

4.12.2023

Opening: A church culture of growth at all costs mentality can be dangerous if it is not accompanied by the truth that we can and should only grow what is healthy. Cancer is growth that is not healthy. As a church we want to grow the way God wants us to grow. Anyone can draw a crowd, but God is not after crowds He is after disciples. Discipleship is the result of God healing that which is broken, corrupted, out of place and unhealthy in our lives. Let's look at what Health before growth means for God's church here at Pendleton First.

Key Verse Ephesians 4:7 - 11

7Now to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of the **gift of Christ.** **8**This is why it says: "When He ascended on high, He led captives away, and **gave gifts to men.**" **9**What does "He ascended" mean, except that He also descended to the lower parts of the earth? **10**He who descended is the very One who ascended above all the heavens, in order to **fill all things.** **11**And it was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, **12to equip the saints for works of ministry** and to build up the body of Christ, **13**until we **all reach unity in the faith** and in the knowledge of the Son of God, as we **mature to the full measure of the stature of Christ.****14**Then we will no longer be infants, **tossed about by the waves** and carried around by every wind of teaching and by the clever cunning of men in their deceitful scheming. **15**Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things **grow up** into Christ Himself, who is the head. **16**From Him the whole body, fitted and held together by every supporting ligament, grows, and builds itself up in love **through the work of each individual part.**

Ezekiel 36:25-27 25I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. 26I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27And I will put **My Spirit within you** and **cause you to walk in My statutes** and to carefully observe My ordinances.

1. God's desire Habakuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the **glory of the LORD** as the waters cover the sea

a. God's glory is His excellence, His nature, His ways, and His goodness. God desires that the whole earth be full of who He is so that all people can receive and know Him. **You are here today because God's desire has met your heart. We owe it to make sure others hear the good news.**

b. The ultimate fulfillment of this verse will be when Christ returns but today, we have been given a great commission to go into all the world and make disciples of the nations.

c. God's desire cannot be accomplished without committed leaders working in unity. God's vision is fulfilled through multiplication of gifts.

2. Love or Religion: You are not valued because of your work for Jesus. You are valued because God made you and placed His spirit within you.

- a. Religion puts works as the driver of relationship “ If I work for Him, I will be loved by Him”
- b. Love puts works as the result of relationship. “ Because I love Him, I will work to reveal Him”
- c. **Life Lesson:** Lovers of Jesus outproduce religious workers because their work will last. The motive is pure when it comes from a heart of love instead of the treadmill of works-based religion.
- d. **Religion puts work ahead of health:** Work cannot produce health. Wounded people don't need a shovel and work gloves, they need a prayer partner and an ear willing to listen to bring healing. ** The shovel will come when the heart is healthy.

e. **Key Point:**

As our Church grows remember to see the bigger picture. We cannot grow and sustain growth beyond our health. Our goal is not growth, it is healthy family members.

3. What is a healthy Church? We strive for a healthy church; we aim to never arrive but here are a few indicators.

- a. **Acts 2:42** “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”** The Church is committed to growing in the knowledge of the truth of God, to spending time with one another in fellowship and to praying together.
- b. **Acts 4:33** “The multitude of believers was one in heart and soul.” ** The Church is unified in its love for God and in its mission to humanity. They kept the unity of love and purpose; they found a place of agreement.
- c. **Acts 4:33** “And abundant grace was upon them all.” ** The Church had evidence that God’s grace was the sustainer and supplier of all that was needed. They did not work alone but as the grace of God enabled them. The early church presented themselves as available and God did the rest.
- d. **Acts 4:34** “There were no needy ones among them,” **A truly remarkable statement that was only a reality because the hearts of the people really cared about each other. Their love for each other resulted in actions of love.**

4. Love and Truth Collide

- a. Luke 15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near Jesus to listen to Him.
- b. Luke 15:2 “So the Pharisees and scribes began to grumble: “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”
- c. The Pharisee’s loved truth more than people. Giving truth without grace is not truth. We must love the truth and people equally.

Jesus loved sinners and the truth

- e. **Key point:** If our love of the truth doesn't cause us to love the sinner as much as we love the truth than we may love truth, but we don't know Jesus. We must Love the truth but remember the broken don't just need truth they need to see the way out of the pit they are caught in.

f. **Life Lesson:** People don't care how much we know until they have their eyes opened to how much we care.

5. Servant Leaders brought for leaders raised: God intends to use Heavenly and Human leaders to help you grow.

a. The purpose of every sent servant leader is to teach, train and model the change God wants to establish.

b. Would others consider you a teachable person? We should always be a student, sometimes a teacher but never an expert, who has arrived and has stopped learning.

c. God brings ministry leaders to raise ministry leaders: The responsibility of the ministry leader is to be available to equip and empower those who are willing to be equipped and empowered.

d. Question: Are you willing and available for God to equip and empower you to grow in His purpose for your life?

in the leaders He has sent you?

e. Are you using the gifts God has given you

the evidence of desire: If you desire to grow and mature into the next leg of your life, your purpose your ministry than pursue those who can help you grow there.

f. Pursuit is the

6. Pursue the Change you want, it's time to get healthy

a. If you need healing to grow then get the resources and relationships you need to touch the areas that are broken in your life. Nothing plus nothing is always going to produce nothing. Change requires change. Doing the same thing will always produce the same results. **A radical step will produce a radical change.** God will always honor a heartfelt pursuit of His purposes in our lives.

b. If you need additional knowledge, wisdom, understanding then connect to sources of these three things locally and from a distance. If you don't know how, what, where when or why than ask, seek, and knock.

c. Jesus words Luke 11:9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

d. James 1:5 Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him

e. At some point it is God's intention that we are all going to be God's human element to help others grow. To help others we must allow God to work in us. The preparation for your future ministry is to allow God to work in your heart today.

Action Step: God wants you to seek for the articles of your preparation whether it be **more of God, a gift of God in a person, a training resource, or a moment.** **What can you do this week to ensure you are going to become a healthier Christian in the future.**

Notes:
