

Essentials

Reaching and Developing Week of August 2

We are starting a series called, "Essentials," to remind us of the DNA of Christ Church. This week we will discuss Reaching and Developing, core verbs in our mission statement: Reaching millions of unchurched persons by developing thousands of fully-devoted followers of Christ. As we go through the lesson think about how these two actions are lived out in your life group and in your personal life.

Place an empty chair in the circle or identify an empty space on a couch. At Christ Church we want to remember the empty chair because it represents someone who does not yet know Christ. WE want to remember that person, pray for that person, be aware of that person in our own lives. Try to remember to honor this reminder each time you meet so we don't forget our mission.

Before we begin, did anything from Sunday's message speak to you? It can be scripture or just something the pastor or worship leader shared? Could you share it with the group?

READ: Acts 4:8-13

Reaching millions and **Developing** thousands doesn't just happen. They are intentional actions that require an encounter with God, submission to Jesus' guidance and power from the Holy Spirit. Let's examine what these verses have to teach us.

1) An Encounter with God

Cornerstone: the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure.

In several passages of the Old Testament (Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 28:16-17), the Messiah is referenced as the cornerstone. Then in Ephesians 2:20-21 Paul writes, "Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord."

Any mission must have a starting place. For us, as Christians, that starting place is Christ. If we begin at any other place, we aren't building on His foundation. The Pharisees had built their foundation on the laws and ceremony they had developed through the centuries, so that when the true cornerstone came, they didn't even recognize Him. What foundations do people build their lives on in our current culture?

Notice, not all of these things are bad. Many of them can be good, just like the law that the Jews were given from God. However, when we build our foundation on any of these things, that foundation is unstable and can be ruined.

How can we tell when we are building on foundations other than Christ?

Ask yourself, if everyone you love died, you lost your home, your career, your health. . . would He still be enough?

2) Submission to Jesus' guidance

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13 NLT

Peter and John were physically with Jesus during His ministry on earth. They were two of the twelve disciples that Jesus chose to follow Him. The Greek word for "disciple" is "mathetes," which means, "accepting and following the views and practices of a teacher."

What "teachers" have influenced the way you live? These could be actual people, or they could be circumstances that have shaped you.

The Pharisees recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. It is amazing how being with Jesus turns the ordinary into the extraordinary.

How has Jesus changed the way you live? What teachings and practices of Jesus are still difficult for you to live out?

Because Peter and John had lived with Jesus for approx. 3 years, they were able to see firsthand how He could be trusted, that He was who He said He was, and that He was raised from the dead to live again. However, even during that time with Him the disciples were often confused, disobedient and prideful (as we can be). It wasn't until they were given The Holy Spirit that miraculous things began to happen in and through them. They did not grow and develop on their own—Jesus had to leave (John 16:7) so the Holy Spirit could come to comfort and empower them.

Since The Holy Spirit is here with us right now and everywhere we go, how has God been growing you? What is frustrating about that process? What is beautiful about it?

How does the following quote from Tim Keller change your perspective on developing and growing in Christ?

“We can say that we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but more loved and accepted in Christ than we ever dared hope — at the very same time. This creates a radical new dynamic for personal growth. It means that the more you see your own flaws and sins, the more precious, electrifying, and amazing God’s grace appears to you. But on the other hand, the more aware you are of God’s grace and acceptance in Christ, the more able you are to drop your denials and self-defenses and admit the true dimensions and character of your sin.”

3) Power from The Holy Spirit

The beginning of Acts 4:13 reads, **“The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John.”** And it goes on to say in Acts 4:29-31 that after Peter and John had returned to their fellow believers that they prayed together, **“And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”**

After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.”

Can you think of a time in your life when you were bold? What allowed you to be so bold? In other words, what fueled your boldness?

In this passage, Peter and John are speaking to the leaders of the high priestly family about matters of faith. It would be like two fishermen from Eastern NC going to the Pope and teaching him about who God really is. How were Peter and John able to be so bold; what enabled them to speak with authority?

What excuses do Christians give for not sharing the good news of Christ?

One Year Bible Reading

Aug. 2: 2 Chronicles 32:1-33:13, Romans 15:23-16:9, Ps. 25:16-22, Prov. 20:16-18
August 3: 2 Chronicles 33:14-34:33, Romans 16:10-27, Psalm 26:1-12, Prov. 20:19
August 4: 2 Chronicles 35:1-36:23, 1 Corinthians 1:1-17, Ps. 27:1-6, Prov. 20:20-21
August 5: Ezra 1:1-2:70, 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, Psalm 27:7-14, Proverbs 20:22-23
August 6: Ezra 3:1-4:23, 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:4, Psalm 28:1-9, Proverbs 20:24-25
August 7: Ezra 4:24-6:22, 1 Corinthians 3:5-23, Psalm 29:1-11, Proverbs 20:26-27
August 8: Ezra 7:1-8:20, 1 Corinthians 4:1-21, Psalm 30:1-12, Proverbs 20:28-30

ESSENTIALS

Text: Acts 4:1-13

The Plain Truth: People drift -
so we focus on “_____” and
“_____”.

First we focus on the _____:

1) We focus on what Jesus has _____ for us and not what we ___!

“ These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children.” **Acts 4: 2-4**

2) We focus on the Mission—_____

3) We focus more on _____ than on _____.

4) We focus more on _____ leaders than _____ programs.

Here are spiritual markers which keep us from drifting....

a) _____ in Life Groups--- Be one of a thousand!

b) _____ in a ministry

5) We focus less on _____ and more life _____.

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