

Movement through Multiplication (Matt 28.18-20)

Redeemer Values | 2023

I. REVIEW: EMBODYING OUR SHARED VALUES

- A. At the center of our pursuits together as a spiritual family must be an understanding of what values *motivate* us to action. Intentionally defining and instructing in our motivational values will help us to better organize our labors in focused and consistent ways over time.
- B. Each of us possess a value system that gives shape to how we seek to orient our resources (time, energy, money, etc.). Our value system is how we define: (1) what matters; (2) what we see as successful; and (3) how we participate within a group of people.
- C. Understanding our motivational values is essential, because these motivational values should give birth to process, activity, and focus together. Said differently, our values determine our **commitments**.
- D. For our church to embrace a vision fully (i.e., choices and commitments over the long-haul) requires that we seek to possess a **shared value system**. This will help us pursue a vision of where God is leading us together with greater personal buy-in, zeal, and resolve.

II. MOVEMENT

- A. The final motivational value that we hold as a church is related to **movement** through multiplication. Within the flow of our values, this is an essential outworking of our prior two values.
- B. We believe that every encounter with God and all transformation tends toward *multiplication* and some form of external expression (over time).
- C. As with our previous values, we must be *intentional* and *consistent* in establishing this value as the **effective result** that operates within the life of our church. However, we must spend significant time casting vision and training for what we are to expect in thinking about movement and multiplication.
- D. To talk about movement is an attempt to set a trajectory toward becoming a disciple-making movement — not setting a vision for the size or scope of our impact. We long to be the kind of church that produces disciples who make disciples who make disciples.

III. THE GREAT COMMISSION

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28.18-20)

- A. The heart of our commitment to this value is the reality of the Great Commission. Jesus gave his believers a assignment in walking out obedience to his mission in the earth.
- B. We believe that *every* believer (and every spiritual family) is called to walk in obedience to the Great Commission in and through their lives. However, we do not believe that this necessitates that every believer “Go” abroad (i.e., international missions) or that this dictates the scope of the impact within their lives (i.e., size and scope).
- C. The potency of the Great Commission is built on two primary pillars:
 - 1. **New conversion** (baptizing in Jesus’ name): Jesus promised that as his disciples went, they would bring new members into the family of God.

2. **Discipleship** (teaching to obey his commandments): Jesus also instructed his disciples to shape the *obedience* of those who were coming into the household of God through *teaching* and *instructing*.
- D. The vision for our church should include a picture of disciples who make disciples. This fights against many implicit values and processes we have come to hold in the western church. Many models of church are built primarily on a “come and see” model of discipleship. However, we must recognize the “priesthood of all believers” and seek to reorient the rhythms of our lives together.
 - E. However, to reorient our church around a desire for multiplicative discipleship does not mean that we forsake the high value of the corporate gathering (as the place to worship together, hear the word of God proclaimed, and partake of the sacraments together).
 - F. To hold fast to these two tensions will require great care and the grace of the Spirit. We long to be a people who understand the need for the community of God and who are committed to multiplication.

IV. JESUS IS REIGNING THROUGH HIS CHURCH

- A. Jesus situates the Great Commission in his authority over all creation. In his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus has been established as the Lord over all the earth.
- B. The New Testament authors understood that the *primary way* Jesus expresses his present reign (i.e., the kingdom of God) on the earth between his comings is *through* the ministry of the Church. In this age this happens primarily through *spiritual ministry*.
- C. If it is true that the primary way that Jesus expresses his kingdom reign in this age is through the spiritual ministry of the church, we must understand the *two aspects* of this ministry and then understand the essential need for the anointing of the Spirit to fulfill each of these ministries.

1. The church expresses the kingdom reign of God through faithful proclamation of the gospel in *evangelism*. In the context of the New Testament, this was always to be done in partnership with *demonstrations* of the Spirit’s power to give witness to the kingdom rule of Christ Jesus.

¹And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction... ⁷proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’. ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons (Matt 10.1, 7)

¹After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two... ⁹Heal the sick in it and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you”... ¹⁷The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” (Luke 10.1, 9, 17)

³I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (I Cor 2.3-5)

²⁰For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. (I Cor 4.20)

2. The second way the church expresses the kingdom reign of God is through *building up the church*. This happens through faithful discipleship, teaching others to walk in obedience to Jesus’ commandments, and in a specific way is empowered through the operation of the gifts of the Spirit among the body.

¹¹And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4.11-13)

³the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation... ⁴the one who prophesies builds up the church (I Cor 14.3-4)

- D. One of the essential aspects of seeking to *fulfill the Great Commission* is to understand the relationship between the empowering of the Spirit of God and the inbreaking of God’s kingdom.
- E. Jesus commanded his disciples to not first *go* into all the nations, but to *wait* until they were endued with the power of the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24.28)

- F. On the Day of Pentecost, God poured out his Spirit upon his church to be the animating presence of empowering life as they sought to fulfill the great commission.

¹When the day of Pentecost arrive, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2.1-4)

- G. The early church continually returned to the place of seeking greater infilling of God’s presence in order to walk in obedience to the Great Commission.

²⁹And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4.29-31)

V. RIGHT-SIZED EXPECTATIONS

- A. Along with a vision for multiplicative discipleship we must have a tempered understanding of the “patient ferment” of discipleship that is presented in the New Testament.¹
- B. Many of the parables of Jesus outline the slow, quiet, even seemingly “unsuccessful” work of multiplication as it will be experienced in this age.

³¹He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” ³³He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flower, till it was all leavened.” (Matt 13.31-33)

- C. This demonstrates to us that most ministry in the church happens in small, seemingly insignificant contexts. Many people will never minister beyond 2-3 individuals at any given time. However, we are given a vastly different vision for “success” in the kingdom of heaven.
- D. Jesus declares that our true and lasting greatness is tied to our own commitment to wholehearted pursuit (and obedience) to his words — and our faithful (intentional) teaching of others to do the same. It is important for us to remember that he does not evaluate success based on size and scope of our ministry, but on our intentional commitment to call others to lives of wholehearted pursuit of him.

¹⁹Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5.19)

¹This phrase is borrowed from the title of Alan Kreider’s wonderful book *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church*.