

*Wright Baptist Church*

# REIMAGINE

AUGUST 2, 2020

*Wright Baptist Church*

# **REIMAGINE**

**AUGUST 2, 2020**

I want to throw a few names out at you. William Wilberforce, George Mueller, and Elizabeth Fry. There are so many more that could be listed here, but this is where I'll stop for today.

Each of these individuals has something in common, and that is the audacity to believe they could change the world. They looked at the world and saw things that were not right. They dared to reimagine the world as God would have it, and they acted on their imagination.

Wilberforce imagined a world without the slave trade, and worked until his dying day to abolish the slave trade and emancipate enslaved Africans in Britain in the early 1800's.

George Mueller saw the neglect and abuse of orphans. In response, he opened up an orphanage and decided never to ask for help except in his private prayer closet. Having never asked for financial help or food, God alone sustained that orphanage to the point where over 10,000 orphans received sufficient care at the hand of George Mueller.

Elizabeth Fry looked and saw a prison system that was an affront to human dignity. The purpose of prison at the time was not rehabilitation, but punishment. The women in prisons were not fed, but could only beg the public through the bars of their cells. Where an entire society saw human trash, Fry saw unlimited potential for redemption. She was granted entrance to the prisons. She was told that the women would kill her. She walked in, past a woman taking clothes off of a dead baby in order to give them to a live baby. She

sat down with a live baby, fed it, and told the stories of Jesus to the women there. Because of Fry's imagination, we have seen prison reform.

That is not to say that there isn't MUCH work to do in any of these three areas, but it is to say that a dreamer bold enough to reimagine the world as it is, when guided by the light of the gospel, can change the world.

I want you to imagine what our church could accomplish in Fort Walton Beach. What story are we telling? What story could we tell? If we're called to live and act in God's story of redemption, how can we best do that in our city, in our country, and in our world?

If all we had was each other and God's unwavering promise, then what could we accomplish in Fort Walton Beach? What is God calling us to do for His kingdom, for His glory, and for the joy and redemption of our friends and family?

To borrow a question from Brent Crowe, what would you do for the kingdom of God if you knew you could not fail?

Let's dream together. Let's reimagine.

*The world is full of pain, hurt, loneliness, and abuse. It is all around us, and I can't help but wonder if our inundation in it has caused our imaginations to go dormant and our hearts to grow calloused.*

*-Brent Crowe*

*The following message is not a sermon strictly speaking. It is a re-telling of what our students did two weeks ago as we met for a beach retreat out in Destin.*

*It is also a challenge to you, to get your head in the clouds, and to get your hands in the dirt.*

*It is, in part, a prophet's warning to God's people. It is a message, as much for me as anyone else, from a messenger saying, "Hey! LOOK! Don't miss what God is doing! He's in our midst! Open your eyes! Open Your ears! Lift up your Head!" To quote the Psalmist, in 24:7, "Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in."*

# CHAPTER 1

## REDEMPTIVE IMAGINATION



*“We are creatures of story, created by a storytelling God, who created the very fabric of our reality in terms of his story. Rather than seeing our existence as a series of unconnected random events without purpose, storytelling brings meaning to our lives through the analogy of carefully crafted plot that reflects the loving sovereignty of the God of the Bible.”*

*-Brian Godawa*

I love thinking about history in terms of story. We all have a story. What’s more is, we all have a storyteller over us. The good news is that He is a great storyteller. When you see the world around you, you see it as one *IN* the story. When God sees it, though, He sees it as one *OVER* the story.

How much of your life would change if you could see with God’s eyes? How much of your heart would break? You know that God made a good world in Genesis 1, but by Genesis 3 all of creation was under the curse of sin. If you had God’s eyes, you would be able to look around at our fallen world

and you would be able to see what God saw, to feel what He feels, and know how bad things have really gotten.

But you wouldn't only see how far it has fallen from God's original glory. You'd also be able to see how, by God's grace, things could be made right again. If we are people who pray, "God's kingdom come, and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven," then we would be able to see the great potential that exists in the world around us. This is possible because of REDEMPTION.

I want to challenge you to use your redemptive imagination this week. I want you to practice seeing with Kingdom eyes. I want you to cultivate your imagination for the glory of God.



1. When you think of the world around you, where do you see evidence of the curse of sin?
2. What does God see in your world?
3. What does redemption look like in Fort Walton Beach?
4. How many people have you seen baptized here?
5. What do you think God wants us to see in our city?

# CHAPTER 2

## CONSUMING & CREATING



*“The lack of redemptive imagination and creative solution is a sad reflection on how little use people are making of their ‘thought world’ for the glory of God... They find themselves in a state of boredom because they don’t think for themselves; they just absorb the thoughts and worldview from others around them.”*

*-Brent Crowe*

There needs to be a healthy balance between how much we *CONSUME* and how much we *CREATE*. If we are always consuming, and never putting anything out, then we are gorging ourselves, and we are becoming gluttons of whatever it is that we’re consuming.

You didn’t think gluttony was only about food, did you? We are easily enticed into consuming culture, binging on netflix, marathons of Fortnite and Call of Duty campaigns, and now that we have sports back, flipping between this game and that. Where do the hours go? When all that we do is consume, we deny the image of God in which we were created.

The opposite can be true too, though. If we are not consuming the right things in the right way, then we will not have the energy to create in a way that glorifies God. The balance we must seek to strike is to consume the right things the right way.

Then, and only then, will we be able to create in a way that glorifies God. Then, and only then, will we be able to access our redemptive imaginations and use our thought-worlds for God's Kingdom.



1. What is the hardest part about striking a balance between consuming and creating?
2. What are you consuming? Creating?
3. How can we consume the right things in the right ways?
4. What are things in your world that are not as they should be?
5. How can we create solutions for those things that are not as they should be?

# CHAPTER 3

## A TANGIBLE IMAGINATION



*“Blessed is that Bible student who comes to God’s Word with an open mind, a loving heart, a submissive will, and a sensitive imagination.”*

*Warren Wiersbe*

Brent Crowe uses that quote to make the point that, and I quote, “If the Bible, the grand story God has told, defines reality, then our thoughts should take residence inside the Scriptures.” This doesn’t necessarily mean we need always to be thinking about the Bible, but it does mean that we need always to be thinking *biblically*.

When we develop the habit of thinking biblically, then we begin to live biblically. We see the brokenness in the world, we see God’s heart for the world, and we begin imagining our role in the answer to the prayer, “your kingdom come, your will be done.”

Were you ever told to get your head out of the clouds? I was. And here’s my advice, don’t do it. Keep your head in the clouds. There’s a reason they call the perspective from the

sky, “God’s-eye view.” I will add, though, that if your head is in the clouds, then your hands need to be in the dirt.

You get the ideas in your head, but those ideas don’t become real until you build them out. A professor of mine that taught a class on Preaching used to say “good earth” if you made a good point while speaking. What he meant was that you took a good idea, or maybe a God-idea, and made it tangible, concrete, or relatable.

We need to think biblically with our head in the clouds — in the heavens — and our hands in the dirt. That’s how we get “good earth.” That’s how we get God’s kingdom *here* and *now*.



1. What’s the difference between thinking about the Bible and thinking *biblically*?
2. Do you think you have a biblical imagination?
3. How can you develop a biblical imagination?
4. Go read Joel. The whole book. Think about his prophetic imagery. Does it help your imagination? Does any of it jump out at you?

# CHAPTER 4

## DREAMING BIG



*“The dreamer is gospel-centered in his or her own imagination.” -Brent Crowe*

Brent Crowe asks the question, “What would you do for the Kingdom of God if you knew you could not fail?” I’m curious as to what you would say.

God can use *YOU* right now. He can use you to change the course of history. Do you believe that?

The disciples that Jesus chose were young. Most likely, they were all teenagers. They turned the world upside down with the gospel of Jesus.

Sure, their stories contained failures. No success story has ever happened without failure. Don’t be afraid to fail. Just because you fail once doesn’t mean you should give up.

When we keep a kingdom focus, I believe God delights that we would have the audacity to believe we could change the world. So, I ask again, what would you do for the Kingdom of God if you knew you could not fail?

No matter how BIG your answer to that question is, the putting it to practice must start small. It starts here. It starts with you and your gospel community around you. It starts with the small and ordinary moments of everyday obedience and faithfulness to Jesus. It starts in your prayers. It starts in your discipline in seeking God, in waiting for God.

So let's commit to those small things, and let's dream big about what God wants to do with you, with us, in our community.



1. What do the people in your world need from God?
2. If you could change one thing in the world for the glory of God, what would it be?
3. How can you use your redemptive imagination to answer the needs of the people around you?

I invite you to dream big dreams, to reimagine the world around you, and to get in on the story that God is telling.