

**“The 2025 Vision of Mound Evangelical Free Church:
Evidences of God’s Grace”
*Sermon Notes***

- **The mission of Mound Evangelical Free Church is to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ**

**Therefore, in our 2025 Vision we believe God called us to...*

Prayer

1. Cultivate dependance upon Christ (vv.2-3a)

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Care

2. Demonstrate the mercy of Christ (v.5)

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Share

3. Communicate the gospel of Christ (vv.3b-4, 6)

Evidences of God’s grace

Next Week: The 2030 Vision of Mound Evangelical Free Church

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the week of January 5th-11th

Getting Started

1. Five years ago, we first began to chase our 2025 Vision of cultivating dependence upon Christ through **prayer**, demonstrating the mercy of Christ in practical acts and ministries of **care**, and communicating the gospel of Christ as we seek to **share** him with those on our 'Lists of 5'. This vision was made public on January 26, 2020. Little did we know that less than eight weeks from then an historic and seismic shift would occur across the globe with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic as stay-at-home orders were issued worldwide. Do you remember where you were when it first began to occur to you that something significant was happening along these lines (that this was going to be a big deal, etc)? What do you recall in particular of the period of time from March 22nd (our first Sunday worshipping remotely) to May 31st (our first Sunday re-gathered as a congregation for corporate worship)?

Digging Deeper

2. Today we find ourselves five years on the other side of the public launch of our 2025 Vision. That vision boiled down to three words: **prayer, care, share**. We became quite familiar with them over that period of time. By God's grace we are a church that has the gospel *right*, so by God's grace we've been striving to become a church that gets the gospel *out*. From 2020-2025, how did you see each aspect of this three-step pathway to outreach working together in order to better pursue our mission to be and make disciples of Jesus? Any encouragements? Discouragements? Discuss.

Open Your Bible to Colossians 4:2-3...

3. Read and reflect together on Paul's words to the Colossian church regarding **prayer** in these two verses. Would you say that MEFC is a 'praying church'? What concrete evidences of God's mercy do you see as it relates to being a church that seeks to cultivate dependence upon Christ through prayer? On the other hand, in what ways do you sense some room for improvement? Are there ways in particular that you grew personally in your understanding and practice of prayer over the last five years? If so, please share with the group.

4. Over the summer of 2021, we preached a 17-week series titled: "Calling on the Name of the Lord": *A Biblical Study on Prayer*. Click [here](#) for a link to the sermon texts and titles, outlines, audio and video. In addition, during the summer of 2020, we preached a 7-week series titled: "An Anatomy of All Parts of the Soul": *Praying the Psalms*. Click [here](#) for a similar link to refresh your memory. Can you discern any aspects of the way that you pray today that might have been influenced by the Scriptures we studied during those days? If so, once again, take some time to reflect on these things together.

5. The second aspect of our 2025 Vision was related to our church's compassion and mercy ministry: we wanted to seek to demonstrate the mercy of Christ through tangible acts of **care**. Throughout the New Testament, one of the phrases we see repeatedly that captures this concern is "good works". Take some time and ponder these Scriptures as a group: Matthew 5:16; Acts 9:36; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Timothy 2:10; 1 Timothy 5:10; 5:25; 6:18; Titus 2:8, 14; 3:8, 14; and Hebrews 10:24. Why does God place such a premium on good works, particularly in view of the fact that our justification is by grace through faith in Christ apart from works (Romans 4:4-5; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)?

6. Over these last five years, with the Lord's help, it was our intention to complement our compassion ministry of feeding the hungry (Wednesday Evening Meal) with initiatives such as housing the homeless, clothing the needy, helping the weak / defending the vulnerable, rescuing the unborn, and adopting the fatherless. Are there any ways in which you'd say that we grew as a congregation in these areas? Do you see ways in which we still have a bit of a road ahead to

walk? Which of these six areas of mercy ministry moves you the most? In what practical ways would you like to assist us in the development of our compassion ministry into the days ahead?

7. While we certainly want to demonstrate the mercy of Christ to our unbelieving neighbors, it's even more essential that we grow in our communication of the gospel of Christ. We desire to alleviate suffering...*especially* eternal suffering. Our main strategy in evangelistic outreach with those on our 'List of 5' over the course of our 2025 Vision was the **B.L.E.S.S.** practices (**B**e in prayer for them, **L**isten to them, **E**at with them, look for opportunities to **S**erve them (or be served by them), to **S**hare your story and especially to Share God's story in the gospel with them). Looking back over these last five years, where would you rate your evangelistic temperature on the whole?¹ Which of these come easiest to you? Why? Which are more difficult? How come?

8. Over the course of the 2025 Vision, it was our aim to welcome 75 newly baptized covenant members at Mound Evangelical Free Church (given an average of our membership and weekly attendance, that essentially meant: 'each one, reach one'). By God's grace, we welcomed eight: Micah Von Hagen, Will Lund, Mari Engesser, Paul Von Hagen, Li Cunningham, Sophia Engesser, Elyse Klein, and Theresa Maslowski. How does this encourage you? On the other hand, in what ways is there room for growth in terms of our evangelistic outreach? Close your time together as a group praising God for his grace to our church through our 2025 Vision. At the same time, ask the Lord to prepare our hearts for the unfolding of our 2030 Vision (starting next Sunday - 1/12)!

¹ Remember, the B.L.E.S.S. practices provide a way to gauge our evangelistic temperature - B (Be in Prayer) L (Listen to lost people) E (Eat & Drink with them) S (Serve or be served by them), S (Story -share your story and Christ's) - If you're having difficulty giving your outreach efforts an objective number, imagine that each letter is 'worth' 2 points. So, if you did nothing more than pray for your 'List of 5' on a regular basis over the last month (which is huge by the way!) then you're already at a 2. If you engaged in more of the B.L.E.S.S. practices over the last month, your number goes even higher. Give it a try!