

Begin Again Becoming a Sending Church

We are continuing our series "Begin Again." **To this point we have been resetting the target and checking the foundational things** that we are building upon before we start building. **Today we start building on those foundations.**

We talked last week about releasing, becoming a sending church instead of an attracting and accumulating church. Today we get to actually act like a sending church by sending some people.

Becoming a sending church demands...

A willingness to go when staying seems safer.

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 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. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Because Jesus is king and has been given all authority you can go in confidence. **But what keeps us from going or sending is that we forget who is king, who has authority.** That's when staying seems safer.

Let's look at how Jesus did it the first time. Yes, he had them practice this being sent, or going, under his authority **before his resurrection.**

The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. ² These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. ³ **Now go, and remember** that I am sending you out as **lambs among wolves.** ⁴ Don't take any **money** with you, nor a **traveler's bag**, nor an extra pair of **sandals**. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road. ⁵ "Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God's peace be

on this house.' ⁶ If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. ⁷ Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what they provide. Don't hesitate to **accept hospitality**, because those who work deserve their pay. ⁸ **"If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.'**
Luke 10:1-9

Lambs among wolves! That sounds like we should **stay where we are, in the sheep pen.** (Gesture as if our building is the sheep pen) If that isn't bad enough, he tells them to **not take money** with them, a travel bag, or extra shoes. Money, my stuff, and extra shoes are **all signs that I am prepared** and I can handle this. **Jesus says go without the stuff you think you need.**

And then he says to look for the people who return your peace. These are the person's of peace **who God has prepared to receive** what they are giving. **That is the proof that his authority is in play.** Then all the stuff they thought they needed, **people will give them,** which is another sign of Jesus' authority.

Then the final proof of his authority is that they will be able to do what Jesus did, heal the sick, and effectively preach the kingdom.

There are two key phrases from this passage that must be remembered to be a sending church. The first is in verse one, **"The Lord now chose"**. The second is in verse 3, **"Now go, and remember that I am sending you."** Jesus chose you and he sends you.

Becoming a sending church demands...**Faith in Jesus' way**
(or his math).

- This is about multiplication, not simply addition.

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

We have another platform from which disciples can make disciples and God's people can love neighbor. It's **one reaching one**, but from another base of operation. We have a second platform from which people can reach people. **First, there's Cultivate**, our coffee shop at the mall where we are reaching people we would have had no chance to know had we not gone. **And now we are sending people to Beaverton**, a place where we would have had no chance of reaching people if we had not gone.

What if we just added our friends from Beaverton and then didn't send them back prepared to be a disciple making church? **The answer is, that would have been addition and not multiplication.**

Multiplication is Jesus' way, but it demands going, sending!

Becoming a sending church demands...**Courage to go. against the flow**

What does time after a natural disaster, during a pandemic, and the economic downturn lead us to do?

- Play defense.
- Make sure all of your people don't leave or wander off.
- Circle the wagons.
- Let's take care of our own, as if multiplying means we can't take care of our people.

The natural flow is to say, "This isn't a good time." Here's the honest truth, **there's never a good time** to send people. If you wait for a good time, you'll never do it.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² 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 12:1-2

We have to go against the natural flow of our humanity and our culture if we are going to discover God's will, which is good, pleasing, and perfect.

What is the cultural pattern right now in America? Negativity and divisiveness is the pattern. We are practicing the opposite, unity. One church, two locations, we are better together.

The spirit has a flow to it also, but it is typically not in the direction of culture.

Both Midland and Beaverton campuses will need to be willing to watch a screen once a month. That is for the sermon, not worship.

Becoming a sending church demands...Looking for signs of the Kingdom.

The foundational truth of the Bible is that God is always working and always speaking. The question is, do we see his work and hear his voice?

What are these signs of the kingdom that we need to be looking for? First, here's what the kingdom is. The Kingdom of God (Heaven) is the restoration of God's rule over all things.

It's putting things back to the way they were before sin came into the world. With sin, God allowed us to go our own way and be our own authority, not follow his loving rule. The kingdom is God putting things right. **We see signs of that when people and his creation start to come back under his rule.**

Look at the great commission again. Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Matthew 28:18 This commissioning is a part of the kingdom, God's rule being restored.

May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10 There are signs of things on earth looking like they do in heaven where God's loving rule is unchallenged.

Brendon Cook in his book, *Learning to live and love like Jesus*, talks about making the reign of God present or presencing the Kingdom. **"We like this phrase. It's a clever way of describing God's kingdom as both being present and advancing in the world. When Spirit-filled disciples are sent from prayerful churches in the power of the Holy Spirit to love and serve others in the world—especially in ways that lead to people being disciplined in the gospel—the "presencing" of God's kingdom multiplies powerfully. That is what Jesus did, it's what he trained his disciples to do, and it's what Jesus commands us to do today—both individually and as members of the church."** *The Discipleship Gospel* by Sobels & Hull pg. 56

Where are you seeing glimpses of Jesus' authority being restored? Where are you seeing things being made new again? Where are you seeing glimpses of God's will being done on earth as it is right now in heaven? Here's what I've seen.

God's Kingdom is being made present in...

- One week no money, the next week nearly 100,000.
- Willingness of our elders to dive into this.
- Willingness of the Beaverton people to die in order to live and give up autonomy.
- No sentimentality when we tore up the building.
- Willingness of Deb and Dave to start a new life in a new town with a new church that will love like Jesus and see people come to Christ and taught how to follow Jesus.
- People who aren't super outgoing volunteering at Cultivate, sharing their lives with people who live and work at the mall.

- Bob Coleman.
- Yvonne and Jim Lamson.
- Grandparents who bring your grandkids to church.

Are people being drawn to things of God who aren't Christian? That's a sign of the kingdom?

Are people trusting Jesus and being baptized? That's a sign of the kingdom.

Is your life being transformed into something that looks more like Jesus? You're a sign of the kingdom.

Are you finding yourself wanting more of what God has always wanted for you, but you've resisted in the past? Then you're a sign of the kingdom.

17 Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven." Matthew 16:17-19

I do not interpret this to simply Peter. It speaks about the church, therefore it is for you and me. **If Christ is your king, then you have the keys to His kingdom. When you go in Jesus' name, you make the Kingdom present for other people. You have the keys to the kingdom. When people see your life being directed and transformed by Jesus, they have an opportunity to see the kingdom.**

The kingdom is a present reality and a future promise at the same time. The promise is that it is moving forward and expanding, pushing its borders outward. That means this is not simply about an organization that will have a presence in Beaverton and Midland. It is about a

movement. And that is what we've always fancied ourselves as in the church of God. We aren't a denomination, but rather a movement. **I like being a part of a movement** a whole lot better than thinking I'm a part of an organization.

¹⁸ Then Jesus said, "What is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? ¹⁹ It is like a tiny mustard seed that a man planted in a garden; **it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds make nests in its branches.**" Luke 13:18

²⁰ He also asked, "What else is the Kingdom of God like? ²¹ It is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. **Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.**" Luke 13:20-21

Today we get to practice being a sending church. We will need to resist our tendency to stay. We will need to go against the flow that says play defense, this isn't the right time. We will need to believe that the way Jesus did it is the way we should still do it.

Steps of Obedience

- Pray for and encourage those who are going.
- Give consistently.
- Go and See for yourself.

Deb will thank some people..

Commissioning prayer.