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## Summer at Woodland Hills

### Part 5 – Aim Small, Miss Small

Adam Donyes

God has just been laying this on my heart this summer and it's *Aim Small, Miss Small*. I believe three types of people walked in here this morning: those that know exactly what they are aimed at, those who are aimed at the wrong things, and then those who have no idea what they are aiming at or what aim is. The title for today is *Aim Small, Miss Small*.

I've been training basketball players all summer. That's what I do; I'm a basketball coach. I just love Jesus, so I get to speak. This is a seven-footer. People often tell me, "Stop hanging out with tall people; it makes you look shorter than you already are." Whatever. This seven-footer stayed with my wife and me for the last seven weeks, in our basement. He's a Division One athlete. He already holds the shot block record at Central Arkansas and he already has NBA scouts looking at him. He's a potential future pro.

He's one of the humblest, Jesus-loving kids I know. As a matter of fact, he stayed longer than he had to so he could watch our dog because my wife and I were at a wedding yesterday. He stayed longer to drive home to Dallas. We get home and there is a front and back, full-page thank you note to me and then a note to my wife and to my boys. So, there's a hope for our future. Here's a Division One athlete that has everything handed to him everywhere he goes, but he still understands the importance of writing a thank you note. For you young people in here, take notes (pun intended).

I've been working him out. We do grueling workouts. He's drenched in sweat by the time he's done. We finish every single workout with a drill. I do this drill with him. He's got to make five swishes before having misses. A swish is worth a point, a make is worth nothing, and a miss is a minus. What I am teaching him... The year before, we increased his free throw percentage from 68% to 82%, which increased his points per game to about 4.2 points per game and he'll do it again this year. What I'm doing is I'm teaching him on his free throws to aim small, miss small. Why? Because then when he misses, he really still makes it. I'm only counting his swishes and I'm teaching him to aim even smaller.

That's really what I want to talk to you guys about today because if we are to be honest, when we walked in here today, some of you would say your home, your aim is completely based around your kids. They dictate what you watch in your home, they dictate your schedule, they dictate everything around your marriage. Your kids are really your aim.

Some of you, if you were to be honest with me, you're worried about your fame and your followers and your popularity and the size of your platform, especially in a show driven town, an entertainment town, you're worried about this.

For some of you, your aim just might be success. You want to be really successful and have a lot of money and have a boat and a car and white picket fence and retire with your 401(K) in check. So, all these things become your aim. They are okay aims, but I don't know if they are the ultimate aim.

Another thing I got to do this summer is we do these opening ceremonies at camp. We have leaders of the tribes and the leaders are called chiefs and princesses. We honor the native Americans. I let both my sons come down to this sacred tribal ring with me. On opening night, we have our new leaders of the tribes... The girls are called princesses and the boys are called chiefs. We take these arrows and I attach sparklers on the end of these arrows. I dip them in the fire and then, as I pronounce the chief's or princess' name, I fire the arrows into the lake. So, this flaming arrow goes through the night sky and into the lake. It's really cool. It's just a really beautiful ceremony that Joe White started and that we've performed for many, many years.

(shows pictures of his sons in Indian costume) I would think that this one would have pulled a stunt like I'm about to describe to you, but it was this one. This is usually the really well-mannered one, my seven-year-old. I'm getting everything ready in the Teepee and I'm getting my Indian garb on. I'm getting the arrows ready and everything. I turn around and I hear a counselor give out this gasp. I look back and I go, "What happened?" and he goes, "Your son just shot an arrow right at my head."

My Aiden has as deer in the headlights look on his face like, "I didn't know it would go that fast." This counselor, who is going to do these Indian fights and dances, is up here getting these ropes tied together for us and Aiden goes down and grabs the bow and arrow that I shoot and just kind flings it back and lets it go. I'm telling you it was six inches from this counselor's head. Now, I'm assuming the sparklers would have stopped the sting a little bit... But I thought, *Man, that's such a powerful illustration.* I said, "Aiden, what were you aiming at?" His exact response was, "I wasn't." And because he had no aim, it was almost catastrophic for him.

So, there are really three passages I want to share with you. Two of them come out of Corinthians and one of them is in Hebrews. If you have your Bibles, you can open them up. If not, don't worry, we'll have it right here on the screen.

I Corinthians 9 – This is written by the Apostle Paul and this is written to the Church at Corinth to encourage them, rebuke them, and to sharpen them. He asks this question: **24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run...** He's not talking about a physical race, even though this is proof, Ted, that there was athleticism in the Bible. He's talking about the race of life. He's saying, "Did you not know that everyone lives life." That's just another way to contextualize it. Everyone who has breath in their lungs, everyone in here is living life, ...**but only one gets the prize?** He's saying, "All these people live, but there is only one group of people that receive a prize. **Run in such a way as to get the prize.** Everyone runs this race and there is only one group of people in this game of life that receives the prize.

That begs the question: **What is the prize?** What is this prize that Paul is talking about? He seems to know what it is. He is telling this Church at Corinth, "Run after this prize, there is only a group of people that can attain it, and keep your eyes fixated there.

I'll tell you what the prize is. It's simple. It's the bullseye; it's Jesus. The prize is Jesus. Paul is saying, "Run in a way that you may obtain the prize." Run in a way that at the end of the day, Jesus is all that matters. I ask Carolyn and the worship team to sing that hymn they sang last week with Alex Himaya. It fit in perfectly with what the Lord has laid on my heart. When you talk about fixing your eyes on Jesus, everything else will grow strangely dim. Everything else just doesn't matter as much when your eyes are on Jesus. Your problems don't seem as big, your worries don't seem as worrisome, and your anxiety seems so much less when your eyes are fixated on Jesus. It's when your eyes are fixated on your problems that they seem so much greater than they actually are.

It goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 9 - **25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things.** Richard Foster says our stomach is like a spoiled child; we give it whatever it wants. Think about it. If you want Bluebell Ice Cream tonight, you're going to go to the freezer and get some Bluebell Ice Cream. If you want dessert, you're going to get some dessert. "Hey, it's the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, I get to cheat this week." The reality is that our stomachs are like a spoiled child. Paul is talking about the value in believers being able to exercise self-control and not chase after things he knows won't satisfy or fulfill your soul. He knows that chasing those things won't bring true satisfaction. As a matter of fact, they will only keep you longing for more.

Three times in scripture, in three gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke, this rhetorical question is asked. It's in Matthew 16: 26, Mark 8: 36, and Luke 9: 25. It's the same rhetorical question asked all three times in the synoptic gospels. It's left out of the love gospel; I don't know why, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke asked this question. It's Jesus and he says, "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul." Think about this, Woodland Hills.

Let's pretend that you walk out of here and you just found out you hit the Powerball or the Mega millions and you won 400 million dollars and you're 45 years old. You live to be 85, around the average age, so you get to be a multimillionaire for 40 years. You have access to private jets, helicopters, boats; you get to be on the sideline of the Chiefs finally making it to the Super bowl. You have access to whatever, wherever, whenever you want. For 40 years of your life, you get to live like a sheik; you've got it made. And you chase the world and you get it because you have access to it.

Then you take your last breath and these three apostles ask this rhetorical question: "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world yet forfeits his soul?" How long do you think it would take to live in a place where you forfeited your soul to realize those 40 years weren't worth it? Sixty seconds? Five minutes? Surely not 24 hours for you to realize those 40 years on earth, where you chased everything but Jesus, just wasn't worth it. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forgoes his relationship with Jesus? Everything else in his life became more important to him than Jesus. That's where the self-control comes in.

I have a goldendoodle. This goldendoodle is named Sippi. My wife is from Mississippi, so we named the dog Sippi. Goldendoodles are some of the best dogs ever. I've had multiple dogs in my life. I'll never get another breed besides a goldendoodle. They don't shed, they're not messy, they're amazing with kids. I love this goldendoodle.

I give a devotional every Tuesday morning to 18 – 22-year-old men. They work for me; they're the counselors out at the camp I run. I had Sippi with me one day out there. I had a piece of Fillet Mignon in my hand. She knew I had this piece of steak. I went around to about 45 counselors and gave them all some of her dog food. I'm standing with my hands behind my back with Sippi's eyes locked on her master. She doesn't care about anything else.

I told the counselors to call her name, whistle at her, shake her food in the cup, do whatever they want to get her attention. They're yelling and screaming and whistling. She's not budging. Her eyes are on me. She knows who has the goods. Her master has the goods. Their yelling and screaming goes on for about two minutes, which seemed like five minutes because counselors can be obnoxious. Finally, I told them to stop.

I tell Sippi to shake; she shakes. I tell her to lie down; she lays down. And then I sit the steak right on top of her head to where she is cross-eyed. She's just waiting for me to tell her to eat it. All the counselors are sitting there watching. I said, "Ok, Sippi." She tears into that bite of steak. I look at all my counselor who have been in the frat parties and hanging out and doing whatever else the secular college world brings them. I said, "You guys are settling for dog food. You realize you are settling for dog food when God has Fillet Mignon for you."

In true camp fashion, I said, "Alright, now you all eat a piece of that dog food." They did. As they were eating a piece of dog food, I looked at them and said, "Don't forget that taste next fall when you're back in college." Or after you leave this sermon today, don't forget that taste of dog good when you're settling for less than what God has for you and taking your eyes off Jesus.

That's what Aim Small, Miss Small is all about, that you would aim at Jesus. If you miss Jesus, his grace is sufficient, his power is perfected in your weakness. So even if you are aiming at Jesus and you fall short, which we will, he'll pick us up and carry us and bring us through. There's an old saying, "Aim for the moon and if you miss, you'll land in the stars." Whatever; aim for Jesus and you miss, he's still got your back. He's not going to leave you on your own. There are some people in here 75 or 80 years old and guess what? He's still with you. It's not when you came to know him when you were 20 years old and then you're on your own. It's not like, Okay, you made it to 75 and now you're on your own. It's not like your 14 years old and now you're on your own. No. You aim for Jesus and he's got you.

Psalm 37: 25 says, **25 I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.** He's got you; he's never missed a curve ball. It's us that get our aim so far off that we start firing this thing; it's crazy. I'm not a hunter, but I've shot a lot of target practice. I just can't bring myself to watch an arrow go through a deer. You guys are like, "You're soft." Well, I'm sorry, maybe I am; I just don't want to watch an animal die and wiggle and squirm and all that stuff.

I've been given a really nice gift. This is a bow. As you can see on this bow, there are these little fluorescent lights. Those lights, when you crank back this compound bow, give you the yardage. It knows exactly how far away from the target you are. It tells me where I should be aiming depending on how faraway I think the target is. It's helping me to aim really small because, as all of you avid bow hunters know, you get one shot. It's not like you get a redo. That buck is gone. You get one shot at this thing called life. There's no redo. There's no, "Whoops, I'm 90; I blew it. Alright, I'm going to take my last breath and then I'm going to conjure up some Hinduism and reincarnate and try this thing again." No, no, we don't believe that in the Bible. We believe you get one shot at this thing. You get one shot to rear this thing back, to aim small, to miss small, and to know what you're aimed at.

So, we start firing these arrows off, whether they are our kids or our jobs or whatever it is. We start firing at these things and we're like, "Man, I'm just going to hit this target and hope it lands." And you start firing away. You hit targets. You take care of your kids, you get them off to college, and they seem to be doing well, but is that the aim to just get them off to college? You leave them an inheritance and they get to take over your house and then they have money and then they are financially set. And there's nothing wrong with taking care of your finances; be good stewards. But what is the ultimate aim of what were trying to leave for our kids?

Eventually, one day, it's all going to dry up. You've never seen a U-Haul follow a Hearse to a funeral. Then what? What is your aim? What are you aiming at as a family? What are you aiming at as a dad? What are you aiming at as a mom? Because eventually none of this stuff is going to matter and all that's going to matter, when you take your last breath as a dad or a wife or a husband or a grandparent, is Jesus.

And that ripple effect... I love that this bullseye also looks like a ripple effect. You drop that legacy of aiming small, missing small for your family, you drop the bolder of Jesus in their life and that eternal ripple effect will be far greater than any legacy you'll ever know. And it will go on far after you're gone. Your 401(k) will dry up. Success will be redefined a million times over. A hundred years from now, fame won't matter. You shouldn't worry about the size of your platform; you should just determine the size of your faithfulness. Jesus is all that matters. So, what are you aiming at today? How broad is your aim? Do you even have an aim? Paul talks about this and I love this. This is the only time he says it in all of scripture.

1 Corinthians 9: 25 says, ***They do it to receive a perishable wreath...*** So, basically, they are chasing things that won't last. I love what C.S. Lewis says. He says we're far too fascinated with mud pies. If only we knew a holiday at sea. We're so enamored with making mud pies when there is a holiday at sea. There's something far greater than anything else this world has to satisfy. It's Jesus. It's just Jesus; nothing else. You get Jesus. You aim small, you miss small. You get Jesus. If you want to go to heaven and there's no idea of Jesus being there, you miss what heaven is all about.

Paul is saying, ***They do it to receive a perishable wreath...*** They are chasing things that will have no eternal significance, so they live life full of anxiety, worry, depression, because these things were never supposed to satisfy their souls. They're tense, they're angry, they're argumentative, they're rude. When things don't go their way at work, they bring it home and they're frustrated. Why? It's because

their aim is on something that it's not supposed to be on. When your aim is fixated on volatile things, you, yourself will become volatile. But, when you aim at something that is grounded, rooted in the rock, you too will be grounded and rooted and able to withstand difficult storms.

I won't go into detail, but my wife has been going through an unbelievable storm the last five weeks with an immediate family member. It has been extremely difficult, probably one of the more difficult things she's ever been through. Do you know what's crazy? Because I sat back and watched this amazing woman of God. She is so fixated on Jesus, as I wake up and see her on her knees almost every single morning and in the Word. She's aiming so small and missing so small. I'm convinced that if Jesus wasn't in her life, there would be no way she would be getting through this season of life. It's just amazing.

Paul says, ...***but we are imperishable***. They can't take you from this, right? I had an unbelievable conversation after the last service. This person had gone astray for a couple years. Into drugs, addiction, the whole bit. He just came and gave me a huge hug after the service and said, "Jesus is bringing me home." I was teary eyed. I had chills just like I'm having now. I knew him from five years ago when we used to run a young adult ministry here. He was doing great and then he just disappeared. I didn't know what happened to him. He just came up to me and was really honest with me. He said, "My eyes are back on Jesus and they are there to stay,"

**26 So I do not run aimlessly...** What are you aiming at? Paul is saying anyone who is chasing after anything but Jesus, that's aimless. I looked up the Greek word for *aimlessly* this week and it literally means *uncertain*. When live aimlessly, you live uncertain. When you're uncertain, you're anxious. When you're anxious, you're stressed. When you're stressed, you're not happy. When you're not happy, nobody wants to be around you. That's what happens when you live aimlessly.

Paul is saying, "I have an aim." As a matter of fact, he tells us what his aim is in Acts 20 - **24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.** Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, died on the cross we all should have died on and lived the life we all should have lived. He freely gave his life as a gift -there's nothing we can do to earn it – so we wouldn't live aimlessly. That's what he did.

The prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 43 – **7 "...everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."** That is your aim. To exist focused on Jesus and to live for his glory, regardless of what your occupation or vocation may be. Paul is saying I don't run aimlessly. I know what my aim is, and he lived with great purpose.

He said in Philippians 1 – **21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.** "I know my aim. I'm not worried about dying. I'm secure. I've got the best life insurance policy ever. Let's go." He wasn't worried about that.

Then you guys that grew up in the 70s love your Bruce Lee movies, when he would do all the shadow boxing and everything else. The shadow boxing was awesome, but what we really wanted to see is him

take out some people. Back to 1 Corinthians 9 – *I do not box as one beating the air.* I mean talk about Paul with laser focus. That brother he knew exactly what his bullseye was.

All these other things, they'll give you points. You'll get some points and for a short period of time, they'll make you feel good, but they won't last. Jesus is where you get the maximum points. John 10: 10 – ***He came that you may have life and live it abundantly.***

Two months ago, I took my family on a Disney cruise and we stayed one day in Miami before we hit this cruise. You hear about South Beach and want to do South Beach. So, I made the foolish mistake as a father to take my family to South Beach. So, after two hours of trying to find a parking spot, we made it on the beach for half an hour. My two boys were asking me why we were leaving so soon, and I said, "Sons, there is way too much floss on this beach."

It was horrific. I looked at my wife and said, "I'll never go back to that beach as long as I live." I know Joe made a covenant to never look lustfully at a woman. I'm pretty sure he never walked the beaches of South Beach, okay? My wife and I are walking on this beach, covering the kids' eyes. That was a huge, huge mistake. Nothing against the people of South Beach, but I have some money for clothes if you need some clothes. That's just how the world thinks. The world thinks this way, so you really wake up every morning with this tension of what you're going to get from the Word of God versus what the world is going to communicate to you.

So, everything is feeding you from media to news to social media. Everything in our world is feeding you. That's called the world. Then we have God's theopneustos, the breath of God, his Word that can also feed us. What's the difference between these two words (**word vs world**)? There's only one letter that separates these two words and that's the letter L. Let me show you what the letter L represents out of that world.

It's going to represent a lot of **lies** in your life. A friend of mine once said, "Spend time reading and receiving the truth every morning because the world is only going to lie to you the rest of the day." "This will satisfy you," or "This will make you happy." Those are lies. The great father of lies, Satan, who started all the way back in the garden and just twisted that lie just enough to get Adam and Eve to fall.

It's also **lifeless**. It won't leave you satisfied. It won't give you true calling and true fulfillment. It's also going to get you **lost**. And not found. It's John 10: 10 – ***The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus came that you may have life and live it to the full.***

In the Word, it says that Jesus finds those that are lost in the world. Satan wants to keep those that are lost, lost, and to keep them aimless and to keep them without purpose and to keep them without mission and keep them without fulfillment and calling. That's what the world does.

So, you're either going to take your cues from the world and generate your opinions from the world or you're going to listen to the word, which already says you're beautifully and wonderfully made, which already says you are affirmed, which already says you don't need man's approval, which already says you have an eternal inheritance that no amount of money can ever buy, which already says that you

are secure in him and no one can take that from you and gives you everything you will ever need. Jesus is all we need. That's why it's so pertinent that we would aim small, miss small.

A para verse on this would be Hebrews 12: 1-2. ***1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight... I love what it says right there. ...and sin... This weight isn't necessarily sin, Woodland Hills. This weight can just be something that is slowing you down. It could be Netflix binging. It could be whatever is not helping you run or keep your aim on Jesus because right after that, it says "and sin." So, there are weights in our life that aren't necessarily inherently sinful, but they are not helping us keep our eyes on Jesus. A job might not necessarily be sinful, or trying to get a good 401 K so you can retire might not be sinful, but if we are fixated on that and not Jesus, is it helping us run, is it helping us line up our target?***

So, let us set aside every weight that's not helping us aim and sin, ...***which clings so closely, and let us run... Once again, there's that theme of running. ...with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.***

That's it. There's no magic formula, there's no solution, there's no amount of works. You don't have to work harder, try harder, and check more boxes. You have to aim small, miss small and it's Jesus. I know it sounds crazy and it's simple and it's hard sometimes to receive that gift, but you aim at him; his grace is sufficient; his power is perfected in your weakness.

So, it doesn't matter how you came in here today. Here's a picture for you to think about. Man, that is a smoking hot pistol right there. I taught my wife, two summers ago, how to shoot a handgun. That is a Glock 23, 9mm. For those of you who are familiar with handguns, that thing has a lot of fire power. That thing has a lot of kick. So, when I was first started teaching her how to shoot this thing... and she had never fired a handgun before... Some of you know this. Your body will naturally flinch because you're anticipating a kick.

I had a target set up for about 10 feet away, one much larger than this one. Needless to say, she's firing away at first and we're not seeing any bullet holes on the target. What she was doing was flinching before the firing. She's just anticipating the kick, so she's kicking and shooting bullets up into the air. Lord willing, they didn't land in any campfires or around anybody. So, that's what happens. It's got such a kick that you'll flinch before you actually fire, and you won't get on the target.

Trained Seals and trained Marine people will learn to put blanks in the gun and they'll rest nickels on top of the gun so when it does fire, they are so steady that nickel will stay on top of that gun. It's a blank gun so it doesn't give that huge kick back. Eventually, I got her to not kick and then she was all over the target.

That's us. We're aimed at Jesus and all of the sudden there is a distraction and we're flinching and we're flinching and we're flinching. We're chasing this success and we're chasing kids and we're chasing work and we're chasing priorities and we're just flinching and flinching. Before we know it, our eyes aren't on Jesus at all and we're not even close to hitting the target. We're all over the place. We're spraying this

thing. We have aims and we're landing on targets, but we're not hitting the ultimate prize which is Jesus.

Paul says this is the ultimate prize that will never perish. This is our aim. So, when you're sitting there and your flinching because all these other things come along, it's going to make it difficult for you to hit that target. If I'm right here, reared back, ready to hit that buck and something scares me and I flinch, that's it, I missed out on a chance for God to use me.

This bow actually has a hand trigger. Look at this; it's amazing. They make these now. This deal actually clips to the rope right here so that when you pull it back, all you do – so you don't even have to let go with your fingers – is release right there. So, you don't flinch, you stay so steady on your target. All you do is release that bad boy and it fires, so that when you're here, you don't have to worry about anything but staying focused on what your target is. For us, as a believer, that's Jesus. If you walked in here today and you're not a believer, I pray that would become Jesus. As you know, you didn't walk in here by mistake and you're realizing that nothing in your life is satisfying or fulfilling you.

2 Corinthians 4 says this, ***17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.***

I'm sure in a room this size, there is a lot of anxiety, a lot of worry, a lot of stress, a lot of tension in your relationships. My question for you, if that's you, is what are aiming at? And where is your aim? Aim small, miss small.

I'm going to close us in prayer and as I do... I know we quickly rush out of here to beat the traffic and quickly rush out of here to get a brunch spot or whatever. We have a phenomenal prayer team, led by Don and Cheryl and other people in this church. They are up here every Sunday. I know this because I've interacted with quite a few of you in community this summer. I know some of you in here could use some prayer today. It's not weird. It's not like Don and Cheryl do a funny dance around you or anything. They just pray. They genuinely intercede on your behalf before our Father who where two or more are gathered in his name, there is God.

I just know with a room this size, there are some people that could really use some prayer this morning. So, as I pray... I'll actually be in the back too if you want to pray with me. I got to pray with about five or six couples last service and it was so neat to see what God is doing. There will also be couples up here that would love to pray for you. They would love to encourage you to help fixate your eyes back on Jesus.

Father God, thank you so much for this church and for Katie and Stephanie and Andy and Ted and Amy and Matt and Carolyn, and just the countless other people that serve this place and these people. God, forgive me for the times my aim is so far from Jesus. Help me to aim small. Help me to aim my eyes on Jesus. Help all of us to aim our eyes on Jesus. I just pray that as they leave today, they'd be encouraged, be strengthened, and that our focus would be realigned. It is in the matchless and mighty name of Jesus I pray. And all God's people said... Amen.