

Your World Needs You

Part 2

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Fruit from the Last Sermon

In Acts 2:37 we read *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*” Now that’s a sign of a great sermon - that at the end of it, the people are saying “what shall we do? we must act now!” After the most recent sermon, I received multiple questions like this. In just two weeks, you can see God moving! This is a very exciting time to be a member of Agathos!

Honoring the Word of the Lord

In prayer on December 3rd, I saw Jesus speaking to our congregation and I could hear word-for-word what He was saying. He said: “ You are a precious body to me because of your purity & wealth of knowledge about who I am. I am calling you to go out - to reach out ... to deliver to your neighbors what I’ve delivered to you. You do not need to be afraid. The World is ready and waiting for you. I am with you. As I look over this congregation, I see leaders and I see influencers. I see those who will stop the advancement of evil. I see those who will set captives free & mark a standard for Godly Christian character. You are called! You have a purpose! I have not forgotten about you - my secret weapon & hidden gem.” We need that prophetic word in front of us to focus on it!

In the Old Testament, there were prophets on whom the Holy Spirit would come and they would prophecy. The rest of God’s people had to take the prophet’s words at face value because they did not also have the Holy Spirit and generally did not hear from God themselves. If the prophets messed up and gave the wrong word, they were to be stoned because you can’t have someone who is the only person who hears from God hear incorrectly.

Not so in the New Covenant! Looking at 1 Corinthians 14:29-32, we see *“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”* Giving practical recommendations for the orderly administration of a Spirit-filled church service, Paul tells the Corinthians to have two or three prophets give words to the church and the have the others pass judgment. Now are those in the

audience supposed to pass judgment on the prophets? No - not in the New Covenant! They are to cast judgment on the words that are given!

How can the people in the congregation pass judgment on the words that the prophets gave? They can because call new covenant believers have the Holy Spirit. If the prophet is prophesying by the Holy Spirit, you have the same Holy Spirit and it ought to generally witness with you too - unless the Holy Spirit is divided and confused and schizophrenic, which is not the case! That's why in the New Testament we have a witness. That is very powerful to understand about the prophetic!

When someone gives you a prophetic word and they say "thus sayeth the Lord, you're moving to New Zealand" and everything inside of you says "I don't think so!" just tell God "Holy Spirit you are going to have to tell me that one a different way, because that did not seem like that's You!"

Other times, someone will give you a word and you know it's right - it witnesses - but you have no clue how it could come to pass. For example, about 8 years ago, someone gave me a word "you are going to reach the next generation through video." I knew it witnessed right, but it didn't seem right in terms of logic. In fact, someone who was more seasoned in the prophetic than me came up to me afterwards to ask me "how did that word sit with you ... you can put it on a shelf if it doesn't seem right." I told him "it seems right, I just don't know how." That's what you do: you put a word like that (that witnesses, but has no current practical application) in your prophetic pantry! "This will be handy some day."

The more you move in the prophetic, experience teaches you when you have heard correctly and when it is a little bit more tentative. This word over our church was almost a word-for-word transcription so I was very confident in giving it corporately. I therefore assume for most of you that you probably had a witness like "that's good! That's encouraging! That's the heart of God! That is Jesus speaking!" In other words, it probably witnessed with you as a word from the Lord.

If you receive a word from the Lord, the value you receive from it is determined by the value you place on it. A lot of us receive the word of the Lord like a very fine wine without understanding that it is a \$200 bottle of wine. Someone gave it to you as a gift, you open it up to have a sip of wine with a piece of pizza and think "wow that wine is tasty!" Then, not valuing it for what is - not realizing it is a \$200 bottle of wine - you let the rest of it sit out and go to waste. The value you receive from it is based on the value you place on it. You need to properly discern where something is coming from. If it was truly a word from God, you need to value it as a word from God.

When Kris Vallotton was a new believer, he was ridden by anxiety - having essentially a mental breakdown. Around that time he went to a men's retreat where a prophet was speaking and much to Kris' dismay the prophet called him out of the crowd to prophecy over him. That prophets speaks over Kris "you are going to be a pillar in the international house of God." That doesn't sound like the

same guy who is having an anxiety-induced mental breakdown! BUT faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not (yet) seen - and that prophet spoke out of faith what the Lord was saying over Kris Vallotton. Next, Kris' wife Kathy did a very good thing - she took that word and she typed it up. Kris put it in his pocket and didn't leave home without it for years - consistently declaring it over himself. Do you know who Kris Vallotton is now? A pillar in the international house of God - providing council to leaders from many nations! Would that have happened if he had not rehearsed that prophetic word for multiple years? Forget about it. It would have been a tasty sip of wine that encourage him for a day or two.

Print out that prophetic word over Agathos. Read it and turn it into declarations over our church - and over you because you are in our church!

Don't Think More Highly than you Ought

There is a developing problem in the body of Christ - particularly amongst those who are hungry for the things of God. There is a big push about the 7 Mountains - about invading the 7 Mountains of society for the Kingdom. We want to bring the Kingdom: "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Awesome and awesome. Here's the trouble: Romans 12:3 says "*don't think more highly than you ought.*" Your bible says "don't think more highly of yourself than you ought." But "of yourself" is not in the Greek - it just says "*don't think more highly than you ought.*"

This makes a lot of sense because that is exactly what Psalm 131:1-2 says: "*Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me. Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.*"

If you want to bring the Kingdom, I am going to tell you one of the main (if not *the* main) places you should bring the Kingdom through: this church - Agathos. This is your church! This is my church! This is where we should bring the Kingdom through. I am not saying you cannot bring the Kingdom at business, in your family, or on your own. I am saying, however, that in the body of Christ, in a global age where we get to hear great teachings from all sorts of places that we don't come up with grandiose ideas about the Kingdom in generalities.

Mark Crawford recently said "the enemy wants you to be a hero in your own head." We need to not think more highly than we ought. We need to start right here! Bring the Kingdom from Agathos! A word like what Jesus spoke over us is essential in this season. Get that word in front of you.

Waging the Good Warfare

Let's also look at 1 Timothy 1:18 "*This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare*" Here's the possible scene:

Paul and Timothy were at a small evening gathering with a number of believers. People are getting prophesied over at that meeting. At some point Timothy was in the middle and 4 or 5 different people prophecy over him and finally Paul prophecies over Timothy. Later (in 1 Tim. 1:18), Paul writes to Timothy and says “Timothy, I charge you, wage the good warfare with the prophecies spoken over you!” What? Prophecies are part of the good warfare?

We have to value the prophetic word correctly. Here is how prophecies are part of the prophetic warfare: you need to use prophetic words with an “if-this-then-that” thinking. Because if God said “this” then “that” must be the case. Or, if God said “this” then “that” cannot be the case!

For example, when Andrew Wommack’s son died, he drives towards the morgue where his body was - being careful not to speak that his son was dead. As he was driving, it dawns on him “what about those prophetic words that were spoken over my son?!? They have not yet come to pass!” Well if he stays dead, they are sure not going to come to pass! But God did not lie when He gave the words over Andrew’s son; so, if God said that, then my son can’t be dead! Andrew’s son then raised from the dead! If THIS then THAT! By the prophetic words spoken over you, wage the good warfare!

So if God said “I am calling you to go out - to reach out ... to deliver to your neighbors what I’ve delivered to you.” THEN we know we have something valuable to deliver! THEN we know the world is ready and waiting for us! THEN we know we will have the capacity and the know-how to give it!

You don’t just get a prophetic word, take a sip of it, and say “it tasted nice” - you do battle with it! You establish yourself in it. It redefines you are and what you will be!

As an aside, at times, after receiving a powerful prophetic word, you can have life blow up, experience distractions, or become discouraged in some way. When you experience that, realize that is very possibly the enemy’s attempt to come against that word. Especially if you can’t really get a grip on why you feel discouraged, depressed, sick, or out of it - there is a good chance it is the enemy. Remember Mark 4:17 *“Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble.”* When the Lord sows a new word into your life, you need to realize that tribulation and persecution can arise specifically as a result of that word!

The enemy’s objective in that is to get you to forfeit the word you just received - know that! Satan’s work in your life is against you being in the word of God. Why? Because the word will do the work if you are in the word! Similarly, satan’s work is against a prophetic word like this because if you get that in you it will change your life in amazing ways! This is why it is so powerful to do practical things to establish a word like this in our lives: printing the word out, carrying it with you, and declaring it every day at the same time! Make a habit of the word so that tribulation or persecution cannot touch the word and it will become deeply rooted in your heart!

Churches are Supposed to Grow

Remember some of the phrases we read in Acts chapters 2-9 concerning church growth: *“that day about three thousand souls were **added** to them. ... And the Lord **added** to the church daily those who were being saved. ... However, many of those who heard the word believed; and **the number of the men came to be about five thousand** ... And believers were **increasingly added** to the Lord, **multitudes** of both men and women, ... when **the number of the disciples was multiplying** ... Then the word of God spread, and the number of **the disciples multiplied greatly** in Jerusalem, ... And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, **they were multiplied.**”* What’s the theme? Churches are supposed to increase in number!

Some people might think “well, maybe God doesn’t want every church to increase.” Consider this simple thought experiment: if you personally had a whole portfolio of investments that you wanted to increase in value, which of those investments would you want to increase in value? All of them!

We also looked at the story of the minas in Luke 19:11-27. In the story, the master (representative of Jesus) gives out a mina to each of 10 servants, instructing them to “do business until I return.” We hear about the results of three of the 10 servants: one earned 10 minas with his 1 mina, the other earned 5 minas with his 1 mina, and the third just gave his original mina back to the master at his return. We learn that the issue with the 1 mina servant was not that he was fearful, but instead that he was wicked and disobedient to his master’s command (“do business until return”).

We need to remember this as we go through this series, which is called “your world needs you.” I can teach until I am blue in the face. I can exhort until the cows come home. We can have the clear word of the Lord, but everything is going to come down to whether we DO IT.

Do you know when you catch traction? Do you know when the rubber meets the road? When you “go.” Remember in looking at the story of the minas that God said “do business until I return” and that God clearly rewards profitability! A desire to be profitable for the Kingdom is not selfish. God wants you to desire to be profitable for the Kingdom. Likewise, if you own a business, God wants you to desire to be profitable in it, because while your vision is the profit, your mission is in serving people. Every mission is always 2 parts: (1) the people that you are serving, and (2) what you are serving them.

If you want profit, you will serve people! That is why Rabbi Daniel Lapin says that capitalism is “forced altruism.” It’s beautiful: unredeemed people are serving people in order to make money. So is money bad? No! It’s actually good - really good! The love of money is not good. We want to have a profit orientation. Our master told us “do business until I return!”

Pray for us to Go!

Look at Luke 10:2. *“Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”* Let’s camp on this verse for just a second ... First point: the harvest is truly great. This means “the fishing is good.” THE FISHING IS GOOD. We may think or hear others say “I don’t know, but now-a-days people’s hearts are just hard towards God.” The fishing is good! The harvest is truly great! Jesus said “I am telling you the truth; the harvest is great. The fishing is great.” The conditions of people’s hearts are prime for the Gospel. Not everyone all at once, but there are PLENTY of fish to catch! Get it through your head! The harvest is truly great. The fishing is good.

So, what’s the problem? The laborers are few. Now we get the real issue. Jesus is painting it very clearly for us: the harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Any questions? Are the laborers unskilled - is that the issue? If you start witnessing, you won’t be unskilled for long! When I started woodworking, it took me 2 hours to cut one joint with a hand plane. Now I could cut the same joint in 20 seconds. What was my secret? I kept doing it until I got good at it. I am not saying we are going to not equip you to be a laborer in the harvest, but the best thing you can do is to DO IT!

There is a Greek form of wisdom that is really not wisdom, but instead just knowledge. We see in the New Testament that they stood around in Athens and wanted to hear whatever sort of new thing anyone could say. This is driven by a prideful, humanistic heart that wants to be able to say that man came up with the best ideas. However, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of actual wisdom and as a result these Greeks never arrive at a knowledge of the truth because their pride keeps them from even able to arrange themselves on the starting line of wisdom: the fear of the Lord! Paul warned Timothy of those like this in 2 Timothy 3:7 saying they will be *“always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* A more Hebrew view of wisdom has an application expectation. You know it when you can DO IT!

If a church didn’t have a powerful, life-changing message, or if the people of that church had not been transformed by that message, then you could see how the church might not grow - but that is not the case at Agathos! The only thing we have been missing is outreach. That is not a rebuke of our church. God is saying “this is what I want you to do now. Secret weapon, hidden gem, you are about to be seen. You are about to be seen in Columbus, Agathos.”

Where are we Going?

As I said, there was a lot of “what then shall we do” from this sermon. I received a number of emails or had a number of conversations about outreach ideas and I pretty much like them all:

- A worship night

- A big healing event
- Witnessing at malls
- Sending out Facebook videos that share our miraculous testimonies
- Speaking with family and friends
- Going on “treasure hunts”
- Hosting an Alpha group
- We could a neighborhood evangelistic home group gathering
- Hosting / offering a mom’s morning out
- Witnessing on campus
- Sharing with people at work or neighbors
- We could get big signs out front of our church
- We could have invite cards that our members could hand out

Over the past multiple weeks I have been praying about whether we should do one big, corporate outreach event, or is it meant to be multiple smaller outreaches with smaller groups from our church leading them. In my heart it seemed like it needed to be both cohesive and organic. I was struggling with how those go together.

One time in prayer I asked God to speak to me about this and then immediately saw a vision of a rake. At first I shook off the image that had come to mind right after I prayed, but then I thought “wait a second, I just prayed!” Some of you are not hearing God speak to you because He is answering you quicker than you expect!



There is a place for Daniel’s experience where you fast for 20+ days as what was released in Heaven the moment you prayed struggles to get to earth in the midst of a spiritual battle. There is also a place where God is answering your prayers before you even think them out loud!

About a month ago, I was having this thing happen where probably 3 times in one week I had thoughts on my hear (desires on my heart) and before I even voiced it in prayer or thought it particularly consciously, someone calls me with the solution. Wow! *“Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”* (Ps. 37:4) God is sometimes answering your prayers quicker than you know! If you are not having faith for Him to answer quickly, you might miss it!

So, God showed me a visual of a rake when I pray in faith for His wisdom about “whole church” vs. “organic” outreach. This visual seemed like it may have been the Lord speaking to me so I drew out a rake in my prayer notebook. I keep a prayer notebook so that as distractions come up (“remember to pay that bill”) I can write them down. I also keep the prayer notebook so that as thoughts or words from the Lord come up I can write them down. So, I draw out the rake in my prayer notebook.

I didn't get any more on the rake image during prayer that day so I just stayed before the Lord to allow His presence to influence me. Within the next few days, I start praying into "outreach" more and realized from what I got in that prayer time that the rake was in fact an image from God.

I will say this though: when you get an image or a word that you think might be God, but you are not sure yet, do not base all your reasoning with God off of that thing! Put something like that (like the rake) in advisement. Even though I felt like the rake visual was part of God's answer to my prayer about outreach, I didn't need to go around looking for rakes for the next three days! "I know it's about the rake!" God will speak to me again if it is about the rake!

So when God speaks with me during another prayer time (not thinking about the rake at all), I can look back and realize "oh, the rake was the visual for this solution that I am not getting from God!" At that point, the rake visual is a nice confirmation because I had not clue what it meant - I just knew I had seen it during prayer.

My job as a pastor is primarily to feed, to lead, and to protect. I will speak to you as a teacher at times, prophetically at times, and as a leader at times. This is a leadership part of this sermon. I am telling you where we are going as a flock - in the same way a shepherd would at times move his sheep from their current pasture to another pasture.

Let's look at Acts 16:1-5 to see what this solution is. This is the story of Paul and Timothy. *"Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily."*

This verse provides the answer to what I had been asking the Lord about "one big outreach" or "lots of small outreaches." We are supposed to have lots of different outreaches. That is not to say that we won't do some big outreaches together as a church. Here's why: Paul said "I've become all things to all people." Why? Different people need reached in different ways. For instance, he had Timothy get circumcised before he went to minister to the Jews. Timothy had to become "all things to all people."

BUT, did Paul tell Timothy to make the message "all things that people want to hear?" ABSOLUTELY NOT! Paul said "do NOT tickle their ears!" Paul told the Galatians *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."* (Gal. 1:8)

The tines of the rake are different outreaches. Different outreaches will catch different people. They are all attached to one handle. What's the handle? There is only ONE MESSAGE! This is so good! There is only one message. We don't have any other message. There is only one message! There is one gospel and that's it!

So, what we need to do as a church is we need to reach different people different ways. You cannot really reach a professor on OSU's campus the same way you would go about reaching single moms on the Hilltop. By doing a little differentiation of your outreach efforts towards your audience, your outreach is far more likely to be effective!

For instance, if I was going to minister on the Hilltop, I could ask someone who knows that neighborhood "how do you think I should dress." Perhaps they may say "please, t-shirts only ... they will look at you weird if you have a button-up shirt." What do I care! It's easier than being circumcised! I will put on a t-shirt!

But listen!!! Once someone is saved, do you know that there is only one message? The discipleship process is identical! It's the same message. It's the same truth! Notice that there are not tabs on your bible for the sections for "poor people" vs "rich people." There are not tabs for different *ethnos* (people groups). The same truth is universal in its power to transform! This should be encouraging because you can become all things to all people - to reach them in all sorts of different ways, but you only need to know ONE message!

This is the vision for Agathos! This is what we are going to be doing! We are going to be doing outreaches as a church and in smaller groups of people, etc. - AND everyone in this church is going to be a discipler.

Everyone is going to disciple someone at Agathos. If you are not discipling someone it is because you are being disciplined. For instance, if someone is new to the church, they will be disciplined - and then they will disciple someone! This is exciting; there is no greater joy in life than seeing people's lives transformed by the Word of God.

So, it's like a rake. There are tines, there are different outreaches. The outreaches are just to connect with people and lead them to the Lord. And then there is ONLY ONE message! This is so helpful! You don't need to know more than one message. When you disciple people at Agathos, you already have the message set. Brad and I have been working on a manual that captures his most basic and important teaching from the past 5 years. Long story short, you will not need to prepare content or sermons in order to meet with someone to disciple them! They will read a few chapters. You will read a couple of chapters to refresh to them and you will get together with them to discuss them and answer some specific questions and share some specific testimonies. And their lives will just radically change - unbelievable and so fun!

A Few Notes on Discipleship

Let me share a few things with you about discipleship. Jesus had 12 disciples. He had a very close group of 3, then had a larger group of 12 and also 72. Jesus had disciples. Paul had Timothy “a true son in the faith” and Titus “a true son in the faith” and I am sure many others. Paul instructed Timothy to have disciples: *“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*

Now, let’s look back to Acts 16:1-5 and see the model for outreach and discipleship. We see that Timothy got circumcised (in other words, he became all things to all people). Then Paul and Timothy delivered to them the decrees (the doctrine) to keep - which were determined by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. In other words, you should not need to come up with the doctrine to disciple someone - it should already be established somewhere. You don’t need to come up with teachings, you are just delivering to them the basics of walking with the Lord and the basics are already set. And what’s the result in Acts 16:5? *“So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.”*

You are smart and talented enough to be a discipler. Acts 4:13 says *“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”* You do not need to be smarter or have a doctorate degree in order to disciple people. You just need to know Jesus and use some resources (that we will give you) - just like Paul and Timothy were delivering the doctrine that had been established by apostles and the elders. They were not making up doctrine as they went. They were not having to come up with all sorts of new sermons.

Some will say “the great commission was only given to the apostles in Mt. 28 and Mk. 16.” Not so! In Matthew 28, Jesus says *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”* So they are supposed to observe (obey) all the things Jesus has commanded the apostles. What is the thing Jesus had just commanded the apostles to do? Make disciples! So, who’s supposed to make disciples? Everyone! The Great Commission is EVERY Christian’s job description! You are qualified to be a discipler!

Hebrews 5:12-14 says *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”* Something that drives me nuts in education is when schools do not expect their 25-year veteran teachers to have something valuable to give to younger teachers. They

will hold professional development days and none of their seasoned teachers are the ones that are presenting. Insanity! It creates an organizational expectation that “it’s OK to not grow up here.” Hebrews 5 says “never shall it be in a church either!” *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God”*

It is essential for me as your leader to say “we will be a church where your capacity to teach others the oracles of God is actually pulled on!” All of you are meant to become teachers! This is a universal expectation in the body of Christ. All of you are meant to become teachers, but not all of you are meant to become 5-fold teachers (Eph. 4). All of you are meant to be teachers! All of you are meant to disciple! When you lead your neighbor to the Lord, you are not going to need to turn them over as a ward of the church. When you lead someone to the Lord, you are not going to need to set them up for spiritual adoption. You will know how to parent them. You will have the milk to give them! You will be able to raise them up. If you don’t feel like you can yet, that is what this sermons series is moving towards.

I should mention that some people get a little bit weird about leading people to the Lord if you may not be able to disciple them. That’s silly! If I meet someone at an out-of-town gas station I am going to lead them to the Lord in a hot minute and I am going to get their contact info and make sure they get connected to a church. If that is not possible, I can at least give them the bible that’s in my car or a gospel tract for them to be able to review or direct them how to download a free bible application for their phone. Lead them to the Lord and don’t hesitate to do so! But usually we do have opportunity to follow up with them and we should be ready and willing to do that - and be confident that we can!

Here’s one last note about discipleship. There is a common idea about discipleship that it is something like an extended “flesh clean up event.” A lot of “discipleship” that happens has people needing to meet together for years and years and years “oh, did you sin again brother?” Yeah right! That is NOT the discipleship we are going to have! Awake to righteousness and sin not! (1 Cor. 15:34) Grace-based discipleship ... I predict 6 months (tops) for people to be established in it! I could be wrong; we’ll figure it out together! This is going to be a research and development thing. We are going to develop it together - I think some people will have this down in 3 or 4 months. And what are they going to do when they are done with it? They are going to go disciple someone else!

The training will not just be the basic principles. At the end of the training, there will be material on how to disciple someone and how to witness to people so that you have someone to disciple! If you don’t have someone to disciple, what do you need to do? Go get someone saved! We are going to get to the outreach part of this series, but we need to know what we are going to do with them once they are saved! If there are people here that feel like they need to be disciplined before they can be a discipler - great! You will be the first ones who get disciplined! At that point, there are still going to be a lot of

unemployed disciplers here and we are going to need to go find them some people who need to know how good God is!

Get Ready through your time in the Word and in Prayer!

Before I took over as lead pastor, Pastor Brad told me that “one thing” would take care of 90% of my job as a pastor. He had my ears. He said “your time in the Word and your time in prayer.”

Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:2 *“Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season ...”* It is easy enough to know how to be ready in season. “They are going to call on me next ... quick, what’s the answer?” That’s the in-season readiness. You get a chance to be ready when it is an in-season need. Out-of-season readiness is not that. How can you be ready out of season? Time in the Word and time in prayer. It’s John 15.

John 15:5 says *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”* If any of this (outreach and discipleship) starts to feel like a stretch to you - or if you just want to have more capacity to do it, look to your time in the Word and in prayer. 90% of your discipling of someone is going to be taken care of by your relationship with God. That’s where the fruit comes from.

When they have some issue going on in their life and you are meeting with them and the conversation is a little bit off the pages of the book that you guys have been reading together, God will speak into your heart very clearly and you will hear Him. Why? Because you have been in prayer. You have been in the Word.

So, I want to encourage you now - not later - to start ramping up your time in the Word and in prayer. When Pastor Brad told me about the 90% this past summer, I said to myself “I need to ramp up now!” So I set some goals for myself in terms of my time in the Word and in prayer and I set up some systems to ramp it up - saying “I can’t do what I’ve done before in this new territory and have success.” It turns out that the ramping up was beautiful because it was seamless for me when I became lead pastor.

I want to encourage you when you are thinking about New Year’s Resolutions to be thinking about your time in the Word and your time in prayer. “In the beginning was the Word ...” So, where does everything start at in your life? In the Word and in prayer! The Word is a Person, so it’s the Word and in prayer!

That is what you can start doing right now - start building yourself up in the Word and in prayer. Do not condemn about specific time requirements and all that sort of thing. If you are not doing anything right now or you want to do more, make sure that you have at least let’s say 15 minutes in the Word and 15 minutes in prayer on a daily basis. Here is what’s going to happen: you are going to

find that if you commit to something like that you will find that your hunger grows. Just get yourself there every day and keep yourself to that standard that you set and eventually your standard will rise up in your own heart and it will be out of love not law. Just get yourself there. Get yourself there!

Points to Ponder . . .

- Why is it important to properly value prophetic words?
- How can we use prophetic words to wage the good warfare?
- Why is action / obedience so important as we look at being laborers in the harvest?
- What is the outreach / discipleship model described in Acts 16:1-5?
- What scriptures make it clear that all believers should be able to disciple others?
- What keeps discipleship from being an extended “flesh clean up event?”
- How can you build yourself up in the Word and in prayer to prepare for outreach & discipleship?