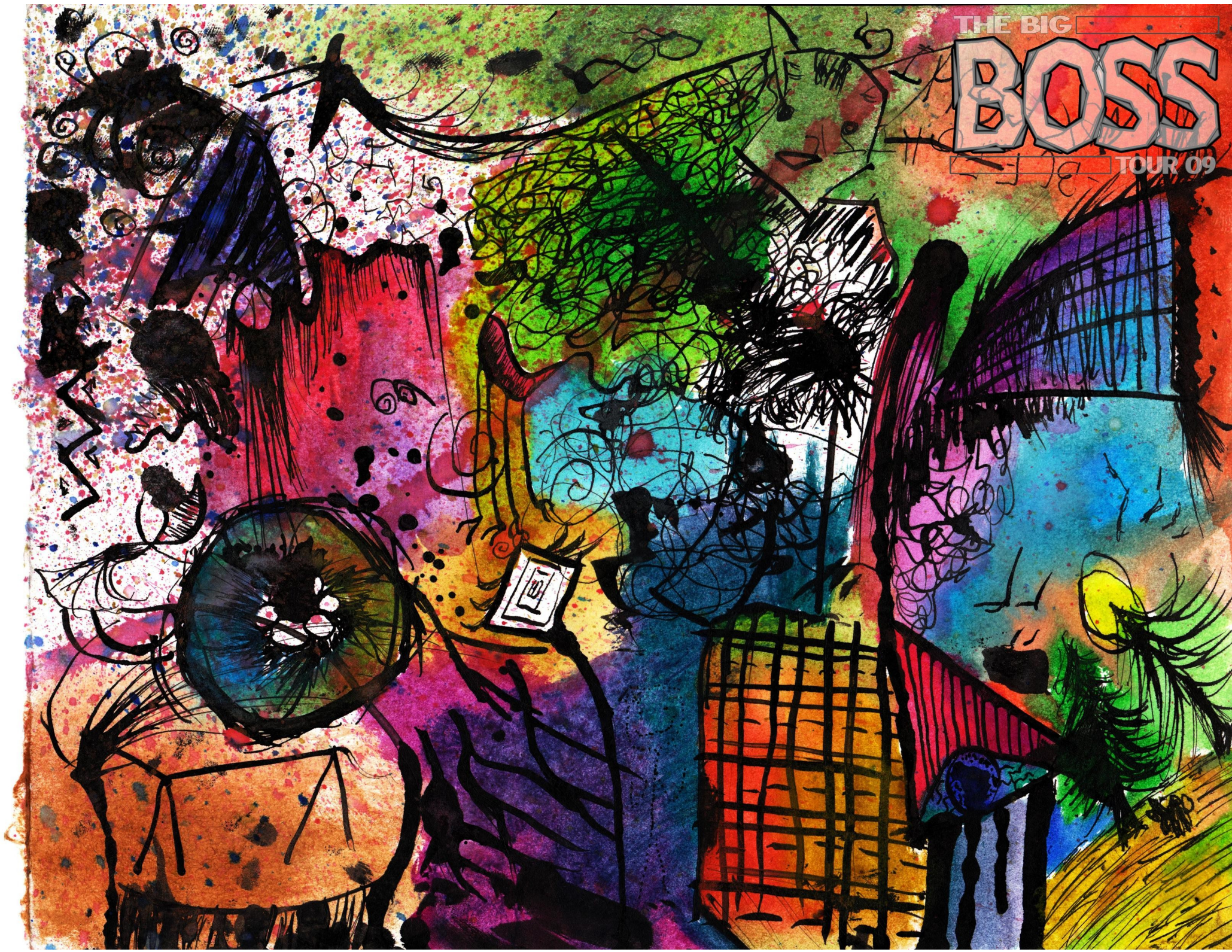


THE BIG  
**BOSS**  
TOUR 09





<b>Intro-----</b>	<b>Not inside the Church -----</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Sunday -----</b>	<b>The City -----</b>	<b>2-3</b>
<b>Monday -----</b>	<b>I-Pod -----</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>Tuesday -----</b>	<b>Cave Art-----</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>Wednesday-----</b>	<b>Clapping Trees -----</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>Thursday -----</b>	<b>Vision -----</b>	<b>10-11</b>
<b>Friday -----</b>	<b>Going Home -----</b>	<b>Catch "UP"</b>
		<b>("UP" Goals on 12)</b>
<b>Saturday -----</b>	<b>Regal-----</b>	<b>If you caught "UP"</b>
<b>Sunday-----</b>	<b>Home Concert-----</b>	<b>Evening Service</b>

We live in a chaotic world and daily events beg the question, where is hope? We know that God, in the sacrifice of Christ, is the world's only hope (at least we hear this at church). Of course when we step back and look at our relationship with Him, I doubt we inspire much world-altering hope. How can our relationship become liberating, not only for us, but for everyone around us?

We can not be liberators if we do not know freedom. In the love of Christ we must IMAGINE a new world. One that does not end with violence on the evening news, but begins with the ever rising sun! Then we must strive to live in this dream!

This week builds from the vision of Isaiah 55 & 56. It challenges us to use our imagination by incorporating the artwork of Clark DeLoach. Each day is built around one of five core images from his drawing. The study also uses Bruce Springsteen quotes (Why? See bottom right article) and Pac-Man points about the scripture passage. Of course there will also be one of my random stories... enjoy stepping "UP"!



### By Clark DeLoach

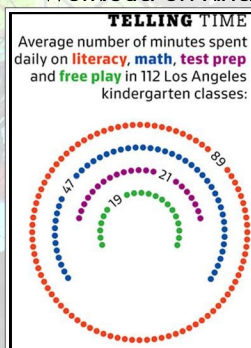
I asked for chaos moving into clapping trees and this exploded out from his imagination...



**Spring-who... not inside the church** ~ In college I was in the dorm watching a movie with a group of friends and while the movie was far from Christian I began to feel the Spirit's conviction. Sitting there I realized I could be the person committing the evil acts, I could be the bad guy. I could be the violent, the racist, the liar, the... Though I always viewed myself as good, there in front of a DVD, I joined with Paul and declared myself to be the worst of sinners.

God reigns over ALL, not just the space inside the church walls. So we should not just expect to find Him on Sunday and Wednesday. Instead we should be watching every day and in every place for His movements!

I recently read an article in the NY Times lamenting the workload on Kindergarteners. Even outside of class



homework cuts into their free time. But studies again and again have proven that the *work* of a child should be *play*! [Random: no study has proven any value from homework until MS—too bad for you, but I can hear the songs of joy from the 4th graders!]

Playing, for a child, is central to developing social, physiological, and emotional skills (along with intellectual—as any game requires knowledge). And as a child plays they learn to unleash their imagination. With homework we learn to memorize humanity's knowledge, but the call of God is beyond knowledge. This call can not be attained without imagination, not in a pretend sense, as though it is not reality. Instead God is calling us to envision His Reality. To envision the life He created for us (take MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech, he imagined a new reality)! Of course this life has only been lived perfectly once, so we must imagine. Imagine life if God's Kingdom ruled over the world. Even in our world with movies and fast food and Wal-Mart... even with Springsteen!

How did I come to Bruce Springsteen? Admittedly I am not a major fan (Greg even had to give me a list of his songs), but when I was looking up the meaning to *Asifwe Boswana*, I found that it is literally translated "Praise the Big Boss". This was a great title for our tour, and when I mentioned it to others they all responded, "Springsteen?" Of course I just stared dumbly until someone told me he was nicknamed "The Boss". And that seemed perfect for our tour, perfect for a faith that is not learned, but lived!







Baby I got my facts learned real good right now  
Poor man wanna be rich, rich man wanna be king  
And a king ain't satisfied, till he rules everything...

~ "Badlands" [Springsteen]

# THE CITY

"... Of course I guess it could be worse," Grandma said. "We could have our view blocked by one of those vans that carries aliens around. I was listening to the news on the radio, and they said a bunch of aliens were found dead from heatstroke in one of them vans yesterday. Imagine that. Here these poor creatures travel through space to get to us, all those light years and galaxies away, and then they die from heat stroke in a van."

"What a shame," Esther said.

"I'm just glad it wasn't in front of my house," Grandma said. "I'd feel terrible if I had to find E.T. dead in a van."

[Ten Big Ones by Janet Evanovich]

In college I took a lot of Greek (hard to imagine, I know!). The professor was an intense old-school sort of gentleman. While today aspiring teachers are taught to grade in blue or green (soothing colors), my professor would always grade in angry red. He would often say, "I will bleed all over your paper." Which is laughable until you hold a paper awash in blood red.

Anyhow, I was studying for the final in his class. Watching the clock I knew I needed to be there by one, when the phone rang. "Hello, this is Dr. Dutile's secretary, you are late for his test." It seems it began at noon...

We like to pretend that we have everything figured out, that we have everything together. Sometimes we get everything wrong, and we miss the point entirely. As Christians, as the church, we think Jesus is ours. While in reality we are the watchmen, created to go out and report to the world...

Why begin here? We got the theme verse from the song, *You Shall Go Out With Joy*. But when I went to look up the passage they had misprinted the song sheet. Rather than 55:12, it read 56:12...



**Dogs** ~ When reading the scripture we can live in a contemporary bubble. We read "dog" and picture faithful Bolt, who traveled the country to return to "his person". But in Israel, dogs were not human's best friend. While some helped with work (like a sheep dog) they were just as often roaming strays. Dogs that would make you afraid for your children and livestock!



IMAGINE: A pack of stray dogs running  
around your neighborhood—how would  
you perceive dogs then?



"They seek their own gain" ~ Why do we  
miss the point when we think only of  
ourselves?



## Isaiah 56:9-12

- <sup>9</sup> Come, all you beasts of the field,  
come and devour, all you beasts of the forest!  
<sup>10</sup> Israel's watchmen are blind,  
they all lack knowledge;  
they are all mute dogs,  
they cannot bark;  
they lie around and dream,  
they love to sleep.  
<sup>11</sup> They are dogs with mighty appetites;  
they never have enough.  
They are shepherds who lack understanding;  
they all turn to their own way,  
they seek their own gain.  
<sup>12</sup> "Come," each one cries, "let me get wine!  
Let us drink our fill of beer!  
And tomorrow will be like today,  
or even far better."





Message keeps getting clearer  
radio's on and I'm moving 'round the place  
I check my look in the mirror  
I wanna change my clothes, my hair, my face  
Man I ain't getting nowhere  
I'm just living in a dump like this  
There's something happening somewhere...

~ "Dancing in the Dark" [Springsteen]



It started in college. I just had my hair cut, short as always, but looking in the mirror I noticed one long hair sticking out above my ear. I grabbed the scissors and pulled the hair tight. I was ready to cut it short, but as I pulled I realized it was not connected to my head. Instead it was connected to the top of my ear!

With every year I find hair growing in new places. First the ears and now my nose has become such a thick jungle that I have a special trimmer to cut the hair (no one wants to see 6 inch nose hairs...).

Yet this is our reality. We are not all super models, and no matter what, we grow old (with wrinkles and aching muscles). But many of us dream of another reality. We wish we looked differently, so we tan and lotion and dye and pluck and... Eventually as adults we may be tempted to visit doctors who slurp, cut, or inject.

We have listened to society and discovered the secret for success and happiness. So when we imagine our future it is not God's Kingdom we picture but a reality about ourselves. For ourselves. A reality which will cost us everything... even our hope and joy. All the while God is offering a new reality that will not cost hope and joy, but will create them both!

In the New Testament Jesus does not just pull ideas out of the air. Instead he picks up the promises God delivered in the Old Testament. On *bread*: "Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life'" (John 6:35) On *water*: "Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you have asked him and he would have given you living water.'" (John 4:11) [Of course in John 2 he turned water into *wine*!]



IMAGINE: If everything was free  
in the mall...



Why do we listen to other people's  
definition of success? Why do we allow  
them to define our self worth?



### Isaiah 55:1-3b

- <sup>1</sup> "Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without cost.  
<sup>2</sup> Why spend money on what is not  
bread,  
and your labor on what does not  
satisfy?  
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is  
good,  
and you will delight in the richest of  
fare.  
<sup>3</sup> Give ear and come to me;  
listen, that you may live.

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Hey there mister can you tell me what happened to the seed I've sown  
Can you give me a reason sir as to why they've never grown  
They've just blown from town to town  
Till they're back out on these fields  
Where they fall from my hand  
Back into the dirt of this hard land  
~ "This Hard Land" [Springsteen]



## CAVE ART

"My child could do that!" ~ Aelita Andre has just turned two and is an aspiring abstract artist. Of course I can vouch that all two year olds are abstract artists, my own little Ivy specializes in water colors. Still, it is rare that their work would find its way into an art gallery (some of Ivy's are on the Taylor fridge gallery...), but little Aelita's work did and some are now being sold for thousands of dollars!

Which begs the question, for how much would Clark's masterpiece sell? He gave it to me and for multiple thousands I might be able to part with it...



Often the church stays inside working on deeper theology, cooler programs, better buildings, smarter sermons, hipper Bible studies (look at this bloom'n book!), greater music... Inside we grow content with a child's work of art, but when we strive to live the life of Christ outside of our cave it requires a masterpiece. A cave doodle does not liberate. We must imagine a life that resembles Monet. Then we should live the life that leaves people awed, as though they have been standing in front of Water Lilies (which I have seen—it will mesmerize you, even in sheer size!).



**David ~** The boy who beat Goliath, the king who had an affair with Bathsheba... Who is David? That question is too big, but God made a covenant, a promise, to David: "I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations" ~ Psalm 89:4 (also 2 Samuel 7). Of course the kingdom of Israel was split and then destroyed, but the promise of God was not void. Jesus came from the line of David...

**IMAGINE: The gallery owner who first showed Aelita's work did not know she was only two. How must he have felt when it was discovered he was hanging a toddler's artwork in his gallery? ~ If your relationship with Jesus was art would God be proud to display it in His gallery?...**



**Most of us declare the world is far from godly; but, rather than work for change, we conform—why?**



### Isaiah 55:3b-7

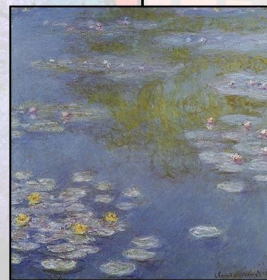
<sup>3b</sup> I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

<sup>4</sup> See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples.

<sup>5</sup> Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor."

<sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them,







Without you I'm workin' with the rain fallin' down  
 Half a party in a one dog town  
 I need you to chase the blues away  
 Without you I'm a drummer girl that can't keep a beat  
 An ice cream truck on a deserted street  
 I hope that you're coming to stay  
 ~ "Waiting on a Sunny Day" [Springsteen]

# CLAPPING TREES

## "Pizza Plants"—Ship's Captain in Wall-E ~

As you read yesterday, Ivy takes art to a new level every week with her Mother's Day Out projects. Recently she made this little flower. Notice how the label "stem" is upside down, to represent our upside society which receives value from the wrong source—she really is brilliant. Of course she did not know that seeds produced plants, so Megan was trying to explain to her how a seed is planted in the soil. Then water and sunlight enable the little seed to grow. Megan used her art as an example and asked what her little seed grew into and Ivy shouted, "muffins!"

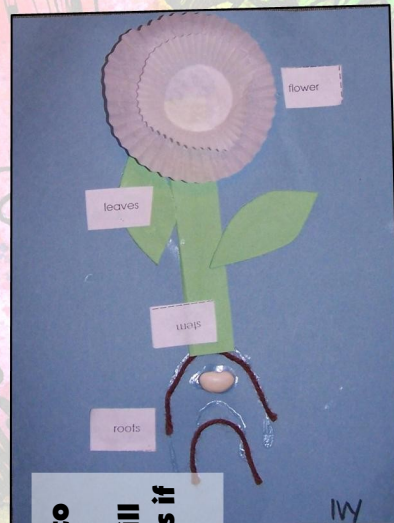


Moving into our house, the backyard was literally overrun with weeds and vines and dead trees. I set out to make improvements, but first I had to remove all of the bad plants... they were not going to transform from thorny vines into a crape myrtle! That only happens in our imagination!

But that is exactly what happens in the Kingdom of God. Beyond our normal reality, the bad is made good. The worthless, valuable!



**Thorn bush and briers** ~ Throughout the book thorn bushes and briers have been a symbol of God's judgment. "I will make [Israel] a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there." Isaiah 5:6). But now God has set course for redemption!



**IMAGINE: Weeds transforming into flowers. What would that do to lawn service companies? What will happen to churches and ministers if the world was ruled by God? ...**



**How are God's ways higher than our ways? ...**



## Isaiah 55:8-13

<sup>8</sup> "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
 neither are your ways my ways,"  
 declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> "As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
 so are my ways higher than your ways  
 and my thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup> As the rain and the snow  
 come down from heaven,  
 and do not return to it  
 without watering the earth  
 and making it bud and flourish,  
 so that it yields seed for the sower  
 and bread for the eater,

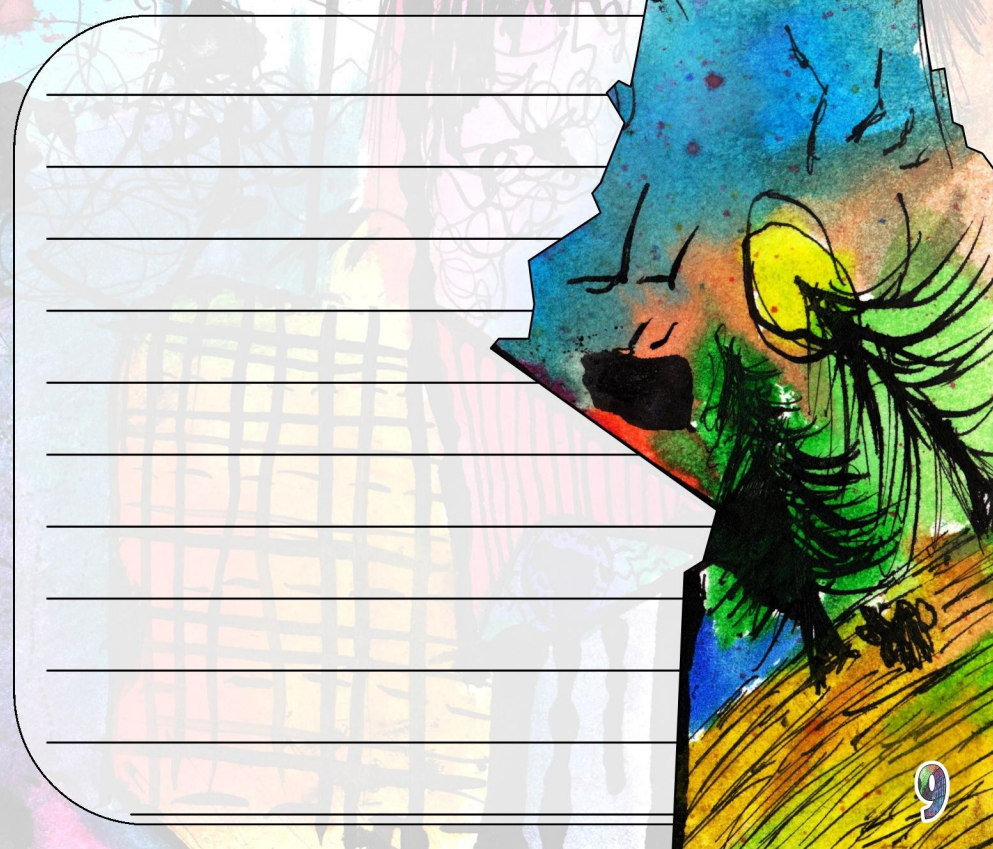
<sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth:

It will not return to me empty,  
 but will accomplish what I desire  
 and achieve the purpose for  
 which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup> You will go out in joy  
 and be led forth in peace;  
 the mountains and hills  
 will burst into song before you,  
 and all the trees of the field  
 will clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn bush will grow  
 the juniper,  
 and instead of briers the myrtle will  
 grow.

This will be for the LORD's renown,  
 for an everlasting sign,  
 that will endure forever."





# VISION

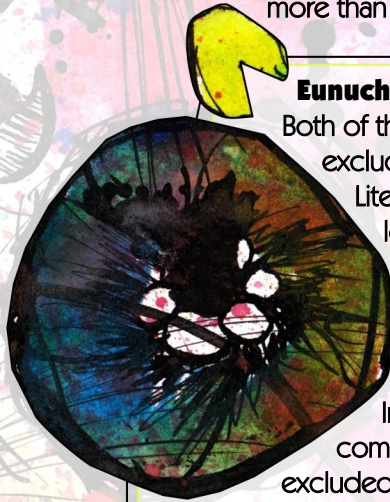
The man sat in my office. He was disheveled and his clothes were rags. But it was his teeth that were hard to believe. I could not stop staring at them. Multiple were missing and those that remained were dark with decay. AS he spoke he wiggled one with his tongue, as though he was a elementary child with a loose tooth. He was homeless and had come to my office to ask for painkiller...

Looking at him I was convicted. Had he come to a Sunday morning worship, I would not have excluded, but I would have judged him. I would have talked about him with others... Only in a dream would I love him unconditionally.

We confess that ALL have sinned and fallen short, but when push comes to shove we exclude people. We may not ask anyone to leave, but we judge. We wonder why they have come. We talk behind their backs... all while singing "Jesus loves the little children". Yet in that song there is a vision of something greater—of the gospel. I can imagine not excluding anyone, though it seems impossible—like trying to punch the breeze. But God can do "immeasurably more than we can imagine"! (Eph 3:20)

**IMAGINE: The Eunuch reading Isaiah 56. How would he react?**

**Why do we exclude people? Have you excluded anyone? Have you ever been excluded?**



## Eunuch and the Foreigner ~

Both of these groups were excluded from temple worship. Literally left on the outside, to look in while others worshiped God!

In Acts 8, Philip comes upon the Ethiopian Eunuch reading Isaiah 53. In that moment the Spirit comes down and the excluded person is saved! I imagine the Eunuch continuing to read; I would love to have seen his reaction when he came to our passage...

## Isaiah 56:1-8

- <sup>1</sup> This is what the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
- <sup>2</sup> Blessed are those who do this— who hold it fast, those who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keep their hands from doing any evil."
- <sup>3</sup> Let no foreigners who have bound themselves to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely exclude me from his people." And let no eunuch complain, "I am only a dry tree."
- <sup>4</sup> For this is what the LORD says: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—
- <sup>5</sup> to them I will give within my temple and its walls

a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever.

- <sup>6</sup> And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—

<sup>7</sup> these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."





- <sup>8</sup> The Sovereign LORD declares— he who gathers the exiles of Israel: "I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered."

Have you ever seen a one-legged dog making its way down the street?  
If you have seen a one legged dog then you've seen me ...  
Have you ever seen a one armed man punching at nothing but the breeze?  
If you have seen a one armed man then you've seen me...  
~ "The Wrestler" [Springsteen]





### Stepping "UP"

-  **Read the passage and article**
-  **Answer the questions**
-  **Memorize 5 verses from 55&56  
(Must include 55:12)**
-  **Reward: Saturday we will go to  
see the Movie UP!**

I believe in the love  
that you gave me,  
I believe in the hope that  
can save me,  
I believe in the faith  
And I pray, that someday it  
may raise me,  
Above these badlands

~ "Badlands" [Springsteen]

