



Oct 16, 2022 - Pastor Jason Carter

### **Vision Statement**

We live to see lives transformed through Jesus

### **Mission Statement**

We are a family committed to seeing lives changed. We connect people to God and others, make disciples of Jesus, and are Spirit-empowered people who live out the Good News in our world. And we are each determined to fulfill our unique purpose in God's mission to everyone, everywhere, every day.

### **3 Pillars**

Connect | Disciple | Empower

**Last week, Pastor Rafael talked about being Spirit-empowered and said, "We can't be about the mission of God without the Spirit of God".**

We are His witnesses - we have 'seen, heard, or experienced something'. The arc of our life should reflect Jesus, even within our humanity.

So, when Jesus calls us to be the Good News to our world, He is asking us to share what we have heard, seen, and experienced through Him.

God empowers us *with* the Good News, and he empowers us *through* the Holy Spirit.

### **Empowerment: 'to enable or permit'**

- Christian empowerment: Looking to add value to someone or something because I am a Christian and this is what Christians do. To take what we have received and discovered and help someone live it out. To be a witness.
- To strengthen, encourage
- Empowerment is investment, accountability, opportunity, teaching, equipping, and imparting to others; to help them know who they are in Christ and to live it out

**Empowered means giving what we have for the betterment of another.**

## **Jesus exemplified this through a pattern he had with his disciples:**

Opportunities: to do ministry with Him

Capacity: then He would increase their capacity - "you go do it"

Character: always working on their character. When they argued over greatness, Jesus didn't tell them they couldn't be great, He redefined greatness.

Commitment: Taught them commitment. They were empowered to live as a witness of Jesus. He wanted them to grow in *being*, not just *doing*.

## **Every place we go should be better because we are there. When we share Vision & Mission, we are thinking through multiple lenses.**

- How do we invest in people and create opportunities for us all to grow?
- How do we think missionally outside the walls of the church

Whether it is through Good News in serving, or through everyday life opportunities to serve and invest in others, this is what we mean by empowerment. An opportunity to take what we have and serve others. To bring the Good News, to be Good News. To bring heaven to earth because we are there.

### **1. God empowers us to live and to serve others**

**Matthew 14:15-16 NIV**<sup>15</sup> "As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." <sup>16</sup> Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

- Send the problem away...it's much easier, right?
- Jesus is always looking for opportunities for his disciples to grow
- He is always putting them into position to grow
- He invited them into a situation that was bigger than they could handle

Jesus saw the redemptive potential in every person and every situation, and this is a filter we all must have as well.

### **There is a tension we feel in empowerment:**

- We do not want to use people. We don't want to use people for what they can do, to build our church on the backs of those who serve, and burn them out.
- However, we do want to utilize people. We do want them to be able to utilize their gifts, talents, abilities and transformation in service to God and others.
- There is sacrifice involved in that, for everyone who serves. Time, energy, effort, inconvenience. This is faith expressed in action. But to be healthy and stay healthy, we all must have healthy boundaries.

Sometimes the most powerful spiritual moment is one that is practical. In our text today, it was food. People were hungry.

John 6:5 NIV **When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"**

When God asks you a question, He is not looking for information. He is usually asking for involvement

- In order for us to do something, or give, we must recognize God's prompting
- Instead of saying "send them away", we begin asking "God what do you need?"

## 2. When it comes to opportunities and empowerment, our perception can be our greatest hindrance

Matthew 14: 16 NIV Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."<sup>1</sup>

Christianity and convenience don't go together. Jesus is wanting them to see the need and the moment differently.

Matthew 14:17 NIV We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

This is going on in the mind of God: John 6: 6 NIV <sup>6</sup>He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. We read this in the scripture. Jesus had a plan. But He wanted His disciples to be a part of it

God is good about involving His church in His plan

*"It's not that we don't like change. It's that we don't like what change does to us - it pushes us to a place of incompetence for a season."*

-Seth Godin

John 6: 7 NIV "Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages<sup>la</sup>to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

- Jesus asks where, Phillip thinks how? How will we? How can we? Ever felt this way about an issue?
- God shows us need and we start doing the calculations and immediately take a negative stance
- It is easy to get lost and overwhelmed at what we see. There is need everywhere. Maybe we see a life that has been ravaged: loss, addiction, sexual abuse, pride and we blame government and we disengage
- The disciples are thinking the same thing. Jesus is trying to shift their mindset
- God cares about the people who need food. He also cares about His disciples' growth. And He invites them into an impossibility
- Being logical is valuable, but logic is often our greatest hindrance to the miraculous

### We will never feel perfectly ready for what God asks us to do.

*"It's not that we don't like change. It's that we don't like what change does to us - it pushes us to a place of incompetence for a season."* -Seth Godin

- God often calls us to a moment, a season, an opportunity, a need that makes us feel incompetent.
- When in doubt, people don't. We don't try, we don't pray. We don't act. We don't engage.

### How often do we miss God-moments because we do not feel we have enough, or we are not sure how?

- Need is God's calling card and it everywhere
- Jesus is wanting them to see the need. He is challenging their perception. Their practicality is right (too many people, not enough money or food) but their perception is holding them back.
- How many of you are held prisoner in your life or in your faith by the word only? Or maybe the mindset of only?
- Matthew 14: 17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered."

### How is the "only" mindset holding you back?

- You "only" have a few years of Christian faith, I couldn't be a missionary
- You "only" have this amount to give, it won't make a difference
- You "only" have this amount of education or experience
- I "only" have so many years left on earth; it is too late to learn something new
- I "only" have this amount of time to disciple another person but what is the point of 30 minutes a week?
- I don't feel qualified to lead or invest in someone else or share the gospel, what's the point?
- If "only" I would have started earlier, and it is too late now

### Did Jesus ask how much or what? Who quantifies what you have?

The question we should ask is not 'how much' we have, but 'God, what are you wanting me to do with what I do have?'

- Remember, Jesus did not call the elite religious scholars to follow Him, He called regular everyday day people.
- Our excuse doesn't limit God. It simply makes us miss moments. Jesus already had a plan
- But you are missing out, missing out in serving people, missing out in seeing what God can do with what little you have. Missing out in growth and understanding of God's partnership with us on this earth
- Missing out in God moments that look like impossibilities
- Missing out because it feels like an inconvenience
- It is God's Spirit that brings power. He is supernatural, we are not. God simply wants obedience and trust.
- **The power to multiply was already there. The only limitation was their "only"**

When it comes to opportunities and empowerment, our *perception* can be our greatest *hindrance*.

John 6:9 NIV "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

**When it comes to opportunities and empowerment, our perception can be our greatest hindrance.**

**3. God's empowerment is not dependent on our ability but on availability and dependability**

**Matthew 14: 18 NIV** "Bring them here to me," he said. <sup>19</sup> And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. <sup>20</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over."

### **Most of growing is found in the going**

- The power is in the breaking and the blessing

The disciples are tasked with taking food from Jesus and providing it for the people. Jesus blessed and broke the food. But in many ways, he was blessing and breaking the disciples' mindsets, their "onlys", their understanding of God. He was showing them who He was and what He could do through them.

*"Missional churches are those that understand "the church as fundamentally and comprehensively defined by its calling and sending, its purpose to serve God's healing purposes for all the world as God's witnessing people to all the world."*

- Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*

Empowerment in the kingdom of God is not about position or power. It is about sharing what you have and what you know and investing in another person.

**Acts 1:8 NLT** <sup>8</sup>"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be **my witnesses**, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

God's empowerment is not dependent on our *ability* but on *availability* and *dependability*

### **Questions for reflection/discussion:**

- Do you have a Gospel-first lens? Do you see the people and the potential in every situation?
- What are some giftings that you have not utilized, or haven't thought about how God could use to invest in the world for His glory?
- What parts of your story could be part of transformation for someone else?

If you feel your time is limited, pray this way:

- God, what do you want me to do with my limited time?
- What do you want me to do with what you have given me?