

Small Groups

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Mantles – Part 4
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Main Idea – The most meaningful mantle available to you is the mantle Jesus left behind. Without this mantle Kingdom work is not possible. To receive Jesus' mantle for yourself you must first desire it, then you must identify new priorities, give birth to a new way of living and thinking, and then do what He did by serving the needs of others.

Jesus left a mantle

- Mantles are unique, directed anointings, responsibilities, and assignments that serve God's earthly purposes.
- There is no reason for a mantle to stay in Heaven. It's purpose for being is for earthly work.
- Just like the patriarchs of the Old Testament, Jesus left behind a mantle you can pick up.
- Jesus' mantle is not just about salvation. Jesus' mantle is also about serving others.
- There is much Kingdom work to be done in the local church.

How the Book of Acts describes Jesus' mantle

- **Acts 2: 14-39** is Peter's address to the people of Jerusalem on the day the Holy Spirit was released to all people. In this brief message, Peter explained how Jesus' ministry had been prophesied for thousands of years, the reason for His coming, and how His crucifixion was the incentive for believers to commit to serving according to that legacy.
- The Holy Spirit is faithful to bring people together and grow the church when believers pick up Jesus' mantle. **Acts 2: 40-47** – **And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,**

praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Brought together for a reason

- God brought the church together for a purpose.
- To pick up Jesus' mantle, it was important new believers be trained; and that their lives be fundamentally changed in order for the work of the mantle to be accomplished.
- Jesus didn't recruit the twelve apostles because He needed their help. Rather, Jesus trained them so they could carry on His work after He was crucified.
- *Harry Firestone, the founder of the Firestone Tire Company, is quoted as having said, "The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."*
- The church today, even in a Christian-friendly state like Texas, is faced with the challenge of successfully integrating new believers into their congregations.
- In His Sermon on the Mount – recorded in **Matthew Chapters 5-7** – Jesus concisely taught the fundamentals of Christian living.
- The gospel writer Mark also quoted something else Jesus said about His mantle - **Mark 8 34-36: When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"**
- Jesus' description of His mantle is a synopsis of a believer's Christian journey through life.

In order to wear Jesus' mantle, one must:

- have desire
- deny oneself
- give birth to a new life by letting the old life die
- follow in Jesus' footsteps

Desire

- To pick up Jesus' mantle, you must first have the desire to wear it.
- Acting on your desire simply requires easy-to-understand initial steps.
- For example, we are called to come to church, show up, and get involved.
- Your presence in church - and your service to others - is a testimony to others that you are a believer.

Denial

- As you develop your desire to wear Jesus' mantle, you will develop new agendas in your life. Your daily habits will gradually, but continuously, evolve.
- As you pick up Jesus' mantle, you will find yourself thinking less about your own agendas and desiring to discover more about God's agendas.
- **Luke 9:23 – Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” (NIV)**

Death to the old lifestyle and ways of thinking

- As old habits and thoughts begin to die, they are replaced by new ways of thinking, living, and being.
- **Matthew 5: 17-48** contains numerous statements by Jesus where He raised to a higher level the hearers' expectations of their own performance.
- One example is in **verses 38-39** – **“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”**
- Another example is **verses 43-44** – **“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”**

Follow Jesus

- As you go through the process of desire, denial, and death/new birth, you will find yourself automatically following Jesus' footsteps.
- **Mark 8: 35 - For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.**
- Jesus' mantle is available to every believer. Jesus came to earth to serve by first offering salvation - and then by preparing others to follow behind Him in teaching and service to others.

Reflective Questions for Mantles, Part 4

1. Pastor Stephen provided a quote from Harry Firestone (above). To what extent do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why did you answer as you did?
2. The wearing of Jesus' mantle requires personal transformation. Which of the four steps (desire, denial, death/ new birth, following) is the most exciting or meaningful to you?

3. Because you are wearing a mantle designed in Heaven, what are your expectations of how the Holy Spirit will help you as you pick up and put on Jesus' mantle?