

# YOU ARE CALLED TO SO MUCH MORE

SUNDAY 29TH AUGUST 2021

## INTRODUCTION

- I'm gripped, fascinated, excited by what Jesus is doing in this change of season – those amazing scriptures in John 3 where Jesus and Nicodemus are speaking, Jesus speaks about those who are of the Spirit are like the wind, you hear the sound but you don't know where it comes from or where it goes.
- We want to be like those people – those are listening for the wind of the spirit, for that still voice which leads us in life.
- But we don't just want to be those who hear that voice, we want to be those who obey.
- Those who say yes, even when yes seems like the crazy decision which to us, naturally, makes no sense.
- I believe it's His way, just look at the life of Jesus, none of his life made sense to the majority of people – he's the same yesterday, today and forever, so we can expect him to be unpredictable by nature 😊
- He's calling us out of the old way of doing things and he's inviting us to "go all in" into the new. Question is, will we respond and go with him, or hold onto the comfortable and familiar and miss the greatest adventure we could ever have. An adventure beyond our wildest dreams, an adventure that makes our very dreams seem limited.
- This morning I'm going to share something the Lord has recently spoken to us as a family, then we're going to explore some scriptures along this theme of "going all in".

## DREAM – BIG CIRCLE, LITTLE CIRCLE

- My wife, Abigail is from a line of missionaries to Zambia in Africa, in fact she's the fourth generation in that family.
- We were recently on the mission station in Zambia when the Lord gave an amazingly challenging yet exciting dream to Abigail, with her permission I'm going to share part of that dream.
  - The first part of the dream covered specific details about the mission station which aren't relevant for this morning.
  - However, in the second part Abigail became aware that she had to speak in Africa and she was saying to the Lord that she didn't know what to share.
  - After she asked, she saw a circle being drawn in front of her. In that circle the Lord drew a man and a woman, who were married, two children a car and a house – and they were successful in their jobs.
  - Next to this circle the Lord drew a larger circle.
  - He said to her – this is the life the most believe they are to live (when he said this she knew those in the circle were Christians). But that's not the life I've called them to live, I've called them to live in here (pointing to the bigger circle).
  - As the Lord said all of this Abigail knew that the bigger circle was impossible to define and therefore it was unknown and uncomfortable.

- For me I believe that larger circle represents 'Kingdom life', a far greater expression of life, an unlimited expression of life.
- It's also clear that we either have to live in one circle of the other, we can't live in both.
- That means in order to live in the big circle which he's calling us to, we have to first give up on the small circle life, the life we can define, the life which is self focused and therefore is limited.

## KINGDOM LIFE

- It's been said many times that a Kingdom is the King's domain. It's the place where the King, our King Jesus lives and rules.
- In fact speaking on where the Kingdom was, Jesus was clear in:
  - Luke 17:20-21 20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, **"The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."**
- The Kingdom was where Jesus was, which now through the Holy Spirit is within us.
- But what is this Kingdom life he's calling us to?
- One of the best expressions of who Jesus is, and therefore what Kingdom life is, is written in Isaiah 61.
  - Isaiah 61:1-3 <sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to **proclaim good news to the poor.** He has sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted,** to **proclaim freedom for the captives** and **release from darkness for the prisoners,** <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, **to comfort all who mourn,** <sup>3</sup> and **provide for those who grieve in Zion—** to **bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,** the **oil of joy instead of mourning,** and a **garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.** **They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.**
- Jesus lived for people. He's whole mission was people, just listen to some of those statements.
- Kingdom life, yes is about our freedom, but if our focus stays in that place, on ourselves, then we'll miss the very point of Kingdom life, which is about others, this is about people. How basic does that sound? Yet I believe the church can easily fall into an agenda which cares for ourselves and settles for a life in the small circle, whilst Jesus has called us to a life in the big circle.

- Some of his final words to us in Matt 28, all power and authority has been given to me. Now go and make disciples, go and rescue others – turn their **mourning into joy** and their **despair into praise**.
- We are called to carry the Kingdom with us where ever we go. There's an amazing quote in the book Scattered Church about some of the early missionaries – “

## GOING ALL IN

- That's the life he calls us to live – to be Kingdom carriers in every setting we enter into in life. This isn't about attending a meeting, this is about carrying the hope of the kingdom with us where ever we go, into work, school, university, maybe another city or even a nation – the calling is the same.
- We are all on Mission!
- But like we said earlier, you can't live in both circles, to live in the big circle we have to let go of the little circle.
- The challenge is, the little circle looks comfortable, it's attractive as we can define it and measure our success in it.
- But the reality is, for those that find the true and great expression of the big circle, of Kingdom life, the reaction is stark but clear.
- Jesus tells these two excellent parables back to back to try and help His followers understand.
- Matthew 13:44-46 The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl  
<sup>44</sup> **“The kingdom of heaven is like** treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, **and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.**  
<sup>45</sup> **“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like** a merchant looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, **he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.**
- In both these stories these men instantly gave up what was most precious to them to obtain Kingdom life. To obtain the big circle.
- In the first story Jesus is really intentional to use the words 'in his joy', this isn't a religious duty, this is a reaction to finding Kingdom life and wanting to fully embrace it.
- Jesus wants us to “go all in” on Kingdom life, “all in” on big circle life.
- Yes, it feels uncomfortable to follow this life, a life we can't plan and control. But that very place is where we have to trust Him like a father, it's child like faith. In big circle life we can only do what we see our father doing, step at a time.

## THE DANGER OF DISTRACTION

- So, wait a minute, if this journey is so obvious and so attractive, why aren't we all living this life already!?
- It's all about perspective.
- The small circle isn't a small circle until it's put next to the big circle.
- Whilst we are focused on the small circle it looks really attractive, we get educated, we grow friends and family, we get employed and make money, we buy a house and have holidays. All good things by the way!

- But that's where you begin to hit the edges of the small circle, but it's got ourselves and the centre, so its size is limited.
- Let's go back to Jesus' words:
- Luke 14:15-24 The Parable of the Great Banquet  
14:16-24Ref — Mt 22:2-14  
<sup>15</sup> When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."  
<sup>16</sup> Jesus replied: "**A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. <sup>17</sup> At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'**  
<sup>18</sup> **"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'**  
<sup>19</sup> **"Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'**  
<sup>20</sup> **"Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'**  
<sup>21</sup> "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'  
<sup>22</sup> "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'  
<sup>23</sup> "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. <sup>24</sup> I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"
- They were doing business and getting married. Is that wrong? No! But if it gets to the point where those things stop us missing what he's calling us to, now that's wrong. Just like those men missed the banquet which has been prepared, we will miss the life adventure which has been prepared for us.
- Matt 6 calls us to Seek first his kingdom! All these other things will be added, they'll be sorted for us. But our heart has to be first for Kingdom.

## REPLACE OUR DREAMS WITH HIS DREAMS

- I don't know what your dreams are, maybe they relate to your work, maybe they relate to having a family, maybe you want to achieve a certain level of education or wealth in life. Or maybe it's even to live an 'easy life', or a slice of the 'good life' – what ever expression of it you subscribe to. Hey maybe it's to establish your own ministry.
- What ever it is, it's most likely that we hold dearly to those dreams. The challenge is, it could be those very same dreams which are holding us back from leaving the small circle and entering into the big circle.
- But it's hard to let go of those dreams! If we don't hold on to them and fight for them, no one will!

- Point is, his dreams may look very different to our dreams. But his dreams are far greater than our dreams, far more fitting than our dreams. After all he knows us better than we know ourselves, so what he has for us is better than we could ever dream!
- Question is – do we trust him? Do we trust him to let go of our dreams and live for his.
- Abi said when she was looking at these circles, she heard the Lord audible say “I have so much more for you”.
- Let me tell you, the day you let go of your own dreams and release them and say Lord give me your dreams, is the day that you’ll discover the dreams he’s put on the inside of you.

## RECAP

- So let’s run through of those points again:
- He’s calling us to “so much more” than the small circle, a life focused on ourselves.
- He’s calling us to Kingdom life, a life which is about others – just like Jesus’ life was.
- He wants us to go ‘all in!’ To sell out on the small circle life and step bold into the big circle he has prepared for us.
- Let’s not be distracted by all the “attractive” trappings of the small circle life, but trust him with our dreams.

So that all sounds great, but how does that apply to us right here in the middle of ‘normal life’, what do I do next to embrace the big circle.

**Remain close to him** – love what Steve said a couple of weeks back – we are not only called to climb the mountain, but we are to remain in that place.

He’s speaking all the time, question is – how close are we, how much are we listening?

**What’s on your heart?** It doesn’t have to be an audible voice from Heaven telling you what to do. Who to reach – read Isaiah 61, it’s a long list of people groups. I always find it interesting when someone says “oh I’ve always had a real heart for the lonely, something just stirs on the inside of me”.

Yet people never stop and actually do anything, because they are wrapped up in small circle life.

I believe in those situations, life changes have to be made, sacrifices have to be made – and we need to get on and do what’s on our hearts.

This is what I love about Home churches – within each Home Church we are going to have so many amazing expressions of Kingdom – and now we can all get on and start doing things together.

It’s time to move!

**We are all on Mission** – let's realise, it's not about being a missionary to reach people – we are all on Mission and the Mission field is crying out around us. Need, poverty and lack are not hard to find.

**Remain in the body** – On our journey as a family, one of the most encouraging and challenging things we have done as we have begun to make decisions about mission in our lives, is keeping good company. People around us to provide Godly wisdom.

**Remain in him** – Again, I say all of that and I repeat – remain in Him. Stay close, stay in a place of prayer about what's on your heart.

## **PRAYER**

Re-read Isaiah 61.

humanity.

Fast-forward a few centuries. In the nation of Ireland, another band of scattered servants emerged—early Celtic missionaries—convinced that God was doing more beyond their shore, beyond their lives. A few miles west of where I lived for many years, those devoted servants would set out in rugged little boats known as coracles. They had no programs or models to offer. They hoisted sails and invited the wind to blow them ... wherever.

And wherever they went, those who had been scattered preached (communicated and demonstrated) the word (the message of the kingdom). Astonishing! Before long, signs and wonders followed—and new communities flourished.

Amazingly, those missionaries conducted no demographic studies and no market research to identify the most responsive communities. I can imagine a reporter of the day asking, “Where are you going?” And the response would be, “It doesn’t matter. Wherever we go, the kingdom will come. When we get there, we know that God’s Spirit will be present and powerful.” And it happened just as they believed. Whole cities encountered the King and His kingdom.

It’s tempting to consign these stories to the pages of history. Yet they are designed to reveal what is possible in our day—biblical, historical, and cultural reminders that the kingdom comes as we