

THE BIG IDEA: The prequel is no equal to the sequel.

The Take-Off

Wow! Today is March 10, and this is the 10th Sunday in the 10 Series.

Now, it is possible that you're here at The Gathering today for the very first time, and so right about now you're thinking that if you could get out of here without anyone seeing you, you would.

It's hard to show up on the last day of a series, but we've already thought about you.

We're mixing the whole order up to make sure that none of us feel lost - whether today's your first day or you've been here for all of them!

Today we'll be talking through only two points and we'll be sandwiching worship in between them.

So, get out your note sheets and let's just dive right into the first section.

I'm sure that all of us can use a quick review of what we've learned over the last 2 and a half months.

1. A look **BACK**

Each week we focused on a key word and a Big Idea.

Each day we read the same chapter in the reading plan we provided for you.

And more than likely, while every Sunday was good, one or two were better for you. They were the ones that really grabbed your soul and spoke to you right where you are.

In just a minute, we want to give you the opportunity to write down some of what God has done in you during the 10 Series, but before you do, let's take a quick look back at weeks and what we covered.

The basic idea of the entire series was that you would give God the first ten.

There is something powerful and redeeming about first things

Faith is required to give the first, not the last

Faith to put God first allows God to work in the rest

He does, because bold faith moves God (maybe "moves his heart" is better)

- Matthew 9:22

- Luke 18:42

We challenged you to take the FIRST ten weeks of 2013 and trust God with:

- 10 minutes

- 10 percent

- 10 nights, and

- 10 conversations

Many of you have seen God do some pretty miraculous things in those 4 areas!

Then, we took each week and taught on what it would take to complete this challenge.

Week 1:

Keyword: inTENTional

Big Idea: Prioritize to keep from compromise.

Week 2:

Keyword: conTENTment

Big Idea: When we say yes to the best, we can say no to the rest.

Week 3:

Keyword: atTENTion

Big Idea: Where your attention goes, your identity follows.

Week 4:

Keyword: TENsion

Big Idea: Fighting through the tension leads us to a new dimension.

Week 5:

Keyword: consisTENCY

Big Idea: We complete what we repeat.

Week 6:

Keyword: TENacious

Big Idea: Being tenacious means never being shaken.

Week 7:

Keyword: poTENTIAL

Big Idea: Our response to brokenness unlocks our potential for greatness.

Week 8:

Keyword: straightTENed

Big Idea: When we're aligned with Jesus, we just go straight.

Week 9:

Keyword: exTENded

Big Idea: We reach for what we value.

Here's what we'd like everyone to do

We're going to go into worship, and while we do, we want to give everyone a chance to write down one or two things you've learned during the 10 Series

We've got 2 canvases set up for you. After we're done with worship, we'll move to the second point.

2. A look AHEAD

It's always good to look back, isn't it?

We love pictures, videos because they bring up memories

That's the point of taking the time to look back on what we've learned during the 10 Series (look at what was written on the canvas)

But if we're not careful, we'll stay there.

We'll spend the rest of the year talking about how great the first 10 weeks of the year were

We'll find ourselves stuck, and stuck isn't a good place to be [SHOW PICTURES]

Understanding the purpose of the past is the key to not being stuck in the past

Never live in the past. Always live from the past.

Living in the past means that our best days are behind us and we live defeated.

Living from the past means that our best days are ahead of us and we live dreaming.

In fact, most of the Psalms are about remembering what God has done in order to trust him for what he will do

Remembering God's faithfulness in the past allows us to have faith in the present.

Bottom line? The purpose of your past and mine - whether good or bad - is to prepare us for the future

I don't want you to take my word for it, so let's look at a passage of scripture together

Turn to 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

There's a lot going on here, but let's break it way down:

- The past can't compare with the future (vv. 7-9)
- In the kingdom of Jesus, future glory is always greater than past glory (vv. 10-11)
- Translation? The best is yet to come, or as the Big Idea says: **the prequel is no equal to the sequel.**
- When we know this - when we get that God is always pointing ahead - we live with boldness (v. 12) and freedom (v. 17)
- The future is built on the past (v. 18) "ever-increasing glory"

Here's what all of this really means, and it's so simple that it'll blow your mind: not only does the past prepare us for the future, but it also points us to the future

Let me show you something that you saw numerous times in middle school and high school math, and yet I bet you never even noticed it.

It's a symbol, and it stands for "greater than"

Let me ask you this simple question: which way is it pointing?

Exactly - it points FORWARD because the greater things in your walk with Jesus are always ahead of you and never behind you.

Your life is a story, and the gospel of Jesus is always adding pages to it, and while we all know that our lives have been written, it's also true that, until you and I breathe our last breaths, our stories are also being rewritTEN.

The Landing

What does that simple symbol mean for us?

It means

- God won't waste your pain
- Your past doesn't define you
- That no matter how good your past was your future can be better
- That age never signals the end of our usefulness

Ultimately, it means that you and I should keep our forks. [Share the story]

The only way to make sure we see the greater things is by moving as close to Jesus as possible.

While the band leads a final song, we want you to go to the canvas again, but this time we want you to write what you think Jesus has used your past - and specifically the past 10 weeks - to prepare you for.

Maybe you'll be a missionary to an unreached people group.

Maybe you'll be a better spouse, parent, son or daughter.

Maybe God has burdened you for a ministry or a person.

Whatever it is, come take a marker and fill the canvas with the dream that God has placed in you and is preparing you for.