

Fresh Start
Week 3: Core Values

Making a fresh start means putting behind past failures and going back to the beginning. Fresh start only makes sense if you believe God allows, even encourages, those things. Don't you want that? If not now, can you remember a time when you were given a fresh start? Now is the time for you and for us, as a church.

We want to be **outwardly focused**. Accepting Jesus' mission as our mission.

We want to develop people **who represent Jesus** out there. They are ambassadors, or **human bridges**.

We become a church of **disciples who make disciples**, not programs that we hope, by default, will make disciples.

We want to build bridges into our community so that people can walk across them and find their way back to God. Like Cultivate at the Midland Mall and in Beaverton.

These are all good things, noble, outwardly focused, **but if the culture of Eagle Ridge Church of God is defensive, consumer oriented, ingrown, focused on feeding the people here first, focused on our comfort** because we know everyone, then what will happen? **When a vision of what we could be and a strategy to get there comes into conflict with an established culture to the contrary, here's what happens.**

Culture always wins. It's not even a fair fight. It's the freshman football team playing the varsity at Dow high or Midland High or Bullock Creek. **"Leadership consultant, Dr. Samuel Chand, goes so far as to say that a church's culture determines the actual direction of a ministry—even more than published vision or mission statements. 'The strongest force in an organization is not vision or strategy—it is the culture which holds all the other components,' Chand says. Or, as Peter Drucker is known for saying, Culture eats strategy for breakfast. Pg. 80 Spark.**

One of the ways to confront and change the culture is to define key values that represent the culture we want. Then you make the attitudes and behaviors reflect those values. That's what we call **core values**.

Example...Hospital in **Colorado Springs**. One of their core values had to be service. Everyone is there to serve our customers or guests. How do I know? Because there was a list of commitments that scrolled across a screen with their mission statement with this phrase, "At _____

hospital we never point." I left the waiting room looking for the restroom, and an employee in a lab coat stopped and asked if he could help me. That man stopped where he was going and walked me to the men's room.

We are asking God to...**Create a culture at Eagle Ridge where we are...**four different things. This is not what we do by the flavor of how we do it.

- **Real, authentic.**

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Cor. 12:9-10

If we are going to create a culture where we are real, then it begins with...Exposing my brokenness.

There is a part of me that would like to manage how you perceive me instead of exposing my brokenness. Will people follow my lead if they know too much about me?

I used to say that I have bouts of, or time to time. Now I say, "I struggle with depression." I said when Quinten was killed that I struggled with anger. I still have anger over Quinten's death. That is real, I'm not propping up a false self or façade.

The congregational level...

There are things you need to know about me or I'm not being real. You can't know me and I can't be an example of God's grace. My preaching would lack credibility. And I steal from you the opportunity to pray for me.

The relational level, life on life...

In my builder group and with a confidant, I would be more specific about that depression and how it is affecting me as well as how the anger is revealing itself in my life. That is real. I'm not putting on a façade.

- With these people who I am sharing my life with, I go to a **deeper level** of openness.
- **There are things those people need to know about me or I'm not being real.**

You need both. You need to **come here**, even if you don't believe all of this, and that's ok. "I have some real doubts." I'm not sure about Jesus as the only way. **You also need to share your life with people** and talk about your brokenness on a different level. **That is why some of you refuse to get into a small group, because you don't want that type of real.**

To be phony is to have a preconceived idea of how I'm expected to act. Then managing people's perception of me. I need to be viewed as being ok. **Being in lock step with everyone else who believes.**

²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. Ephesians 4:22-24

Thus, authenticity in the church is the quality of our exposure of brokenness and adornment in God's grace. An authentic person is one who is both privately and publicly putting off the old self and, by God's grace, putting on the renewed self. Steven McAlpin, Relevant Magazine Dec. 16, 2014

Allow God to be honored by my brokenness.

We want to see God...Create a culture at Eagle Ridge where we are...

- Ready to be changed.

¹⁹ Therefore, **go** and **make** disciples of all the nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ **Teach these new disciples to obey** all the commands I have given you. Matthew 28:19-20

Obey or align your life to Jesus' teaching.

"A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus."

This is the picture of being totally in, or giving one's allegiance to Jesus. It's head, heart, and hands.

- **Head** (changed their mind = repent), **heart** and **hands**
- Jesus wants to change the way you think (head), what you desire at your core (heart), and how you live or behave (hands).

- An apprentice or disciple cannot say to the master, "I want to do the job the way he thinks best. Just what is natural and more comfortable for me."

Growth mentality vs. a fixed mentality (I am what I am or I can grow).

This brings us back to our first core value, "real". There must be a next step after we stop faking, hiding, making excuses, or pretense.

- **This denies the power of God to transform** and to bring new life

So, how do we come ready to change? Understand that being a disciple means you are **putting yourself under someone, allowing them to change you**. Jesus saw you in your sin and denial, loved you right there, but now he wants to transform you into someone who looks more and more like Jesus.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

- God's word uses that word so that we know that you don't add a little Jesus to your life. He isn't here to **tweak or adjust** you. Transformation is like those shows where the person would start eating right, exercising, plastic surgery, new hair (or adding some hair), teaching them how to dress better and how to use makeup and hair products more effectively.
- **Then the person comes out from behind a curtain and everyone gasps.** They are transformed...it's not one thing it's everything. But it's only on the exterior. Jesus wants to do that, starting with your mind, so that your heart, which wants to please him, knows how.

For a disciple who is an apprentice and is being taught Jesus' ways, it is **natural to be transformed**. It's almost like you couldn't stop it. If you could, then you would be more powerful than God.

- **It is natural, so we have to resist it to stop it from happening.** Plant growth, **all the ingredients** are there; we have to take away or block it's light, water, or food.

Circle any words or phrases that speak of resisting God.

⁵¹ **"You stubborn (stiff necked) people! You are heathen^[J] (Uncircumcised! These are fighting words to a Hebrew man.) at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That's what your ancestors did, and so do you!⁵² Name one prophet your ancestors didn't persecute! They even**

killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered.⁵³ You **deliberately disobeyed God's law, even though you received it from the hands of angels.**" Acts 7:51-53

He is speaking to insiders. Those who were supposed to know God. Those who had every advantage. Those who had a leg up, were set up for success in knowing and pleasing God. His people.

Who fits that category now? All the people who don't believe in Jesus nor want to live a life centered on God and focused on pleasing him? **No it's people like me...and you. Who are the insiders today who are cautioned by the words "stubborn", "forever resist the Holy Spirit" and "deliberately disobeyed"? That's us.**

"Stiff necked" means not wanting to turn your head. In my **vertigo**, one of the issues that causes it is your neck gets stiff, the muscles tighten up keeping your head from turning in ways that make you dizzy. But trying not to do what makes you dizzy, actually is what is making it worse. Therapy was to loosen my neck up and train myself to look where my body was trying to resist looking. *Get it?*

Jesus is saying to us, **"If you want to follow me, then you need to stop resisting turning your head and looking at what I want you to look at.** That may be a behavior for you. I'm not going to look at my...

- **Set the Bible over there** and act like I can't turn and look at it. Then strain to look at the cross.

Create a culture at Eagle Ridge where we are...

Relational in our approach to everything.

- It's the mission not a strategy.

⁷As 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.**⁸ **We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.**⁹ Don't you remember, **dear brothers and sisters**, how hard we worked among you? Night and day we toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached (means **proclaim**, not simply a sermon as we know it) **God's Good News** to you.¹⁰ You yourselves are our witnesses—and so is God—that we were devout and honest and faultless toward all of you believers.¹¹ And you know that **we treated each of you as a father treats his own children.**¹² **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. 2:7-12

Jesus is the example of relational incarnational ministry.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, **the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.** John 1:14

Jesus did not try to get thousands of people into a coliseum at Rome so he could proclaim the gospel on a platform of power that was already recognized by the world around him. He did not "restore the Kingdom to Israel" in a way that made sense to his Jewish contemporaries. He focused instead on a handful of disciples. He focused on loving those the Father placed before them, both for the sake of love itself, and to reveal the generous heart of God. He focused on humanizing those whom God the Father had placed before him, on treating them with honor, on hearing their stories, and on proclaiming the reign of God in them, around them, and through them. Our work, like Jesus' work, is simply to love others—those people Jesus has placed (or will place) in our life, not to save the world. In other words, life as an adopted child of God always leads to life as an ambassador of the Kingdom of God **in the life we are already living.**
Learning to Live and Love Like Jesus, Brandon Cook pg.46

Create a culture in Eagle Ridge where we...

Release what we want to hold on to.

To release is to let go of, set free, relinquish control over.....

The LORD is my shepherd; **I have all that I need.** ² He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. ³ **He renews my strength.** He guides me along the right paths, bringing honor to his name. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. ⁵ **You prepare a feast** for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. **My cup overflows with blessings.** ⁶ Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and **I will live in the house of the LORD forever.** Psalm 23

Do I believe that a God who is loving and generous would tell me to release my money, time, and our best people and then not meet our needs? **Obedying always works. Not always easy or cheered** by those around us.

- **Giving to missions** when our budget was tight. **Everything within me says** hold on to that money, you might need it later.
- **If I tithe**, I might need that money. We have a challenging budget.

To release is the opposite of hoard and consume.

If I'm the king of my kingdom, then it's my stuff and I should have it available for my consumption. Release means I know who owns my money, my time, and my relationships.

Release implies trust in the one who is telling you to let go.

- **Hoard and consume implies fear** that the one telling me to release doesn't love me and doesn't know what is best for me. **"But I might need this later."**

Hoarding and consuming **creates a lot of waste**. That starts to stink. **Releasing or sending is like deodorant** for what will make us stink to those around us who don't know Christ.

- **What we release, God can multiply.**

Addition is about hoarding and then consuming. Because there is not enough and my heavenly father won't take care of me if I obey him; then I must take matters into my own hands and stockpile or hoard so that I can still consume when times are lean.

Here's what it looks like in a church.

Let's say we take our programs and add to them so we have more programs. What will we need to do?

Let's say we want to add 100 more people to this church. What will we need to do?

What if we get more money? In the midst of the first two. What will we need to do? Spend it on more staffing.

What if we add on to this building to cover the increased numbers?

It takes a lot of energy, focus, and resources that are about us, not on people who need a bridge to find their way back to God.

What if we changed the Scorecard? In the American church to score, we keep what we accumulate. **What if we flipped it and gave points for how much we released?**

- That's a **river church**, not a lake church. **In a lake church, the people flow in and stay.** The goal is more people around 1 pastor. In a river church, people instead flow in and then downstream. **We measure the flow instead.** (pg 85)

We don't dam up the river, because then the ones downstream don't get water.

"Value survival, and you'll establish a scarcity (subtraction) culture. Value additional growth, and you'll establish an accumulation culture. Value multiplication, and you'll establish a sending culture." Spark pg 95

We are about to do that by measuring how many people we send to Beaverton. We are measuring how many people we send to cultivate.

This is a challenge for us right now because we don't see everyone gathered together. **That additional growth mentality gives us a feeling that everything is ok because we see this room filled.** The pandemic is challenging us to see the church as something that isn't all about this gathering getting bigger.

See if you can see multiplication and sending in these two verses?

Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. ² You have heard me (Paul) teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. 2 Timothy 2:1-2

- **Four generations** of disciples in this verse. Paul-Timothy-trustworthy people-those they "pass them on to", "others".
- You have and will continue to hear us saying that we want to become a **church of disciples who make disciples to the 3rd and 4th generation.** That's the verse behind that phrase.

Steps to a Fresh Start
Where are you lacking?

As we have gone through these core values, **has the Holy Spirit nudged you about one where you are lacking?** Maybe it's **because of some hurt or brokenness** caused in your formative years. If it **hurts or you feel guilt** because you really aren't expressing one of these values in the way you live, please understand that **the Holy Spirit is bringing it up because his job is to transform** you into the person you were intended to be. Not only that, but when you start in small ways learning to live one of these values, **your efforts are helping us all to have this kind of culture.**

The challenge is **to do one thing** that shows that you want to begin valuing what you have been lacking.

- **Real, authentic.**
- **Ready to be changed.**
- **Relational.**
- **Release what I want to hold on to.**

We can't have this kind of culture if we aren't allowing God to challenge us to be more of these 4 things. It will be just words on a paper or screen. **Not the hospital in Colorado.**

Ask God to do this in me as a part of his transformation of my life.