**Declarations- Sermon Notes:**

* Everybody stand up and do a couple of kicks (round house, side kick, back kick…) to warm up, wake up, get into what this preach is about
* Now that we’re all warm, we can all sit down again
* Okay, so this message is going to be a little bit out the box (Pull message out of box), but I hope it’s going to be a lot of fun as well
  + Hence the face paint and kick boxing and the chairs all different, but it’s nice to have a change!
* Today’s topic is… Declarations right, so why do you think we do declarations? What is their point? We do them every Sunday morning before offering, but why? (Get some answers)
* 1 a formal or explicit statement or announcement. 2 the formal announcement of the beginning of a state or condition.
* I like to think of it though as a declaration of something that isn’t true yet, but something that you believe enough in to work hard to get there
* Why do we do offering declarations? Because we believe and desire for our money and funds to be blessed by God to change the world. Maybe they aren’t changing the world just yet, but that at least gives us vision as something to move towards
* What is a declaration?
* A declaration brings: Vision, direction, motivation (reason for doing something), and hope (expectation and desire)
* A declaration brings- Vision and Direction
  + When we declare something we know the direction we want to move forward in
* A declaration brings: Strategy
  + When we declare something, it inspires creative strategy of how we can start doing or becoming what we are declaring
  + If I am constantly telling myself that I am going to see myself impacting 100 lives before the end of the year, suddenly I will start coming up with plans and ways I can accomplish the goal that I set for myself
* A declaration brings: Motivation
  + It reminds us why we do something, what our reason is for doing it, and what we are working towards becoming or doing

And lastly…

* A declaration gives: Hope
  + When we declare something, all the darkness can be pressing in around us, but we have hope for something more, a strategy to bring change, and direction, to move beyond the darkness and into the light of hope and success
* I want to tell you a story quickly, so I do kick boxing, as some of you may know, which is one of the reasons why I got us to start by doing some kicks
* I’ve been trying to come up with a name for myself for while I’m kick boxing, because a lot of people change their names, kind of like pop stars, to sound more fierce or appealing. It’s kind of like their ‘fighting name’.
* After a few weeks of thinking about it I thought of something, I was going to call myself the shadow fighter.
* Originally I thought of that because when I train I get very fierce and kind of get into character so that I can fight well if ever I have to defend myself and Shadow Fighter sounded fierce and dangerous, brave enough to fight not only bad guys off, but also perhaps that things that attack in a more deadly, silent way, the things that attack from inside.
* All of a sudden that name had so much more meaning to me, and I kind of took it and made it a part of me
* Yes, I am a kick boxer. Yes, I could put up a pretty good fight if I was challenged. But more than that, I suddenly identified with someone that was willing to not just fight to defend my body, but fight any shadow that threatened to attack my heart.
* I became Shadow Fighter
* As a lot of you know, I have been going through a pretty rough time during the last year, and often I’ve stood up here and said that, but in that moment as I identified with ‘Shadow Fighter’ I realised that the only way I was going to get past all of this was if I started believing I could and trusting God again
* Hands up who sometimes feels like God is further than ever when you go through a super dark time in your life?
  + Well me too!
* So you know what the first thing I declared was?
* I declared that I trusted God.
* Every time something came up that looked hopeless, every time I felt like it would be easier to die than to take another step, every time I felt more alone than ever, I decided to say “God, I trust you, God, I trust you” sometimes to the point of me crying out to God because I didn’t know if I could trust Him or not, because I felt so alone and broken and tired.
* But you know what, pretty soon I did begin to trust Him again. It took time and it didn’t happen immediately, but eventually when something happened that seemed hopeless, instead of letting it break me down a little more, I would look for ways that God could help me and then ask Him to, or just ask God to sort something out that I couldn’t handle emotionally or physically
* I went from a place of kind of living in the shadows to living in the presence of God and watching Him help me every single day, all because I decided to declare that I trusted God to help me even when I had to scream above all the noise straight into the face of darkness and despair
* That is a pretty big victory and transformation from four simple words of a declaration of trust in God
* It gave me a vision for something more than I had, a strategy for how to let God in, motivation to move beyond the hurt and exhaustion, and a hope that I would see better days and God was coming to my rescue.
* But now I want to give you a chance to write a declaration for yourself
* If a declaration is something that gives you vision, strategy and direction, motivation and inspires hope, then what would you declare over yourself?
* I’m going to give you guys ten minutes just to sit with God.
  + You can find a space in the room if you need some space or just stay in your seat and ask yourself these questions

1. What do I want to be known or remembered for?

2. What is one area I want to grow in?

3. What are two of my values, or thing I will not compromise on?

4. Where can my relationship with God grow and how?

* Once you have asked yourself these questions I want you to write it into a declaration. It doesn’t have to be long, it can be just a couple of sentences, but this is supposed to be something you can say over yourself every day when you wake up or before you go to sleep, to create a vision for yourself of who you want to become, inspire strategy on how to get there, to help motivate you to get there, and to inspire hope in your hearts for what may seem impossible from where you are now.
* You guys have ten minutes
* Okay, is everybody done? If not you can take a quick picture and carry on at home, but is there anyone that would like to come up and share their declaration?
* Cool, so let’s just close in prayer