

**Moving in the Right Direction**  
**January 8, 2023**

We are beginning a new year. This is a natural time and place to **start something fresh, something new**. Or it can be to **restart something important** that has slipped into the background. **This is always a natural place in time to take stock and make sure we are heading in the right direction.**

To start as simply as we can, **the right direction is the direction that Jesus is going**. He is the **center** of everything. Jesus is **the subject**, period. But it's **more than just copying his path**, it's going where he is going now.

Maybe this will help. **<sup>44</sup> For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. <sup>45</sup> As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. John 6:44-45**

**God gets there first**. Anything that you pursue that is of God was not **originally your thought**. It was placed there. **He does the drawing or pulling or inviting or wooing.**

Our part is described this way.

- **Taught** by God.
- **Listens** to the Father.
- **Learns** from him (God).
- **Comes** to me (Jesus).

**Do you have any desires to get more of what God is offering?** That means you are **open to being taught**, you want to **listen to him**, you want to **learn from him**. **These are evidence that the Holy Spirit is present**. In other words...**Wanting more of God means He is drawing you in.**

**This is really good news!** This makes it clear that it's **not up to you to find God, to figure him out, to crack code**. It's not up to your **goodness, intelligence, and religiousness**... You don't have to meet **certain qualifications**, you just need to be willing to be taught, listen, and learn. It

also doesn't demand that you have to **achieve a certain level of holiness first**.

**Attraction** to something or someone means you are being drawn in that direction.

**Do you have a taste for the things of God?**

**Are you asking the right questions** about who God is and what he is doing?

This is not to be confused with other questions like:

- **Am I good enough** for God to speak to?
- **Am I deserving of God's attention?**
- **Do I have any bad habits or vices that will disqualify me?**
- **Do I know enough of the Bible** to please God?
- **Am I just going to fall short, like I always do, so why move?**

**God speaking always demands movement, which demonstrates faith.**

**We cannot stay where we are, as we are, and still follow Jesus.**

**Following implies that the object is moving, doing things that need to be copied.**

Following Jesus is not some kind of **cute metaphor for life**. **No, we are literally following where Jesus is going because he is drawing us to himself.**

**Moving in the direction Jesus set.**

**This is not like the progressives** say, that we just need to keep moving forward and becoming more modern. **You have to know which way is forward**, or in our case, which way is Jesus moving and beckoning us?

This is not like the **conservatives**, you want to go backwards. It demands forward movement.

**(Bridge Diagram)**

**Jesus is saying, "Come & See what I am about" ...Invitation to explore.**

It's like **walking in a store**, looking at clothes, kitchen stuff, or sporting goods. **You aren't asked to make a commitment** to buying something before you enter or before you leave. When asked, "**Can I help you find something,**" you reply, "**I'm just browsing right now.**" **You explore and see where that takes you.**

**The show room at the dealership is different from the cubical face to face with the salesman, or even the manager.**

**Jesus operates in lots of different spaces, making these spaces where he does his work of transforming people into disciples.**

This is the first discipleship space that Jesus operated in, the **Public Space**. Like the **store, show room, or even a large gathering**, like a sporting event or concert. **The size of the gathering dictates that it isn't very intimate and demands very little** from the participant. Just take it in and see what you think. **You don't typically get to know people** any more than a surface level. You wouldn't start **handing out your personal information**. It doesn't demand that you send the person next to you a **Christmas card** and tell them your favorite color. There's another space for that.

**This is a setting that Jesus used.** He preached the **Sermon on the Mount** and also demonstrated his **healing power in the public space**. He let people **discover a little bit of who he was and what he came to accomplish**. He did this through speaking and doing miraculous, unexpected things. **He didn't have an altar call where he asked them to join him.** He didn't hand out **commitment cards** or try to seal the deal. **He stepped back, waited, and watched to see who moved toward him.**

**He even said stuff that sounded crazy**, like to follow me you must eat my flesh and drink my blood. That will clear the room or thin the herd.

**Where do we operate in this space and invite people to discover Jesus?**  
**That happens at Sunday Morning Worship.**

(Bridge Diagram)

**On Sunday morning, you get to discover more about who Jesus is and what it would mean to further a relationship with him. That is done through worship music, scripture reading, offering our tithes and offerings. You get to experience his presence and people.**

**This is theory; this is the tip of the iceberg. Jesus is saying, "This is the kind of stuff I do, that I'd like to do in you, if you'll let me." We get to see whether someone wants to follow even after the preacher says crazy stuff in the sermon.**

The next space that Jesus used we call the...**Social Space.**

Jesus operated in this space when he was at a **wedding, party, meal, or gathering where his followers were there, but also others** who may or may not be ready to follow him. He could have a **conversation across the table, unlike standing on a mountain** talking to people sitting below him on the grass.

This might be where Jesus is **sitting on a rock, eating lunch with his disciples, and a handful of people come because something piqued their interest.** They wanted to hear a little more.

This happens when we do things like our annual all **church picnic, soup on Sundays, and picnic at the pavilion.** One of the main areas where you can see God's people in this space is **in the lobby before or after worship, drinking coffee or just milling around and talking.** The commitment level is higher and the **intimacy is higher** than in the public place. **Conversations tend to be longer** and in greater depth. There is a chance to get to know someone better.

**Here's the next step across our bridge, moving in the right direction, Jesus' direction. Jesus is saying, "Come and follow me" ...Invitation to learn.**

**We learn by listening, watching, and creating space for Jesus.**

**These are the people who take it further than hanging out, leaning on a tree, and listening. This goes further than sticking around for the after party so I can ask some questions that usually start with, "what did you**

mean when you said \_\_\_\_\_?" **This is where I've seen enough to know that I'm going to get closer to this person, spend time with him and learn from him.**

This is called the **Personal Space**. **Jesus spent 80%** of his time with 12 apostles and a few women who traveled with him. **Clearly this is the space where Jesus did his best, most important work.** That tells you something about Jesus, doesn't it? For a man who **could have walked into the coliseum** in Rome, healed a few people, waved his hand as Caesar drops dead, to do it this way is significant.

At Eagle Ridge...**This happens at Bridge Groups.**  
(Bridge Diagram)

A bridge group is **not where we play bridge** or any other card game. **We call them bridge groups because** that's what we want to become, bridges for others to use to find their way back to God.

Now the stuff that is said on Sunday morning, the **theory gets dropped into a relational environment where it becomes practice.** It becomes **obedience.** We get to **reflect with other people** who are also trying to put into practice what is taught through God's Word, the Bible. **That's why we give you ways to obey or align your life to what Jesus is teaching in the Sunday sermons.** You can take it or leave it. But in a bridge group, we discuss and practice these things together. **It goes from theory to reality; from good advice to something I'm actually trying to do with the help of friends.**

**Flip over your outline** and you can see where all of the Bridge Groups are meeting and who the leaders are. **This is the perfect time to take this step of faith.** If you want to be in a group, **but none of the times work for you,** let us know. Next week we will hear from **Melissa Chesney,** our director of Bridge Groups.

Here is the next step across our bridge, moving in the right direction, Jesus' direction. **Jesus is saying, "Come & Join me in what I'm doing"...Invitation to serve others.**

Jesus said very clearly that he did not **come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom** for many. This is who Jesus is. **We can't follow him unless** we are joining him as he serves. **We aren't initiating this, we are joining what he is already doing.**

**Jesus fed the five thousand** people who followed him into the countryside. They didn't have any food. When the disciples informed him of this, he said, **"You feed them."** Then he helped them do it with him.

At Eagle Ridge...**This happens inside our church and outside.**  
(Bridge Diagram)

Outside the church:

- **Cultivate**, Midland Mall or if you live around Sanford.

Our partner organizations like:

- Adoption Option.
- Young Lives.
- Salvation Army Share.
- Reach the Forgotten.
- Open Door.
- Warner Camp

**There are other places, because there are people who are in need, broken, and separated from God's love.**

In the church family:

- Tech/sound.
- Children.
- Youth.
- Greeting.
- Pickleball...Setting a start date soon.
- Visiting.
- Worship.
- Food for funeral dinners & helping out with soup on Sunday etc.
- Use your imagination.

<sup>9</sup> Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:9-10

Here is the next step across our bridge, moving in the right direction, Jesus' direction. **Jesus is saying, "Come and Remain with me"...**invitation to **multiply His Kingdom.**

This is what we call the **Intimate space**. As we move across the bridge **from the public, to social, to the personal, and finally to the intimate:** the size **gets smaller** and the level of **sharing gets deeper**.

In Jesus' case this would have been his times with **Peter, James, and John his inner circle**. They got to **see Jesus change form** and become transformed into a glorious state in the garden. **He shared stuff with them that he didn't with the rest.**

**God used these men in powerful ways** causing the message of Jesus to be spread across the world. **They multiplied what Jesus did along with others.** **You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you.** <sup>4</sup> **Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.**<sup>5</sup> **"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:3-5**

**If we remain fully connected with Jesus, we will bear much fruit.** There will be people **we help, lead, disciple, who will go off to do great things,** leading others to follow Jesus. **This is not addition,** like someone new coming to church, this is multiplication. **It's multiplication that allowed the message to spread across continents, not simply addition.** If they had **stayed in Jerusalem** and not spread across the world, the kingdom would not have multiplied.

For us...**This happens in Builder Cohorts.**  
(Bridge Diagram)

**A builder cohort is a 6-month time of growing and sharing life together with 3-6 others. We learn what the gospel really is and isn't. We learn how to use spiritual disciplines or practices to open our lives to the Spirit's transforming power. But the catch isn't that we are just doing this to make our lives better, it is in order to lead someone in the same path I have been led.**

**We don't have a sign up for these. We are not trying to get everyone into these quickly. This burns slowly. It is something that we ask people to pray about, who have finished a cohort to approach people they think God is preparing them for. Ultimately you get invited. If God is leading you in this way just let me, Pete Deal, or Deb Yats know that you are interested and we will give your name to the people who are starting the next generation of groups.**

**Here's where we get to the end of the bridge, where we've been heading all this time.**

**<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" <sup>2</sup> Corinthians 5:19-20**

We become ambassadors for King Jesus. Ambassadors cannot stay, they must go. They are...Released into the wild to make The Kingdom present for others.

(Bridge Diagram)

**Someone who has learned how to replicate, or help someone learn to follow Jesus and is able to make the Kingdom present for others, is what we would call a fully functioning disciple of Jesus. Wherever God puts them, they can find those person's of peace and lead them to Christ as well as being salt and light.**

They are poured out into every nick and cranny, crack and crevice of culture. **<sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be**

head over everything for the church,<sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:22-23

That's how we move in the right direction; in the direction Jesus is leading us. We go from simply being drawn, to discovering, learning, serving, and multiplying, by making disciples. Then we are released to go wherever God leads us as a fully functioning, totally broken, hot mess disciple of Jesus, who he is making new.

### Moving with Jesus:

Remember this demands moving, not staying where we are as we are. What are we going to do about it? Let's start with a couple of very important questions that can help us personalize this.

### Am I stuck?

Have you resisted moving? Allow yourself to take that next step across the bridge. He's still calling and he still has amazing things for you. It's not too late.

Do I have any desire for more than I have of God in my life right now? If the answer is "no" what can I do? Simply, ask for the desire, ask for the want to, ask to become discontented with practicing a relationship instead of enjoying a relationship with King Jesus.

### What is my next step of faith?

I'm diving into this winter series! This is where we direct them to pick up a journal and a bookmark for the winter series. Explain the first bible study.

Join a Bridge Group (Beaverton will have Melissa this week and some response cards.) This is the largest step for most people and demands trust.

### Set a meeting with Tammy to begin serving.

Tammy Naffie is on staff. She is our director of Mobilization.

