**HOPE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**COURSE:** Relational Evangelism

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**I CAN ONLY IMAGINE**

E. Stanley Jones was a missionary in India for 40 years and authored over 40 books. In one book he told about a tour of a village in India he was taken on. As they walked along the main street of the village his guide pointed out a group of women sitting next to the street weaving rugs. The guide mentioned that it took them 6-8 months to make one rug. Jones wrote that he felt pains of sadness and pity for the women. The rugs were ugly with no design or pattern. There were loose threads and knots everywhere. What a waste of their life making something so ugly!

As they walked further up the street a loud noise made him turn to look back. As he turned, he happened to see the women and their rugs again. He was shocked. He had to go back. Arriving at their location, he realized that earlier he had been looking at the backside of the rugs! Now he saw the front. They were amazingly detailed and beautiful. He was overwhelmed and asked how they could possibly make something so beautiful in only 6-8 months. He stood looking with his mouth hanging open.

I’ve often thought of a wonderful life application in this. At times, from our perspective, our life seems a bit ugly, seemingly lacking in design, full of knots and loose threads. We experience unexplainable and unexpected pains, disappointments, failures and seemingly meaningless events of life maybe mixed with a scattering of good things and it doesn't make sense. We wonder, we have doubts and we ask why, what’s it all about?

Those are the moments when we need to be patient and trust God, the one who weaves the tapestry of our lives. What we see now is the backside of our tapestry. One day, when this life is finished, we are going to be able to look back on all that happened and we are going to see something amazing, a product of the Master Weaver who has been working behind the scenes.  We are going to see the front side of our tapestry, the finished product.

One day we are going to see what God was doing in those dark moments and how He used them to add to the value of the finished product of our life, and it will overwhelm us. Our mouths will fall open as we fully understand how great God is and how He was with us through all the years faithfully working in our life.

I think about all I've gone through in life: the joys, the victories, the struggles, the sins, the failures, the mistakes, the evil actions of others and the mysteries I never understood. I also think about the many blessings in my life: my loving wife, our dear daughters, our grandchildren, dear friends and the laughter and joy I have experienced with others. I think about my sense of peace and joy in knowing Jesus and realizing that He has forgiven me of my sins. Oh, the lists go on and on.

I am sure that one day my eyes will tear up in a momentary blindness as God shows me the final tapestry from my earthly life.

“Why did I ever doubt?”

I believe at that time I will fall to my knees and weep uncontrollably with joy, gratitude and amazement.

I'm sure that the design and colors will be so brilliant that they will make a rainbow appear pale in comparison.

What will the blend of colors be?

For me, I'm sure there will be plenty of black representing my failures and my sins.

There will lots of red showing the blood of Christ by which those sins were forgiven.

There will be plenty of browns recalling the the pain and suffering caused by the lies, betrayals, short sightedness, selfishness, inaction, disinterest, unfaithfulness, abandonment, neglect and indecision.

There will be grays from the dark days, illnesses, loses, injuries, unexplained suffering and hurts.

There will be green reflecting the good I have done.

There will be splashes of light blues reminding me of all the refreshing times from God in my life.

Yes, there will be yellows showing the many moments that the Son shown in my life.

There will be rich purples relecting the majesty of my King.

Oh yes, there will be lots of GOLD indicating the many untold riches God lavished on me.

I can only imagine.