

ICE BREAK

- Think about a time when something in your life went completely differently than you planned. Did it turn out worse, better, or just different? Share briefly with the group.

STUDY

The sermon described Americans as tending to view control as a birthright. Do you see that in yourself or in the culture around you? Where do you think that impulse comes from? The pastor described himself as "a recovering **controlaholic**." Would you use that word to describe yourself in any area of your life? What area comes to mind first?

1. Fear of the Lord: The sermon draws a clear line between responsibility and sovereignty. In your own words, how would you describe the difference between the two? Where do you personally struggle to stay on the right side of that line?
2. James 4:13-16 describes our lives as morning fog and warns against boasting in our own plans. What does it look like practically to hold your plans loosely while still planning wisely? How do you do both at the same time?
3. Ecclesiastes 9:11 observes that time and chance happen to everyone regardless of their talent, strength, or wisdom. How does that reality make you feel? Does it discourage you, humble you, or free you? Why?
4. The sermon says that needing control is a form of insubordination, and it challenges us to examine whose kingdom we are most wanting to come. Be honest: when you pray, whose kingdom tends to show up most in your requests?
5. The sermon identifies three unhealthy means that controlaholics often justify in pursuit of the end of control: making an idol out of money for security, using manipulative relational tactics to get their way, and stirring up church conflict to enforce their preferences. Which of these is most tempting or recognizable to you personally?

Practical Application: Choose one this week

6. I John Identify Your Control Triggers Write down two or three situations or relationships that consistently make you feel anxious, frustrated, or irritable. Ask yourself honestly: am I frustrated because I am not getting what

I want, or because something is genuinely wrong? Bring those situations before God and practice surrendering them by name.

4.17-18 Perfect Love drives out Fear: confidence from punishment on judgment day. a. What have you thought this passage meant? b. How is it possible to love and be accountable? c. How frequently do you think or talk about the day of judgement? d. To what extent do you fear that day? Look forward to it? e. As you have gotten older have you tended to dread or anticipate the Day of the Lord?

Love One Person Without Trying to Change Them Identify one person in your life whom you have been trying to fix or redirect. This week, choose one specific way to love them without any agenda for how they should respond or change. Reflect on how that feels compared to your usual approach.

Acts 9.31 In what specific ways have you seen or experienced God working where you were fearful?

CLOSING REFLECTION

- The sermon closed with this question: What part of your life seems out of control right now?
- Take a moment of silence for each group member to sit with that question personally. Then, if anyone is willing, invite them to share one word or phrase that describes that area of their life.
- Close by praying together, surrendering those areas to God by name, and affirming together that what we can always control is who we will worship.
- **MEMORY VERSE:** James 4:13-14 — Reflect on the image of your life as morning fog. Let that image stay with you throughout the week as a reminder that fog does not get to call the shots, but God, whose throne is fixed, always does.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SERMON

1. There is a difference between making choices and taking control. Exercising personal responsibility and wisdom is right and good. But controlaholics want life, people, and circumstances to submit entirely to their will. These are not the same thing.
2. Needing to be in control is a formula for frustration. James 4:13-16 reminds us that our lives are like morning fog. Fog does not get to call the shots. The only fixed point in the future is the throne of God.
3. Needing to be in control is a form of insubordination. God sits on a throne, not a loveseat. His kingdom rules over everything (Psalm 103:19). Accepting this is not passivity; it is a healthy grasp of reality.
4. Letting go of control helps us love better, live bolder, and praise bigger. When control is always the answer, other people will always be the problem. When God is in control, nothing is irredeemable, and we can praise Him even in the storm.