. *Jesus has provided forgiveness*
2. *Jesus has revealed God's Will*

*Word like*

*"redemption, forgiveness, mystery of His will, Unite all things in Jesus, inheritance..."*

The power of the Gospel, we have nothing if we don't have the cross

Friends, we have been reconciled. Forgiven. Redeemed.  
What an amazing work that has been accomplished by God himself.

~~It is much like dying for a 2-dimensional painting...~~  
~~Entering into it, feeling the constraints of 2 dimensions...~~  
~~Feeling their loss and brokenness, and then letting the people you painted kill you...~~  
~~Why? You are so much greater, more awesome, and majestic than these creatures~~  
~~Yet, you humble yourself to save these 2D drawings.~~

It is lavish. It is over the top. It is the Gospel. It is LOVE.

My friends,  
We can plant chapters  
We can see conversions

We can conceive new strategies  
We can form new vocabulary  
We can nuance our nuances, then nuance them again...

But we must never forget the cross!!  
We cannot forget the empty tomb.  
God's redemptive plan is crucial!  
The Gospel has power... not us, not our organization

I know this may sound old school, but if we don't have the cross, we are fools  
Our profession, our organization, our vision means nothing... we are utter fools  
We need the cross and the empty tomb!

Jesus and the bloody cross can never be explained away...  
It is the mystery of the Father's Will being revealed to us...  
Jesus, His suffering, His death, His sacrifice... His blood. It is central to who we are...

This sacrifice is going to help us as we seek to establish ethnic general/specific ministries  
My friends, We want more Asian Americans, yes!  
But we want more of other ethnicities...  
Here is what I believe the Lord wants to say to us as a corporate body...

**We, as AAs, will have to suffer, sacrifice to see more students reached with the Gospel.**

Racial Reconciliation and Justice are not theories...  
They are words that have been bought at a price... Jesus blood...  
It is brought to us by the cross...

There is going to be instances in our near future, in which we will have to bear the cross for the rest of the movement...  
Yes, I believe that we will sacrifice/suffer in order to see White, Latino, Black students, etc. reached with the Gospel... this is sobering, but I believe it is what is before us.  
We will be misunderstood, we will have to stand for others and be ridiculed  
In order to reach all of the campus, we must be ready to bear the cross

To my SA brothers and sisters, God may be calling you to enter cross-cultural contexts that will be uncomfortable, costly, and difficult for the sake of the Gospel... we cannot succumb to unhealthy ethnocentric behaviors... we MUST

consider our brothers and sisters around the movement.

You see, Christ's death, His suffering reveals to us God's Will....

it encourages us, it empowers us to move forward

We are strengthened because there is life, resurrection, renewal in our suffering

Resurrection follows this "God-like" suffering

If that is the case, then Resurrection is soon to follow in all of these communities...

Perhaps, we don't need more growth strategies...

We need to bear the cross, and follow Jesus' example to reach the least of these -- whatever the cost...

If so, resurrection is on the way!

My friend, ponder where you would be without His sacrifice (and victory)...

Thank you, Jesus...

### **GOD, THE SPIRIT (v. 13-14)**

*1. The Spirit has sealed us,*

*Words like,*

*"sealed with a promise, guarantee of inheritance"*

The Spirit of God is our "brand"

In Texas, we seal our cattle, we BRAND them

In Cali, maybe you guys... uh, wear your BRANDS on your clothes, purses, etc.

Either way, you are signed, marked, sealed, branded...

**Many of us tease InterVarsity because we don't have a strong brand.**

What are we known for? What is our brand?

We are people of the Word?

We are... Urbana?

We are kinda like CRU... but different?

We are diverse? We are about the university?

We are forward thinking? We are intelligent...?

InterVarsity... EVERYTHING MATTERS....??

Yes, we are all of these things!

**OR, perhaps it is not that we don't have strong brand...**

**Maybe as AAs, we care too much about brand.**

The AA movement is polished, put-together, and pleasant

We know how to make things nice...

We are the pretty part of the InterVarsity movement

**It is not a bad thing... but it is not the best thing...**

However, I'd rather be marked by another brand... a different kind of seal.  
**What if we were a people marked, sealed... branded by the Spirit of God!**  
Don't let me stay here for too long, because my Pentecostal is gonna come out.

Friends, let the Spirit of God not be contained on our campuses...  
Let Him do His work among us!  
Let us get good news out to the poor...  
Let us bind up the brokenhearted...  
Let us proclaim liberty to the captives...  
Because the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord has come upon us as promised by The Son!  
This is our brand. This is going to happen.

God's Spirit is the spirit of mission!

Jason Philipose (BCM staff at University of Texas, Austin).  
Hearing stories of brokenness, and how his heart breaks for them  
JP can come up with tons of strategies, but one word from the Lord...  
That's right... just one word from God through His Spirit

At the student Union in front of the Wendy's...  
Bow your head to pray...  
One WORD FROM GOD's SPIRIT!!...  
Darkness is pierced by light  
Bondages are broken  
Bitterness loses its grip  
Years of aggression melt away

Yes, we need strategies.

But...

**Strategy does not trump the Spirit**  
**Strategy comes to life by the Spirit**

It is the sign, seal of the Holy Spirit. It is the power of God.

By the POWER of the Holy Spirit,  
I believe that Hindus and Muslims will be reached by a compelling  
contextualized Gospel  
I believe that we will raise up the next generation of leaders that will rock the  
global Church

I believe that we will see God renew our US culture through the university campus.

Not because we have a good brand,  
but because of the power that RAISED JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD...

That very same power resides in each of us, because it is  
THE PLAN OF THE FATHER  
REVEALED TO US THROUGH THE SON  
AND SEALED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

### **OPEN YOUR EYES (v. 15-23)**

*This is Paul's prayer...  
It is my prayer for us...*

*Phrases like,*

1. *Know the hope to which He has called you*
2. *Experience the riches of His inheritance*
3. *Encounter the power of the resurrection*

I pray that a vision about hope, riches, and the power of God bursts into full imagination

I hope that the prophetic will take shape in your hearts and be unleashed on campus

My friends, dream big... let His love/power be displayed for all campuses, and finally all nations

### **CONCLUSION:**

*"...according to the working of his great might **20** that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. **22** And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things..."*

Jesus is it!

He has done it.

It has been accomplished.

The symphony progresses and crescendos to the finale

The schematic shows that the design is flawless and ready to come to life

The manifesto orders us to move forward in eager anticipation of the Kingdom

**Imagine with me as InterVarsity takes part in the overall work of God's renewal.**

God's plan for the universe, His cosmic plan has room for us to play a part!  
As we continue to see students transformed of every ethnicity and background,  
including AAs

As we see campuses renewed, even in the midst of access issues  
As we see world changers graduate every semester, with amazing life  
trajectories...

**God's plan is signed, sealed, and delivered. You can take it to the bank.**  
I've read the end of the story... the Kingdom wins.

Let this sink in...

The next time you walk on campus...

The next time you setup a proxie station...

The next time you have to sacrifice for the sake of the mission...

The fight is fixed... Jesus wins.

The fairy tale is written... there will be a wedding on the other shore.

When we arrive and the wedding bells ring

His bride will come together... and we'll sing... "Jesus, You are beautiful..."

The last note of this symphony resounds "Jesus"

The central part of this schematic says "Jesus"

The manifesto declares but only one King, and his name is "Jesus"

My friends,

The Father has a plan.

The Son has revealed it.

The Spirit of God has sealed it.

Open your eyes!

It is signed, sealed, and delivered.

The Kingdom wins. Go out in power from this place.

Unleash a Prophetic Imagination.

Arul Karunanidhi (Team Leader at USF Orlando, FL) says it best,  
"Let's do some damage for the Kingdom, bro."

Let's Pray.

