



**CROSSPOINTE
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Study Overview

Mission of CrossPointe

Pointing our communities to Jesus

What do we mean by pointing? We mean knowing Jesus and making him known.

- Does someone know the story of God?
- Can that person connect his or her own story to the story of God?
- Can he or she connect someone else's story to the story of God?

Vision of CrossPointe

To see our communities informed and transformed by the power of the gospel for the glory of God

Our vision is what we see happening as our mission bears fruit in our communities. To be informed is to look to Christ and his gospel. To be transformed is to believe in him such that it changes who we are and the way that we live. This vision works from the smaller to the greater. That is, the informing and transforming begins early in the morning as we preach the gospel to our own hearts. It then moves into our households and into our relationships, into our Community Groups and our workplaces, into our neighborhoods and our congregation.

Gospel Rhythms

As the gospel continues to work in us, we believe that it will radically transform the contours and fabric of our lives individually, communally and culturally. We will seek together to live lives of Celebration, Connection, Community, and Contribution as the gospel works in and through us in every facet of our lives.



Contested Space

We need to ask ourselves: What will be the cultural challenges to living these rhythms out? If the goal is to become disciples who make disciples, then what are the dominant narratives we will be warring against?

Fundamental to making disciples is a recognition that everyone, everywhere is being disciplined. The question isn't "are you a disciple?" but rather, "who are you a disciple of?" Put another way, everyone is a disciple of a particular vision of the good life.

As followers of Jesus, we want to take our cues from how he describes the good life instead of how the culture would describe it. The tension between these competing visions of the good life and the narratives surrounding them is the "contested space" in which we are called to make disciples and the space we are to inhabit.

We need a Movement of Grace

We have attempted to frame discipleship in our context as a movement of grace. It's a movement from one place to another; similar to the way Jesus says we move from darkness to light, or from death to life. Since death to life is a clear binary, perhaps the picture of darkness to light is best for illustration purposes, because it's often progressive in how it plays out.

As you watch a sunrise, it's clear that you are still in darkness before the sun creeps over the horizon. However, at some point light begins to break through, though it is still considered dark outside. But, eventually, there does come a moment when the dawn has broken and the darkness has been dispelled. When this precisely happened isn't always clear, but you do know when you can see.

When we live our lives with anything other than the gospel at the center we will live in darkness, suppressing the truth of God. We will easily be distracted by the pursuit of false promises of meaning and purpose. We will live isolated from one another. We will continually consume the things of the world in a vain attempt at satisfaction and fulfillment. As we behold God for who he really is, his grace frees us from this bondage and invites us to true life. A life of celebrating God. A life in connection with God. A life of full relationships and community. A life of contribution through being and making disciples of Jesus.

This discipleship guide sees that much of discipleship is a movement in the midst of the following contested spaces: from suppression to celebration, from distraction to connection, from isolation to community, from consumption to contribution.



Study 1: Pointing our Communities to Jesus

Read: Acts 1:1-11

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." – Acts 1:8

Overview

The book of Acts reveals the forming of the church as Jesus "presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking to them about the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). When Jesus appeared, he not only taught his disciples about the kingdom of God; he shared with his followers their role in the kingdom of God. He said, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Matthew 28:18-20 also takes place after Jesus' resurrection and sums up this call for his followers to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." The purpose of the church is to make disciples of Jesus. At CrossPointe, we communicate this through our mission of **pointing our communities to Jesus**.

Our vision **to see our communities informed and transformed by the power of the gospel for the glory of God** is what we see happening as the mission bears fruit in our communities. We all live in particular places and at a particular time. This place and time is not neutral; it is contested. There are competing visions of what Jesus says is the good life and what the culture says is the good life. It is in this contested space that we are called to make disciples.

We are part of the great vision Jesus has to empower his disciples to be witnesses, to point people to him, to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8). This starts in your heart and moves outward into your life, your family, your home, your street, your community, your workplace, your school, any area and relationship God has placed you in, and ultimately to the ends of the earth.

Over the next five weeks, we will explore how we are seeking to point one another and our communities to Jesus in our particular context. We will seek to move from suppression to CELEBRATION. From distraction to CONNECTION. From isolation to COMMUNITY. From consumption to CONTRIBUTION. And we will seek to do it as CROSSPOINTE**TOGETHER**. Join us!



Message notes and application

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

Passage questions

1. Acts 1:1 says that the “first book” (the Gospel of Luke) dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up (his resurrection). What do the Gospels teach about who Jesus is and what he accomplished? (see Matthew 4:23-35; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:16-21; John 3:16-17; John 20:30)

2. How does the good news of the gospel – that Jesus suffered and died on the cross to take the penalty for our sin, and then presented himself alive (v. 3) – inform our lives (your identity, your hope, what you live for)?



3. Jesus spoke to his disciples “about the kingdom of God” (v. 3) and calls his disciples to live according to the kingdom of God through “observing all that I have commanded” (Matthew 28:19). Scan through the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 and also think about what you know from the Gospels.

What does it look like to live according to the kingdom of God and for God’s glory today?

4. How does the gospel allow you to move from a cultural vision of the good life to Jesus’ vision of the good life in his kingdom:

From suppression (of truth) to Celebration (of truth)?
From distraction to Connection?
From isolation to Community
From consumption to Contribution?

5. According to verse 8, what do we see is the result of the good life Jesus calls us to, and who gives us the power and ability to do it?

Where has God placed you, and what would it look like practically to point others to (be a witness of) Jesus there?

As you go...

- Take time to contemplate Jesus suffering on your behalf and his resurrection and bringing of new life through his Spirit. Write down praise to God for it.
- Pay attention to your culture this week (conversations people have, news, what people do). What is the alternative view of the good life that people are seeking? How does Jesus offer a better life?
- As a group, dream what it could look like for your communities to be informed and transformed by the gospel. How can you live like Christ and point people to Jesus in these places?



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Prayer

Father, we thank you for your great plan of salvation and the beauty of life in your kingdom. Jesus, we thank you for your obedient life and sacrificial death on our behalf. Holy Spirit, we thank you for empowering not only Jesus, but empowering us as well. We pray that as we are informed more and more by you, O God, we will be transformed more and more into your image. And as we are transformed as individuals and as a community of followers, we will go out into all the world and be witnesses of your good news and point people to Jesus.

Prayer requests



Study 2: Move from Suppression to CELEBRATION

Read: Acts 2:1-36

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." – Acts 2:36

CELEBRATION RHYTHM: In response to the gospel, we will be a people who sing of the grace, goodness, and glory of God. The Celebration Rhythm is all about the story of God. The story of God is the story that informs and transforms every other story. When we know the story of God well, we are able to share how our stories make sense in light of God's story and how our stories are redeemed by his. Celebrations throughout the Bible were designed by God so that his people would be reminded of his grace, goodness, and glory (Leviticus 23; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25). If we truly understand and believe the gospel, we should be the most celebratory people on the planet.

Overview

It is clear from the scriptures that we are not spiritually neutral. If we are not celebrating the truth of God's story then we are suppressing the truth. We desire to help people move from suppressing truth into a full-blown celebration of God's truth.

Life is ultimately about worship, and when we suppress the truth we end up worshipping lesser things. This is what Paul speaks of in Romans 1:18 when he says, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."* It should be noted that it's not just unbelievers who suppress the truth, but also Christians anytime we choose to ignore God's clear calling on our lives and instead do what we want to do. All of our idolatry is ultimately a suppression of the truth.

In Acts chapter 2, we see Jesus' disciples together on the day of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit came upon them (v. 4) and they began to speak and tell of the "mighty works of God" (v. 11). They celebrated, proclaimed the truth revealed through God's ultimate story, and were singing of his grace, goodness, and glory. This caused some to be amazed, some to be confused, and some to mock (vv. 12-13).

The same Peter who, only weeks prior, had denied Jesus to a little girl (Mark 14:66-72) stood up and boldly declared the story of God to the crowd. He reminded them of the story of God and his promises to be with his people (v. 17) and to bring salvation to those who call on his name (v. 21). He reveals that it is through the gospel, through the person and work of Jesus (vv. 22-24), that God would fulfill this promise of new life with him. He proclaims the good news that Jesus is both savior (Christ) and Lord (v. 36). Peter had moved from suppression to celebration after encountering the risen Lord! It is this good news that we celebrate. It is this good news that we declare in our lives our communities.



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Message notes and application

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

Passage questions

1. What are things that you celebrate? What does the culture you live in celebrate?

2. What did the followers of Jesus speak of (v. 11) after being empowered by the Holy Spirit (v. 4)? What is the significance of some being amazed and others mocking (vv. 12-13)?



3. Where have you recently experienced “the mighty works of God” through his Spirit in your life?

How can you respond with a life that sings of the grace, goodness, and glory of God?

4. What can we learn from how Peter addressed the people (vv. 17-21) and their questions about what God was doing (vv. 14-15)?

What are the main questions people in your culture are asking about life, and how can the story of God answer them? Where do people “suppress the truth” (Romans 1:18)?

5. Peter preaches the gospel, God’s story, the good news of Jesus’ birth/life (v. 22), death for our sins (v. 23), and resurrection/reign (vv. 24-36). How does this cause us to celebrate?

As you go...

- How do people in your culture suppress the truth of God? How can you help them (and yourself) move from suppressing who God is to celebrating who God is (like Peter in vv. 17-21)?
- What avenues/plans do you have to engage in God’s word personally and with others?
- Do you know and believe that Jesus is both Lord and Christ (savior) (v. 36)? How can you remind yourself of the freedom that brings and celebrate daily?



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Prayer

God, we thank you that you have revealed yourself and your story so clearly to us through your creation, your word, and your son Jesus Christ. Who you are and what you have accomplished to rescue us from our sin cause us to celebrate your grace, glory, and goodness. While we know this, we confess we functionally suppress the truth of who you are and what you promise and chase lesser things. This idolatry and sin is what Jesus ultimately was crucified for and delivered us from. We praise you and thank you. Empower us through the power of your Holy Spirit to live lives of joy and celebration in light of your story and who you are.

Prayer requests



Study 3: Move from Distraction to CONNECTION

Read: Acts 2:37-41

"Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" – Acts 2:37-38

CONNECTION RHYTHM: In response to the gospel, we will live in such a way that we connect the story of people's lives to the ultimate story of the gospel. Connection (contextualization) is adjusting the way we declare and demonstrate the gospel in culturally adaptable forms, while always holding to a biblically faithful gospel. Jesus beautifully demonstrated a life of connection when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Overview

The average Christian in our church would unequivocally say they desire for their story to connect with God's story, but why do we so often fall short? Distraction.

There are too many things vying for our time and attention that, in and of themselves, are not bad things. But we allow them to keep us from connecting with God. It is easier to be distracted, because we are often afraid of what we might find out about our hearts if we start allowing God, through his word, to examine our hearts and lives. Our affluence and access affords much opportunity for distraction. Again, the distraction usually takes the form of a good gift in which we over indulge. We then wonder why we aren't feeling close to God. Practically, we have to repent of idolatry. We have to identify what things have become a distraction and then walk toward greater connection with God.

This is what is happening in Acts 2:37-41. Peter preaches the good news of who Jesus is and what he has accomplished (vv. 22-36). He then connects their story to God's story. They realize that it was their rebellion, their sin, their seeking lesser things (and ours) that caused the death of Jesus (vv. 23, 36). Jesus had to die for them. But that Jesus was both Lord and Christ (v. 36). That Jesus was glad to die for them. It says God's Spirit "cut to the heart" (v. 37). Their only response was to ask "what shall we do?" (v. 37). Peter tells them to repent, to turn from their sin and seeking of lesser things to Jesus for forgiveness of sins and the power of the Holy Spirit to seek God and his ways. About 3,000 do and become Christians (v. 41)!

It is through God's word and the power of the Holy Spirit that we can have our stories connected to God's story (vv. 39-41). It is in knowing the grace, goodness, and glory of God that we will stop being distracted by everyone and everything (see Luke 8:9-15 & 10:38-42) and move to a life of true connection with God and others.



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Message notes and application

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

Passage questions

1. What are things that you tend to easily get distracted by? What do people in your community get distracted by?

2. What happens to the people (v. 37) after hearing the gospel message from Peter?

Read John 3:4-8 & Ephesians 2:1-10 and discuss what God's Spirit does.



3. God's Spirit "cuts to the heart" to make one a Christian and grow as a Christian (Galatians 5:22). How did God connect your story to his story to become a Christian? How is he at work currently to grow you?

4. Read Luke 8:19-25 and 10:38-42. Write down things you pick up about a life of connection with Jesus vs. a life of distraction. How have you seen this in your life (both the good and the struggle)?

5. Who is the promise of forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit for (v. 39)? How is this encouraging for you, and how should it shape your intentionality and interaction with others?

As you go...

- What are the activities, relationships, and thoughts in recent months that tend to distract you from devotion to Jesus? What encourages your devotion to Jesus?
- New life in Jesus, forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit are promised to those who turn to Jesus (v. 38). Take time this week to think about what this means for you personally. Write down thoughts, prayers, thankfulness, need for this, etc. Talk with others about what you wrote.
- Pointing people to Jesus and connecting their story to God's story resulted in people receiving Jesus and the church growing. Pray for this to happen in your life and church. Discuss how you can "bear witness" to Jesus and "exhort" others to know Jesus.



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Prayer

God, we thank you for your worthiness of devotion. Who you are and what you have accomplished for us should garner a life of pursuit and connection with you. But God, we confess we are distracted by many things. We thank you for your mercy, grace, and patience with us. We thank you for the power of your Holy Spirit at work in us to lead us to true life, which is connection with you. Oh God, we pray that our stories would more and more be connected to and shaped by your ultimate and beautiful story of redemption found in Jesus. Help us to be a people and a church that seeks to love people enough to help them connect their story to yours as well.

Prayer requests



Study 4: Move from Isolation to COMMUNITY

Read: Acts 2:42-47

"And all who believed were together and had all things in common." – Acts 2:44

COMMUNITY RHYTHM: In response to the gospel, we live our lives within the context of deep, authentic relationships. As a reflection of our Creator who exists in community as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we will intentionally create environments of community and belonging. We will attempt to validate people's connectedness in the spaces God has placed them, while also encouraging them toward an authentic expression of sharing life with fellow journeyers in Christ. This will involve much sacrifice, authenticity, and love.

Overview

Though we regularly admit our need for community, the reality is that it is easier to drift toward isolation. Why? Because community is hard. It takes effort. Busy schedules coupled with proximity challenges create a situation that is ripe for isolation.

Beyond the external challenges, there are the internal heart-level issues that inhibit true community. Part of this is the shame that we carry. We worry that we will be rejected. Thus, it is vitally important that we really know the truth so that we can combat our shame with the power of the gospel. The challenge in all of this is that it is often in community that we are reminded of the truth of the gospel, and yet we tend to isolate ourselves and so move farther and farther from the source of proclamation and encouragement. We need to actively work to create opportunities to move from isolation to greater levels of community.

Though the church is a diverse community, it has a focus. This passage reminds us that true biblical community is one that is devoted to the apostles' teaching (God's word; the gospel), fellowship (community on mission), and the breaking of bread and the prayers (gathering) (v. 42). It is a community that shares not only the gospel of God but their very lives as well (1 Thessalonians 2:8). It is through this sharing of the gospel and our lives that God works in and through the church to make and grow disciples (vv. 46-47).

The same Peter who preached the sermon in Acts 2 penned these words, *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy"* (1 Peter 2:9-10). The gospel allows us to move from darkness: hiding, shame, isolation, covering up; to light: being open, being honest, being known, being accepted, receiving mercy, and belonging through community. It is a community with a mission to "proclaim the excellencies" of God to one another and the world around us.



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Message notes and application

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

Passage questions

1. Think about your personality and your community. What are challenges that can lead you to isolation? What opportunities / avenues are there that can help you connect in community?

2. What are the elements of the church that we see in this passage? How do these elements point us to Jesus and our need for him?



3. This passage reveals that the learning and loving of the church take place both in formal gatherings and in the everyday things of life. Why are both important?

4. In what ways are people helping you grow in understanding and application of the gospel to your life? In what ways are you helping others grow? List names of specific people who are helping you and whom you are helping.

5. Verse 47 reveals that the church functioning in biblical community results in the good of others and others believing in Jesus (see also John 17:21). How can you functionally live this way as a community and invite others to belong and experience it?

As you go...

- Talk about how the gospel – our acceptance in Christ – allows us to live in vulnerable, honest, and authentic community. Share with others one area where you are currently struggling in your life.
- Think about the avenues your congregation has to connect in community (Sunday gathering, community groups, serving, everyday life, etc.). Talk about how they stand in your list of priorities and how you can make living in biblical community a priority.
- What are things you have that can be utilized to serve and care for others? How can you leverage what you have to point others to Jesus (both inside and outside the church body)?



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Prayer

God, we thank you for your beautiful plan of salvation that moves us from being your enemies to sons and daughters in your family. We thank you for the beautiful community the Godhead – Father, Son, and Spirit – lives in eternally. Thank you for your body, the church. Thank you for Jesus whose sacrifice moves us from our sin and isolation to mercy and community. Oh God, we pray that the gospel compels us to be a people who are devoted to your work, your people, and the worship of your name! Compel us, we pray, to live with and love one another in such a way that it points more and more people to Jesus.

Prayer requests



Study 5: Move from Consumption to CONTRIBUTION

Read: Acts 2:42-47

"...praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." – Acts 2:47

CONTRIBUTION RHYTHM: In response to the gospel, we will leverage our time, talent, and treasure to further the mission of God for the glory of God. At CrossPointe we are calling all of our partners to a life of contribution (stewardship). This is put into practice in three distinct, yet overlapping areas of our lives: time, talent, and treasure. To steward something is to realize it is not ours, but has been given to us by God to use for the benefit of others. As the gospel works in us, we get the opportunity to have the gospel work through us and to experience the joy that comes from a lifestyle of contribution (stewardship).

Overview

Perhaps the dominant narrative of our Western culture is one of consumption. We are bombarded constantly by marketing campaigns that treat us as though consuming is all we were created for. However, the true narrative of the Bible tells us that we were made as contributors, as stewards. To be an image bearer is to be a contributor. This should define how we utilize our time, talent, and treasure. At CrossPointe, we believe we must build a strong culture of serving, responding to crisis situations, and being hospitable. But, we must also take seriously the call to be a disciple who makes disciples.

The primary role of the church is to make disciples, and we see in this passage that comes from the power of God in the lives of his people. The result of their devotion to the gospel and one another was lives of contribution. They had awe and wonder. They were doing mighty works through God. They were together. They were generous with one another and ANY who had need. They were both glad and generous (those go together!). They were praising God and having favor with ALL people. Their faith was not private and individualistic, but public and communal. Both followers of Jesus and those who didn't follow Jesus experienced God's goodness through them. And the Lord added to their number through it.

About this passage and the call to live lives of contribution, N.T. Wright says, "There is an attractiveness, and energy about a life in which we stop clinging on to everything we can get and start sharing it, giving it away, celebrating God's generosity by being generous ourselves. And that attractiveness is one of the things that draws other people in...That's how it works. Where the church today finds itself stagnant, unattractive, humdrum and shrinking – and, sadly, there are many churches, in the Western world at least, of which that has to be admitted – it's time to read Acts 2:42-47 again, get down on our knees, and ask what isn't happening that should be happening. The gospel hasn't changed. God's power hasn't diminished. People still need rescuing. What are we doing about it?" (*Acts for Everyone*)



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Message notes and application

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

Passage questions

1. Think about the context where you live. What are some examples of it being a culture of consumption?

2. What are some of the ways Acts 2:42-47 reveals church community living lives of contribution? How were they contributing in both word and deed?



3. How does the gospel motivate and give fuel for a life of sacrifice and contribution? (see Mark 10:43-45)

What are the dangers of attempting to live a life of contribution without resting in the gospel and relying on the strength God provides through his Spirit?

4. What do we learn about time, talent, and treasure in the following passages? How can you leverage/steward what God has given you in each area to make disciples?

Ephesians 5:10-17 (time)

Romans 12:3-8 (talent)

2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (treasure)

5. What does God do through this community living lives of contribution (vv. 41, 47)?

As you go...

- Think about what is costly about living a life of sacrifice – talk with one another about fears you have about living this sort of life.
- Take time to brainstorm various needs there are in your church, community, and city (practical, systemic, spiritual, etc.). Brainstorm what God has given you to steward. Brainstorm ideas to engage those needs with what you have been given.
- The purpose of living lives of contribution is to grow as and make disciples. Who is someone you can ask to help you grow as a disciple? Who is someone you can help grow as a disciple? Who is someone you can pray for and invest in to become a disciple?



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Prayer

Heavenly Father, you are so good and so generous to us. God, we acknowledge that you have created, sustained, and given us all things. When we stop for a second to think about that truth, it causes awe and wonder. It ultimately points us to the gift you have given us in Jesus Christ. We confess that, while you give us all things to steward and use for your glory, we consume for ourselves and worship them. Thank you for Jesus and the Holy Spirit who reveal our life of consumption and turn us to true life in you. God, we confess that we can often view life and your bride the church as “stagnant, unattractive, humdrum and shrinking” (Wright). Oh God, give us eyes to see, hearts to desire, and power to live the beautiful life of contribution displayed in this passage and your word.

Prayer requests