

## “How will you Grow?”

**Mth 28:18-20; Eph 4:11-13; Romans 8:28-30; Acts 2:41-47**

- Remember the days of Rocket ship launches? Along with some greatly successful mission success, there have also been many Failed Missions! Such as the Orbital Science’s Antares rocket that exploded just seconds after liftoff yesterday. Carrying science experiments and supplies for the International Space Station. The mission was unmanned, and nobody on the ground was injured either, according to the public video feed from NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility. The combined value of the destroyed rocket and cargo vessel, a Cygnus craft built by NASA, is \$200 million! The NOAA-19 ( National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) was the last in a series of weather satellites that monitor atmospheric conditions, follow volcanic eruptions and conduct climate research. The Problem: During final servicing at a Lockheed-Martin facility in California, engineers failed to check if the satellite was bolted down before moving it, and accidentally knocked the multi-million dollar piece of equipment onto the ground, breaking a number of components. Whoops!
- Dan reminded us last week that we have a mission! We are a people on mission. **Our Mission Statement:** “Relying on the enabling presence and Power of God, our mission is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, to teach, Baptise and Disciple unto maturity.”
- **Relying on the enabling presence and Power of God...**The importance of the work of the Holy Spirit. The importance of Prayer, dependence on God! We could do a lot of things in our own ability that could grow the church! But if God is not in it, the one behind it, its all in vain! **Psalms 127:1** “Unless the LORD builds a house, its builders labor over it in vain...”
- **Our mission is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ...**Our mission must always be centered on the Gospel! If the gospel is not at the center of all we do, we miss the mark. Sharing the good news of the gospel. Evangelism!
- We are blessed to have a senior pastor whos gift, heart & passion is evangelism! Preaches the gospel from the pulpit.

Creating an evangelism team, get behind it! **Romans 1:16** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes”

- **To teach, Baptize and Disciple unto maturity... Our ultimate purpose and mission is not just to make converts, but to make Disciples!** (Turn in Bibles) **Matthew 28:16-20**
- **Robert Gallaty** - “When the church becomes an end in itself, it ends. When Sunday school, as great as it is, becomes an end in itself, it ends. When small groups ministry becomes an end in itself, it ends. When the worship service becomes an end in itself, it ends. What we need is for discipleship to become the goal, and then the process never ends.
- “The 11 disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw Him, **they worshiped**, but **some doubted**. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came near and said to them, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth**. <sup>19</sup> Go, therefore, and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, **I am with you always, to the end of the age.**”
- **The Great Commission!** Notice **it starts with Worship!** There were **some doubters** (maybe that’s you), that’s ok, we are glad you here! **The enabling presence & power!** Notice the mission doesn’t end with worship, it starts with worship! (Starts and Ends with worship in heaven! Worship is eternal, don’t know that Discipleship and spiritual growth is)
- **The Mission is Discipleship!** To make Disciples. To become and be Disciples. **Of all nations**. Its everything we do as a church, everywhere! Why we have Missions, support missionaries in Ukraine, Nigeria, Haiti, eSwatini, Wasauksing, Migrant Workers. (Tim Keller – Church of future is a multi ethnic church) Heaven will be every tribe, nation & Tongue!
- If our mission is to Disciple, we need to ask the question, **Q: what is a Disciple? How do you define Discipleship?** Like worship, take us in many directions! Book after book has

been written! The Bible defines discipleship as **becoming & being a lifelong follower of Jesus!** Jesus' invitation was "Follow Me." Jesus never said "Be my Disciple", he said (over 20 times) **follow me.**

- **Greek word "Disciple"** literally means **a learner. Is to teach and instruct.** To follow another's teaching, instructions. Its to be a lifelong learner of Jesus! **Requires obedience, Surrender, Sacrifice, Knowledge, Relationship. All of this leads to Spiritual Growth & transformation.** John 8:30-31 "As He was saying these things, many believed in Him. <sup>31</sup> So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples. **Luke 6:40** "a disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."
- Discipleship is a lifelong relationship with Jesus, where we grow in knowledge, relationship, character. Dietrich Bonhoeffer "Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."
- **Q: How do we do when it's done? When we have arrived? Reached the finish line?** (Anyone there? Think your close?) This is where the word "**Maturity**" come in! **Our Mission is to "Disciple unto...Maturity."** **Q: How do we define Maturity? What does it look mean and look like?** The Bible gives us the answers!
- Turn in Bibles to **Eph 4:11-13** "And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some **pastors** and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the **training** of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all reach **unity in the faith** and in the **knowledge of God's Son**, growing **into a mature man** with a stature **measured by Christ's fullness.**"
- The Work and mission of the church is to every believer working together for the **perfecting** of the saints (training), building up one another, until we all reach...**unity in the faith** (united in conviction, belief, mission), in the **knowledge of Jesus** (head knowledge, heart knowledge & relational knowledge), growing in **mature** man (or women),

that is measured by **Jesus**, the character and person of Jesus Christ! Everything about Jesus, how character, his relationship with God, how he handled every circumstance and situation, his mission, purpose, how he talked, how he loved...

- **Maturity** literally means **perfection. Completeness.** Brought to an **end, finished.** Before we move on, don't let it be lost on you that discipleship, spiritual maturity, happens in the church, it is the work of the church!

### ➤ **Annette Brummell Testimony & Small Group**

- Turn to **Romans 8:28-30** "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to **His purpose.**"<sup>29</sup> For those He foreknew He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers.<sup>30</sup> And those He **predestined**, He also **called**; and those He called, He also **justified**; and those He justified, He also **glorified.**"
- **Discipleship is the process of God is using every single thing** in your life and mine to accomplish a purpose. A goal. An end. **To make us more like Jesus!** Not physically (except the resurrected Body), but Mentally, emotionally, spiritually. Character. To the point that we talk like Jesus, think Jesus, feel like Jesus, see like Jesus, act like Jesus, live like Jesus. **If I was to make a list of everything Jesus was and is, what you put on the list?**
- **God's plan for your life** is right here! Clearly laid out! Mapped out in 4 Words! **Predestined... Called... Justified... Glorified.** I would add between justified & glorified the word **Sanctified! (Rom 6:22; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 4:1-7). 1 Thessalonians 4:3** "For this is God's will, your sanctification..." Everything else we worry about is peripheral! (House, job)
- **David Kinnaman, unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters** "Most people in America, when they are exposed to the Christian faith, are not being

transformed. They take one step into the door, and the journey ends. They are not being allowed, encouraged, or equipped to love or to think like Christ. Yet in many ways a focus on spiritual formation fits what a new generation is really seeking. Transformation is a process, a journey, not a one-time decision.” —

- Again let me ask the question **Q: How do you know its done? You have reached the finish lined? Completed?** Easy, bible gives us the answer! **1 John 3:2** “We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is.” Its done when you see Jesus! Only gonna happen one of two ways...You die...or He returns!
- **Q: Who is there this morning?** For those who are farther along in the process, I love what Paul says in **Philippians 3:12-15** “**Not that I have already reached the goal or am already fully mature**, but I **make every effort to take hold of it** because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. <sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: **Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead**, <sup>14</sup> I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Therefore, **all who are mature should think this way.**” How we perceive our own spiritual maturity reveals our spiritual maturity!
- **Q: Are you fully mature? Are you making every effort to get there? Resting on what you accomplished in the past? Still reaching forward to what God has for you next?**
- Tim Keller – Diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer. Did two things for Him. Made Him more intentional and focused. Made Him pursue more Holiness.
- **Kevin DeYoung** “The one indispensable requirement for producing godly, mature Christians is godly, mature Christians.”
- Our Mission is to make Disciples. To Disciple unto Maturity. Big & Final Question! **Q: How are we gonna do it?** How as a church do we make sure that we are doing the work of Discipleship. Facilitating and encouraging continual spiritual growth, learning, obeying, maturing, transformation.

- Again, we go back to The Bible. It was in the great Commission “<sup>19</sup> Go, therefore, and **make disciples of all nations, baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> **teaching them to observe everything I have commanded** you. **Starts with Baptism.** Public profession of our Faith, of our new life in Jesus, With the church gathered around us.
- Then its **to teach!** **To Learn!** **EVERYTHING** Jesus has shown us and commanded us! We have a lot to learn!
- Love the Greek word **“observe”** used here. Means to also **guard, protect, keep from losing, to watch over our lives,** what we have learned and know. Not fall away from it!
- So as a staff we have come up with a Discipleship strategy, to do what God has called us to do, to make Disciples, encourage discipleship, toward Maturity. 3 Words. **Worship. Grow. Serve.**
- **Starts with Worship.** Worship is a commitment to regular corporate worship. **Big Church!** A lot of elements to it. **Singing. Preaching. Praying. Communion. Baptism.** Coffee! We need it! Every week! To learn but also to keep! Stay right with God! Keep everything in perspective. Before people fall away from faith, Jesus, they fall away from Church.
- Worship, then **GROW.** To be doing what we can to intentionally continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus, our knowledge, and our becoming like Jesus. Although Corporate worship is significant, we believe **we need more than Big Church Worship.** Big church is lacking in some ways.
- The reality is that you can go to big church every week, sit in the back row, go through the motions, check the box. Without really responding. Without allowing God’s Word & H.S. to work in you. Without any accountability. Without

building biblical relationships and really entering into Biblical community. “You can use God to Hide from God”

- Let’s finish with one more passage this morning. Turn to **Acts 2:41-47** “<sup>41</sup> So those who **accepted his message** were **baptized**, and that day about 3,000 people were **added to them**. <sup>42</sup> And they **devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching**, to the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread**, and to the **prayers**. <sup>43</sup> Then fear came over everyone, and many **wonders and signs** were being performed through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> Now all the believers were **together** and **held all things in common**. <sup>45</sup> They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, **as anyone had a need**. <sup>46</sup> **Every day** they **devoted themselves to meeting together** in the **temple complex**, and broke bread **from house to house**. They ate their food with a joyful and humble attitude, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved.”
- This was the birth of the church! The perfect church! For about 3 days. We see the **critical Elements for genuine Discipleship & Spiritual Growth**. Let me highlight them.
- **Evangelism. Baptism. Church. Devoted** (2 times, earnest, persevere, constantly diligent in). **God’s Word** (Apostle’s teaching). **Biblical Relationships** (Fellowship, Breaking of bread, together, held all things in common, met every need). **Prayer** (They had some prayer meetings. So Devoted that they met **EVERY DAY**, in the **temple (Big Church)**, and from **house to house**, Small church.
- We need more than “big church” worship, once a week. Especially in our culture. If we truly want to grow, to learn, follow, become more like Jesus. Its too easy to slip away from Big Church. (How quick some fall away! After Baptism)
- **Paul David Tripp** “The church is not a theological classroom. It is a conversion, confession, repentance, reconciliation, forgiveness and sanctification center, where flawed people place their faith in Christ, gather to know and love him better, and learn to love others as he designed.”

- Our **Vision** is to see **EVERY** regular attender at Emmanuel committed and involved in **ONE** Small Group, Ministry Group (CR, She Works His Way, AWANA, Fusion, Surge), or Bible Study (Sunday & Wed). Growing in relationship with Jesus and experiencing Biblical Community.
- **WHY?** Because you can't Hide from God there. You can try. Because we believe in small groups, Ministry Groups, & Bible studies that relationally connect people in such a way that encourage them to be growing spiritually, in their relationship with Jesus. That they provide the best context within the church for genuine discipleship to happen.
- **Gary & Pricilla Smith Testimony & Small Group**
- Acts 2:41-47 kind of stuff that doesn't happen in Big Church, happens better & deeper in Small Church! **Accountability and encouragement to personal evangelism, Baptism** (love it when whole small group comes up!), to **Big Church attendance** and growth. If you go missing, we are gonna know, send out a search party! (hospital or sick)
- **Devotion to God's Word**, digging deeper, asking questions, wrestling with it, mostly applying it, being held accountable to it. (Judge me!). Why we have Sermon based, Pastor Peter gives you questions!
- **Devotion and experiencing Authentic Biblical Community.** The place and opportunity to truly learn and practice love to other believers, to truly care for one another (Rachel can't do it all), to carry each others Burdens, spur one another on when we fell like giving up, to challenge, encourage and support one another in spiritual growth, to confess our sins to one another.
- **Serving one another.** Meeting practical needs. Using our spiritual gifts. Serving together as a group.



- **Prayer!** Seeking together to see God work and move in each others lives. Praying each other through the challenges we face. Burden carrying prayer. Persevering prayer. (I love how small group help a church become more consistent in our spiritual disciplines, make them urgent and put them on our schedule!)
- The reality is that these thing are more likely to happen when we pursue God together in Circles instead of Rows.

### **Finish / Challenge**

- Be honest. I'm an idealist! I know its not as easy and amazing as I make it sound lol! Sometimes it's a grind. Sometimes you get hurt in small group. Sometimes it takes time to find that small church place you fit in!
- If you are not in a small group, ministry group or Bible study, can you spend some time answering the question **Why Not?**
- **Sticky Church, Larry Osborne.** "Most Spiritual growth moments aren't linear and don't come from a program or curriculum, but from the result of life putting us in a need to know or need to grow situation. These situations are usually accompanied by a trial or stretching experience that calls for a deeper walk with God, when the two things we will need most are the Bible and other Christians." Where will you find those things when the time comes? Big Church yes. Even more in Small church. But if you wait until the need arises...it might be too late.
- **Hebrews 3:12-14** "Watch out, brothers, so that there won't be in any of you **an evil, unbelieving heart that departs from the living God.** <sup>13</sup> But **encourage each other daily**, while it is still called today, so that none of you is **hardened by sin's deception.** <sup>14</sup> For we have become **companions of the Messiah** if we **hold firmly until the end** the reality that we had at the start."
- Sign up at the back Table or Online. More that sign up, easier it is to put the right groups together. Need small group leaders! Pastors!

➤ Prayer