

The Urbanity of the Bible

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As I look at the book *The Urbanity of the Bible* by Sean Benesh I have to say this one of my new favorite books to read. Because they reintroduce what is urban theology in a new light that I didn't see before. When I first hear the word urban the first thing that comes to my mind is ghetto and black and a place where nobody wants to be at. But Sean Benesh bring a new view to me that I didn't see before that now made want to get involved in and that the Bible is very urban then what we think it is. In this paper I will be dealing with some of the main point that the author speaks about and I will also talk about a few social analyses of the urban context and its connection to the resulting Theological reflection. I will also be dealing with some of the author arguments that he made in the book but also giving my view points on what things I have learn about this book how can this book help others.

We first have to understand that urban is in the city and the only way people will see that is by us making the effort to go out and speak to the people. We have been so locked inside the church that we forgot that we need the people to come inside the church. Sometimes as preachers we forgot that Jesus didn't stay just in the church but He minister to the people everywhere he walked. While I was reading this book, this stood out to me it says "In short spurts, the solitude was welcoming; but after a while, it turned to loneliness and isolation. Soon they found themselves driving into town just to sit in restaurant or café in order to simply talk with other people. They were desperate for connections"¹. We have to stop being isolated and being more engaging with people because Jesus did not come for the righteous but He came to set the captive free and to bring people together. We as a church need to set up and be a place where the broken people can come and be transformed by the word of God. We try and move our churches

¹ Sean Benesh, *The Urbanity of the Bible: Rediscovering the Urban Nature of the Bible*, 2015, pp28

to better communities and to go to the suburbs and we leave the urban city and we abandon the people. And this is why people leave church and never go back because they don't trust us anymore. We have to help our city and meet the needs of our people and show love the way Jesus did for the Samaritan woman. Even when it was not culture for a Jew to speak to a Samaritan He still spoke to her and met her at her needs and she was saved. In the book it says, "To move from the cities of the Ancient Near East to those of Jesus's day is to take a large leap. Cities, after all, change and adapt in function as social system of which they are a part change"². If Jesus who is the most Holy of Holy can do that why don't we follow His example Jesus did not play about His people. We had to go through a pandemic to realize that church is just not the four walls in the church but its us making a connection with people.

Sometime we have to take a walk through in our community and see what can the church do to help the needs of the people. Like if there is a lot of single female parents then have a problem where a male figure can help out their sons so they can learn about manhood. Or if they see that the single mother or father need help with a babysitter the church can help start a daycare to help the needs of the people so we can be a community. That just a example on how a urban community can come together with a church and be united but also witness them to Jesus Christ. We are called to be different form the world but not to be separated because Jesus didn't do that to us He went after the broken people and fill them with His love and joy and peace.

² Sean Benesh, *The Urbanity of the Bible: Rediscovering the Urban Nature of the Bible*, 2015, pp123

How can we have a healthy urban life is going out into the city and seeing the needs of the people. In the book it spoke about a mass shooting that happen in a city and it was all over the news and a football player came to the city and spend time with the people and seeing the needs of the victim's family and loved on them that right there blessed their hearts, just spending time with them with no camera just listening and giving love will help a broken heart to be healed. Another thing that I like from the book when the author said, "One of the marks of our salvation is the concern for the poor. That assertion stands in stark contrasting beliefs lead us to ask: what is the mission of the church? We have been looking at the urban trajectory of the Bible and how the early church was intrinsically woven into the fabric of urban life in the first century"³. We have to remember what is the mission of the church and not no one distract us from it. But also, being a Pastor is not easy but if you keep your eyes on God and stay in His word He will direct your path. Never get hungry for money because that will distract you from where God want you to do. God will meet your every need you if you just trust in Him. This book is helping me and sharping me for ministry and reminding me why God has called me to do His work on earth. God theme for the urban ministry is to help the people and to witness them to Christ and to embraces community. We have the tools to help us we just have to use it the right way and in context. The Bible is urban and that is our Manuel to look at to help us serve the people and to engage with one another. So, let go and be the servants that Jesus want us to be.

³ Sean Benesh, *The Urbanity of the Bible: Rediscovering the Urban Nature of the Bible*, 2015, pp167-168