



# Be a Bridge, Build a Bridge

## Session 3: Core Values

May 28, 2017

Eagle Ridge Church of God

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Here's where it all got started.

*And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21*

To reconcile is to build a bridge between two people or groups that have separating them. Paul is saying that he is to act like a bridge between God and people who are separated from him. He brings the message of Christ.

Similarly, to be an ambassador is to be a bridge between government, who sent you, and another nation that the leader wants to have a relationship with. An ambassador is a human bridge.

That's what "be a bridge" is all about.

"Build a bridge" as vision...we are strategically together building bridges into our culture that will provide a path to knowing God

Don't forget, kids, to memorize this passage. Misty and Jason, with youth, and Jenn, with children, remind them.

*Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20*

Both demand an outward focus but if our culture does not match our vision, then culture will win. If our culture is about us and our needs and our comfort then, as the saying goes, "culture eats vision for lunch."

Here's what I mean by culture... Culture = attitudes and behavior characteristic of a particular social group

- Scarcity thinking...there won't be enough for me... what about my needs?
- Consumerism, even if it attracts people.

Core values describe the culture we believe God wants at Eagle Ridge. They are attitudes that affect behavior...those boundaries we won't cross or when they are crossed there will be a response.

John Wooden taught, coached, instilled, these values into all they did at UCLA. This created a culture that produced 10 national championships, countless all-Americans, NBA stars, college graduates, who passed

on what they were taught. Bill Walton, hall of famer and former Bruin, said that after being drafted into the pros he was the highest paid team sports athlete. "When I left UCLA and coach Wooden, my quality of life went down." That's values that create a positive life changing culture.

My cousin Dave was bemoaning the loss of service in the service industry. He had walked up to one to many counters to order only to be greeted by a blank stare from someone who was waiting for his order. Finally, when he walked into a McDonalds, facing that familiar stare, he smiled and quickly said, "Hi my names Dave and I'll be your customer today." Contrast that with this place, Chick-fil-a. These are their core values: Customers First, Personal Excellence, Continuous Improvement, Working Together, and Stewardship. If you've ever entered one of these, you've seen this in action and you sense a culture that reflects. Their business is chicken, but their core values and culture are how they do chicken as opposed to others.

But what about at a church, where they are supposed to be bridges, ambassadors, going and making disciples? I read a story about a pastor of a church that said they were about people who were separated from Christ. There was an evening where there were two people dying in different hospitals. One was a man the pastor knew, but who didn't go to his church, but was about to enter eternity separated from God. That's when the separation becomes permanent. The other person was a long time member of the church who knew Jesus and was about to enter into the presence of Christ's open arms. He had a dilemma. He couldn't be at two places at the same time. He chose to go to the lost man's deathbed where he told him about Jesus. Both men died that same evening. The family of the Christian man's family was angry even after the explanation was given. The church's view of their pastor changed and it wasn't too much longer that he was looking for another place to pastor.

- A culture that was inwardly focused when confronted with a vision to reach lost people ate that vision like a light snack.

Here are what I believe are our core values. I've been bringing updated versions to staff and elders to get kicked around and this is what we have.

### Real-genuine-authentic.

*Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28*

- Where you are is where you are.
- No false self or managing people's perceptions.

Here's how God feels about you where you are as you are right now, not once you get yourself straightened out.

*Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.*

*Romans 5:7-9*

The people who came to Jesus as they are were the ones who experienced his power.

*Example, Isaiah (6:1-13) "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies." 6:5*

You won't have deep and fulfilling relationships with others if you are not real.

Don't try to straighten up and come here or stay away because you know there is something in your life that is contrary to something in the Bible or what the church has traditionally taught. Allow Jesus to meet you where you are instead of trying real hard to change or simply staying away because "I don't fit there".

If we stop right here it sounds like the culture in America. "You be you." "You do you." Decide who you are, how you want to define yourself, and then live it. There's nothing that is sinful, wrong, or out of bounds if you say, "This is who I am." But there's more...

**Ready to be changed...Christ formed in me.**

Listen to the attitude behind this passage.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.*

*11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit[d] from me.*

*12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.*

*13 Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you. Psalm 51:10-13*

We come as we are, not trying to pretend, and then we ask God to transform us.

- Believing in the transformational power of the Holy Spirit.
- Understanding that God loves me as I am but enough to not leave me as I am.

*Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Romans 6:1-4*

Not resisting that power in the Bible, in my brother or sister, the Holy Spirit.

"I'm a just a sinner, addict, broken, flawed...person and that's what I will always be." Instead be open to change.

Growth mentality or a fixed mentality.

*So all of us who have had that veil removed can see*

*and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. 2 Cor. 3:18*

Your destiny is to be changed into the likeness of Jesus more and more. The pace is different for each person. The person who is not seeing the change that another is, must have peace with God's pace and the rest of us must have grace trusting that the person is not resisting the Spirit. The attitude of being ready and not resisting God's desire to change us.

**Relational.**

*As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some demands of you, but instead we were like children (gentle) among you. Or we were like a mother feeding and caring for her own children. We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too... And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory.*

*1 Thess. 2:7-8 & 11-12*

All transformation happens in relationship. Discipleship is life on life.

- Transformation never takes place outside of two relationships, God and other disciples.
- Iron sharpening iron.
- We won't ever become a church that makes disciples who make disciples without relationships as a core value.

Preaching isn't relational, therefore, it is disciple making. I preached a similar series, *Good and Beautiful Life*, a year before. The impact of this series was much greater because you shared it life on life. It wasn't just me talking about it. People don't even remember the first series.

**Release (generosity is close but not exactly).**

*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. Psalms 20:7*

Sabbath and tithe are examples of releasing because we trust.

Tithe is a way of releasing what we want to hold tightly to. It's where we acknowledge that what I have is not mine, but only entrusted to me by the real owner.

*Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations...*

Not squeezing or hoarding out of fear our time, abilities, energy, money and best people.

**We become an airport, not a warehouse.**

When we keep all that is in our grasp for ourselves, we build something that is for us. If we release, then we will build bridges that are for others to walk across.

These values are a part of our history. In 100 years we have been at our best not simply when attendance has been high and staff was big, but rather when we displayed these values.

Be a bridge, build a bridge will be nothing more than a catchy saying unless our culture continues to change.

Resources

Spark: Igniting a culture of multiplication by Todd Wilson

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