

Sunday Assembly Reflection

REFLECTION: This Sunday we witnessed a profound and living example of the only true hope of peace in the Middle East. Joel, a Jewish Israeli, spoke alongside a Palestinian Arab, Melad, about God's heart to join ALL the nations, not through politics or military, but through the love of God through Christ, just as Ephesians 2:14 talks about the cross breaking down the wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile.

Joel (and his wife Teresa) and Melad are missionaries based in Jerusalem, and are passionate about bringing down the wall of hostility to reconcile people to God and to each other so that we all give God the worship He deserves. They said over and over again that this was not easy to do with all the conflict going on, but they focus only on Jesus and trust. We were encouraged to not focus on all the "shaking" or problems in the Middle East, but to pay attention to what God IS doing to bring His Kingdom to earth just as He did with Joel and Melad.

Joel told us that a year ago, he was not interested in ministering alongside an Arab brother, but God not only changed his heart, but gave him a passion to do it, and was willing to even lose his life in following the call. Jim Reynolds called the resulting ministry huge and "world-changing" because of the transforming power of reconciliation and peace through the message of the "one new man." All religious and political differences fall down at the feet of Jesus. Joel and Melad coming together as Jew and Arab is literally building the highway of reconciliation in the Middle East as prophesied in Isaiah 19:23.

In Joel's story of telling God it was worth it to be executed if that was the price for following the call (as in his dream), I unfortunately imagined myself as one of the ones who discouraged him and said that it would be irresponsible. I am asking God to free me from my self-centered self that sees things as I want and instead to see them as He does.

QUESTIONS: Please pick at least one of the questions below to discuss in your groups this week. Be sure to pray at the end.

1. How much hope have you put in political/military solutions to the problems in the Middle East, or our own country, state, or community? How did today's testimonies change your perspective?
2. Melad said that it is hard to connect with people unless we get humble. Is there someone whose feet you cannot imagine washing? Pray for God to change your heart, and consider an act of service (or forgiveness) that you could do for that person the next time you see them.

Pray for God's Kingdom of the "one new man" in Christ to break down barriers in the Middle East, as well as in our own families and churches where differences cause division.

Sunday Assembly Reflection is written by Lake Highlands Church members for Lifegroups and individuals to receive more from the spoken Sunday Assembly message through reflection and quick discussion. It is published on the first three Monday's of the month. If you are interested in knowing more about a Lifegroup or have a question about the reflection, please contact Donjalea Crane, donjalea@lakehighlandschurch.org or contact one of our Lifegroup leaders by going to lakehighlandschurch.org/Lifegroup-listings.

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