

“Upon this Rock I’ll Build My _____”

Part 2: The Kingdom Message

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

A Church with a Mission!

If someone asked you “what’s your church’s mission statement?” you could tell them to turn to Matthew 28 and Mark 16! The Great Commission is a co-mission statement from our Lord! He said “this is MY mission - do you want to partner with me in it?” We’ve got our mission!

Rick’s Testimony!

God had been speaking to Rick and he reached out to the church to say “I feel like I need to come to church.” Luke 15:10 says it best “*Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*” ((LISTEN TO THE SERMON AUDIO FROM 02:15 to 11:00 FOR RICK’S TESTIMONY))

Ask (Demand) and it Shall be Given to you

Matthew 7:7 says “**Ask**, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” The word “ask” here actually means “to demand as something due to you.” John 16:23 is often a confusing scripture for this reason. It says “*And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.*” Huh? I thought I wouldn’t ask! Well the Greek actually says “in that day you will beg (ask as a favor) Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you demand the Father as something due to you in My name He will give you.”

I believe there is an air of financial breakthrough around our church right now. It is coming up in prayer time. There have been some testimonies and there are also some needs. Remember how the kingdom works ... in the Kingdom, where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Analogously, where need abounds, grace abounds all the more. So when I see some financial needs it signals to me that God is about to do something financially. You might say “well that’s just wishful thinking!” Well for me it’s going to work! You can decide if it’s going to work for you!

Abraham taught us how to have faith. Remember, he “hoped against hope.” When you have hope when there is NO reason for hope you are hoping against hope!

Financial Breakthrough

There is an air of financial breakthrough around the church right now. It's very interesting to me that I am teaching on "what is church" and financial breakthrough at the same time because when I started this message series on Ekklesia I was acutely aware that this was going to be a little bit of a different message series.

As a pastor I lead people into the rest of God, the peace of God, the grace of God. That's the overarching job description ... it's the gospel! Under that overall message, I am aware of 3 parts of my job description scripturally: (1) feed, (2) lead, (3) protect.

90% of what I do is feed. Well-fed sheep don't tend to get sick! *"Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagles."* (Ps. 103:5) That's a good scripture if you need to eat better food! It is true spiritually as well ... "you are what you eat!" What you're meditating on, what you are chewing on, is important because it is who you will become. So, as a pastor, feeding the congregation well will take care of the vast majority of the pastoral work.

Because I spend almost all my time and energy in feeding you could almost forget that I am supposed to have two other roles. For instance someone came into the body and started sowing back-biting sort of comments and gossiping, you are going to see a different side of my pastoral role come out ... the protect function! The papa-bear anointing ... speak the TRUTH in love ... "that's going to stop right now" function.

If all you generally see is the "feed" function you could be surprised by the "protect" function if it comes out, but it's been in the job description the whole time - it just hasn't been needed.

Here's another one ... the "lead" function. God "leads us beside still waters." Shepherds know that sometimes sheep need to be brought to a new pasture to find new food. You have to be LED to a new pasture. That is different than just eating. Being "fed" is fare being put before you. Being "led" means being taken to a new spot so that you can be fed again!

When I started this sermon series I was aware that this is a "leadership" sermon series. I'm feeding you some, but I am leading you actually. You might not experience it yet from the first sermon of the series - or even this sermon - but I know where it is going. It's a leadership sermon series and I am trying to give you a "heads up" because you are going to tend to think "what my pastor does is feed me." That's good! I should be feeding you rich fare!

There is going to be a moment in this sermon series for most of us where it is going to occur to us "what Peter's talking about is going to ASK something of me!" Perhaps it's even going to demand something of me! :) This series really will require something of you and that's the nature of leadership. We didn't just get a Savior - we got a Lord!

If you want to be led by God you have to give Him the Lordship function. Jesus is the chief shepherd. I'm just A shepherd. If I shepherd you well, it leads you to the chief shepherd. But I'm still a shepherd of this body. So I am not going to just be feeding you in this sermon series; I am also going to be leading you. This series is going to cost you something.

And you're going to thank me for it.

Because I am aware that this series is going to cost you something I've been thinking "Lord there is something about finances that has to come with this ekklesia message." I had figured it would be a "this" then "that" where I would teach ekklesia and then teach finances after that. Well it turns out the Lord keeps doing it where I keep teaching finances at the start of the ekklesia message!

The Lord DELIGHTS in Your Prosperity!

Remember our lesson last time ... 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 shows us that God gives seed to the sower AND bread for food. There is a supernatural strategy embedded in those verses. If you get seed for sowing you ALSO get bread for food! So if you want more bread make a SOWING GOAL! Lead your bread with your seed. If you lead your bread with your seed you will end up with more bread AND you will end up with more seed because will multiply your seed for sowing and increase your harvest of righteousness! I'm good with a greater harvest of righteousness!

You may think "no, not me. I only increase my sowing so I get more seed. I'm religiously minded." Well you might not be very scriptural in that thought. Let's look at Psalms 35:27 *"Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, 'Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in (delights in) the prosperity of His servant.'"*



If you become unaware of how much God delights in you, you will block His prosperity in your life. Sowing and reaping ... Strategy 1. Strategy 2 is to know just how much God delights in you! It will break the entire religious thing right off of it!

People sometimes struggle saying “is this just about prosperity of money?” No. Shalom in the Old Testament is well-being in every way you could ever want well-being. Sozo in the New Testament is deliverance, salvation, and every bit of freedom that you could possibly want. 3 John 2 says “*Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*”

How many things are you supposed to prosper in? ALL things. And those are all the things God delights in you prospering in.

We Need more Dough for the Work of the Lord!

I know I am in a leadership series here that is going to ask you to move your feet - to go somewhere - to go into new territory, and it is going to cost you something. I believe God is lining it up where I am teaching about finances concurrently because He doesn't cost you something without providing for that something!

Prior to Nehemiah 5, the people under Nehemiah's leadership have nearly finished re-building the wall in less than 2 months time! Yet, at the start of Nehemiah 5 we read this:

*“And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brethren. For there were those who said, “We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore **let us get grain**, that we may eat and live.” There were also some who said, “We have **mortgaged** our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine.” There were also those who said, “We have borrowed money for **the king's tax** on our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards.”*

There was now a great outcry among the workers. Do you see what they say they have need of?

- “let us get grain.” In other words they need food! Said in slang “we need some dough!”
- “we have mortgaged our lands ...” In other words, this group is saying “we need help with our mortgages!
- “the king's tax” In other words, this group needs help with their tax expenses!

So you have people who need more dough, need help with their mortgages, and need help with the king's taxes! Do you see what's happened here? They were doing the work of the Lord but they ran into financial trouble!

I've talked with you about Matthew 6:33 before: “*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*” In context we see that what Jesus is telling us

to prioritize is directly opposite to how the Gentiles operate. They seek after all those things: clothing, food, drink, etc. The Gentiles are not trying to be bad - they just don't have a Provider. Jesus said don't be like that ... seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you!

During the summer of 2013, Brad was taking me witnessing. I needed a break that summer as I had been working 50-60 hours a week. I was getting ready to go witnessing and I really felt like "I NEED A BREAK!" It hit me one day while getting ready to go witnessing that I was thinking backwards of Matthew 6:33. I'm saying "I need a break so I'm not going to go witnessing." He said "be about My business and I will give you a break."

For the next week, that scripture (Mt. 6:33) exploded in my heart. A week later I called Brad, told him everything I was thinking about it, and asked for his input. He said "well, Peter, if latch onto that verse like a bulldog and don't let go of it, you are going to walk on water." He proceeded to tell me about how he had watched multiple friends get serious about that very verse and how God had given EACH of them a supernatural financial strategy! He reminded me that our Lord told us that we could not serve both Him and Mammon. So He must have a supernatural financial strategy for every one of His children! He told me "I wish I could tell you what your supernatural financial strategy was, but I can't because it is specific to you."

I got off the phone and cried out at the top of my lungs "SHOW ME HOW!" Within 2 or 3 weeks a prophet friend (who had no idea what I was talking with God about) gave me a word describing a career transition I was going to have over the next few years. That whole year I declared that I was going to transition well.

Then about a year later (June 14, 2014) Joshua called me up said "I was praying this morning and you came to mind. You are going to be offered such-and-such sort of job either already or very soon." He was exactly right - I had just recently been offered that job. He proceeded "the question is do you want it?" That word caused me to step back. 30 minutes after getting that message I realized "I don't want that job actually." A new thought jumped into my head "what if I could do more time with church and part time at school?" I thought "I would have to talk with Brad to see what he thinks ... but it's Saturday so I am not going to call Brad since he is probably preparing the sermon." 10 seconds later, the phone rang - it's Brad! The transition worked!

That whole year the Lord had been speaking to Megan and I about allegorically sending packages ahead on the Appalachian Trail. Hikers on the AT pack boxes of food and supplies which they send ahead to the small town post-offices along the trail ... they do this before they start hiking the trail of course! Then as you hike the trail you get these care-packages you've already sent yourself with all this food and supplies. So, we had been saving money that year to send some money ahead to ourselves!

It's a good thing because as we transitioned careers, the consulting I was doing caught on right away but sometimes the payment for that sort of invoiced work takes months to arrive!

So, the transition was super-blessed but it was still a stretch for me personally. I was up at Megan's family's house and praying and crying out to God "Lord I know I am supposed to be doing but we've got mouths to feed!"

(Praise God even without Megan working, we are a 3 or 4 income family generally. *"Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days. Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, For you do not know what evil will be on the earth."* (Eccl. 11:1) I'm not saying this as an opinion, it is God's will that you would have multiple streams of income. It's scriptural! You may say "I don't have time for a second stream of income." Well ask God for a supernatural financial strategy!)

Some people will say "well I'm good financially." My question for you is "if you are good financially, are you good in terms of time?" We were fine financially when I cried about Matthew 6:33. What we weren't fine about was time! 60 hours a week is no sort of good life - it sure doesn't leave room to go witnessing! Doesn't leave room for me to drop things and go help someone or minister to someone. Doesn't leave room for me to minister to someone that I meet somewhere. Doesn't leave room for any of that! It doesn't leave room for me to spend extra time with my family - all of which is Godly.

So what I am saying is to not only have hope for being in a great spot financially - but also and concurrently a great spot in terms of time. That's God's will for you - that you would have an abundance of both time and money to sow and enjoy!

So as I was praying that summer God said "if you will take care of My people, I will take care of your family." My family gets the better deal there! God will do the same with you! If you will take care of His business He will take care of your business - and you will get the better deal. You can't beat God in your giving no matter how you try!

This is what Matthew 6:33 says. If you want a supernatural financial strategy, SEEK FIRST the Kingdom! When you seek first the SEED for sowing, what do you get? Bread for food! When you seek first the Kingdom, do you know what you get? All the other things! When you seek first the seed and your giving goals, you get all the bread. When you seek first the Kingdom you get all the other things. This is what Jesus was highlighting. The Gentile mindset has it all backwards. That mindset seeks first all the other things and forgets to seek the kingdom. Let it not be so in the church!

In Nehemiah 5, we see the same problem. They were doing the work of God but they are saying "We need dough and we have mortgage and tax needs!" Those issues were inhibiting the work of the kingdom.

Perhaps God will one day be as smart as the businesses of the world ... you know how the businesses of the world understand that any work that needs done requires resources (time and money?) Is it possible that our Heavenly Father could one day be as insightful as Google about giving their people time and finances to be able to do the work? Maybe God will get that smart someday and be willing to resource you to do the work that He's asked us to do.

Do you realize how asinine it is to EVEN CONSIDER a thought that says "if I step out into the work of God He may not provide for me???" I have thought like this before. It's crazy. Do we really think God will NOT provide for us if we are about His work? Remember the parable in which the master promised a certain wage to every laborer? God has promised you something "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*" It is insanity to think otherwise. God is WAY BETTER than Google and any other top employer - all of whom know that the work they need done requires time and money!

The Kingdom Message

I am not in full time ministry. Do you know what I am in? I am in full time KINGDOM! This means all of you can be in the same thing. This is why Jesus said "seek first the KINGDOM ... and all these things will be added to you." Jesus did not tell me to seek first the MINISTRY and all these things will be added to me.

What's the Kingdom? What's happened today in Rick is the Kingdom! (AGAIN LISTEN TO RICK'S TESTIMONY)

Jesus said "*My **kingdom** is not of this world.*" (Jn. 18:36) "Kingdom" is used 155 times in the New Testament and while some of those uses are about natural kingdoms the vast majority of them are about the Kingdom of God.

Jesus said the Kingdom of God came near to those who had demons cast out of them. (Matthew 12:28 and Luke 11:20).

Rick shared that when He confessed Jesus as His Savior during worship service he felt like something had been in his throat "tugging at the words" trying to keep him from saying them. He felt like during someone reached out and grabbed something out of him. He was sitting there and we were praying for him and next time he opened his eyes he felt 100 pounds lighter! Rick was on the floor and looked at Daniel and said "what happened, did I fall?" Daniel said "no, man, the Holy Spirit got you!" Rick had even told his fiancé previously "I feel like there is maybe a demon inside of me because the more I try to do good the more it tries to take me away."

This is the kingdom of God. There is a kingdom of darkness that Rick had been in before. He had promised his grandma to never get back in it. He was having an opportunity to get back into it. The

opportunity was haunting him. He felt like he needed to come to a church. He looked up “churches near me” online and finds us and we have the same name of the church his grandma used to go to. We connect on the phone, have a great connection, and he comes to service. During worship a voice is telling him to leave service but something else was holding him here so he paced back and forth in the back of the sanctuary. Megan found me and said “I think Rick’s ready for some ministry now.” So I grab Ryan and say “hey let’s pray for Rick.” Daniel joined in too. Rick repents, receives salvation, get’s baptized in the Holy Spirit, is speaking in tongues, and I saw a demon get cast out as we prayed for him. And that’s what Rick just described “He felt like during someone reached out and grabbed something out of him. He was sitting there and we were praying for him and next time he opened his eyes he felt 100 pounds lighter!” That voice that had been telling him to leave and tried to choke him to keep him from confessing the Lord Jesus was gone!

That is the kingdom of God!

Luke 16:16 says “*The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.*” EVERYONE IS TRYING TO GET INTO THIS KINGDOM!!! That’s why you need to have a gate! That’s why Jesus said “I’m the gate. I’m the Way!” Because everyone is pushing in and pressing into His Kingdom!

I have news for you ... Jesus came to preach the Kingdom! If you look at what the gospel is, it is the gospel of the Kingdom! Later on in Paul’s letters, he does call it the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of grace, and the gospel of grace (and maybe some others). BUT it’s the gospel of the Kingdom!

What’s the message Jesus preached? KINGDOM! What’s the message He sent His disciples out to preach? KINGDOM! What’s the message He said would be preached until the end and then the end would come? KINGDOM!

The Kingdom of God is a clash of kingdoms. It’s light and darkness and darkness stands no chance.

The kingdom looks like demons being cast out. “*But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the **kingdom** of God has come upon you.*” (Mt. 12:28) “*And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The **kingdom** of God has come near to you.’*” (Lk. 10:9) “*But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the **kingdom** of God has come upon you.*” (Lk. 11:20)

It doesn’t require God’s whole hand to cast out a demon! Jesus starts waving a finger and those thousand demons start coming out of the man previously-known-as-Legion!

This is the Kingdom of God that causes:

- the dead to be raised
- the sick healed

- demons cast out
- families restored
- gives safety from bad weather (remember the storm on the sea?)
- causes provision for taxes (remember the fish?)
- gives wisdom, wisdom, wisdom which produces all the beauty, excellence, and peace of heaven on earth! (remember how Jesus always had a word fitly spoken which were like apples of gold in settings of silver!)
- sinners repented (tax collectors who said “look I’m going to give it back and make it right!”)
- cities were transformed at the testimony of a woman on her 5th or 6th “husband”

This is the kingdom! What is the message of the ekklesia? The KINGDOM! What is the message of the ekklesia? THE KINGDOM! His kingdom is the message of the ekklesia!