

sermon study guide

Speaker: Val Lieske and Ryan Stockert

Date: January 18 / 19, 2020

Sermon Title: Global Ministries Weekend - Arts in Mission

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. If there was one art form that you could pick up again (or try for the first time) what would it be?
2. What type of artistic or creative form has impacted you most? How has art/creativity impacted your understanding of and relationship with God?

UP - PURSUE GOD

3. Val Lieske stated, "70 percent of the Bible is story, vision, symbol, song and narrative." In the Bible, why do you think God communicates so much about himself through these means?

Read *Ex 31:1-5*

4. Ryan Stockert said, "The first person in the Bible 'filled with the Spirit of God' is an artist... We find this amazing passage where God specifically calls an artist, Bezalel to do the work of building artifacts for the tabernacle."
How did God use this art to shape Israel's culture and religious expression after their captivity in Egypt?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

Read *Acts 17:28* and *1 Corinthians 15:33*

5. In these Scriptures, Paul uses cultural images and metaphors to make the gospel accessible to a wider audience. How can you draw on cultural references (e.g. movies, TV shows, novels) to communicate truth about God?
6. For a significant part of the last century, the Christian community has had two basic responses to art, media and entertainment: 1) Avoiding or demonizing it as the enemy; or 2) Embracing the culture, but often giving up the very heart of the gospel in the process."
How do you discern when to engage with our culture's art, media, and entertainment and when to avoid it?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

How might God be calling you to engage in the arts 1.) To know him better? 2.) To spread his truth to others? What is he stirring in you? How can you reach your neighbour, your community, your city, your world, with the Gospel through your own creativity?

THE WORD (NIV)

Ex 31:1-5

Then the Lord said to Moses, ² "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— ⁴ to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, ⁵ to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts.

Acts 17:28

'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

This week's writers: Sandi Somers, Edi Dygert, Jemimah Ong, David McMillin, Jared Harrison

sermon study summary

Global Ministries Weekend – Arts in Mission

Val Lieske and Ryan Stockert

In. The. Beginning. God. Created. God is Creator, and humans are the pinnacle of His creation (Genesis 1:27). Of all the characteristics of being created in His image, creativity and artistic expression make us most uniquely human. We are creative in the way we plant our gardens, choose what to wear in the morning, and what colour to paint our houses. We were built for creativity.

God modeled creativity and art for us. 70 percent of the Bible is story, vision, symbol, song and narrative. It is full of drama, love and mystery, good and evil, death and redemption. Jesus taught about the kingdom of God mostly through parables. In one narrative of art, God chose Bezalel, filled him with His Spirit, and commissioned him to create designs for the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-5). In this way, God transformed the Israelites' concept of a temple from their years of slavery in Egypt: temples built for pharaohs, idols and prostitutes. God showed them that He redeemed everything, including their whole society.

Today, artists and creatives are essential to the life of the church and the transformation of society. In past centuries, the church was home to the best musicians, painters, stone masons and poets. However, during much of the last century, the Christian community has had two basic responses to art, media and entertainment: 1) Some Christians saw it as the enemy and responded by avoiding or demonizing it; 2) other Christians embraced the culture, giving up the very heart of the gospel. Both options fail to be redemptive or transformational.

In contrast, transformational art speaks to the culture around us. Paul understood this. He used cultural images and metaphors to make the gospel accessible to a wider audience. He cited poets, playwrights and philosophers. In Acts 17:28, he alluded to the philosopher Epimenides and poet Aratus while speaking in Athens, the centre of Greek culture and philosophy: "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring'. He also quoted the Greek playwright Menander: "Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

So How can we transform our culture through our art? We know how a 22-minute sit-com can have more cultural impact than a sermon or a speech. In contrast, how can art drive Christians to create and offer hope to a culture drowning in divisive politics and propaganda?

To change the worldviews of others, artists often walk the delicate balance of portraying both light and darkness. Art needs to ask hard questions, tug at emotions, empathize with real life situations. We need to tell stories about the challenges of living in evil and negative surroundings. Of dealing with the mess of humanity, the consequences of sin and the grace of God. Of providing hope for the hopeless. Of redemption.

Art and creativity are God's high callings and are worthy of our time, talent and treasure. Art encourages us to dream, to go places, to sit in the question of, "I wonder...", imagining things that are not yet, and having faith in things we hope for (Hebrews 11:1,3).

What does this all mean to you? What is God stirring in you? What can the Holy Spirit do through your art to change a piece of this broken, hurting world? Who needs to meet Jesus through you? Whether you're in a creative career, or whether you express yourself through hobbies, God is calling you to reach your neighbour, your community, your city, and your world, with the Gospel.