

Firebrand

January 2016

-- Sunday morning --

Discipleship: The heart of continuity and multiplication

ILLUSTRATION: What legacy do I leave behind?

Judges 2:7-10 *7 And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the Lord had done for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110 years. 9 And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. 10 And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.*

Matthew 4:18-22 *18 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*

- **Follow Jesus**
- **He will make us**
- **We will become fishers of men**

- **Follow Jesus**
 - Everyone a follower of Jesus. The vision of every local church, and therefore every believer, **TO KNOW CHRIST, AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN**. We are a Christ-centred people.
 - 1 Corinthians 11:1 *Follow me as I follow Christ*. Therefore, even though we follow our leaders, we are all disciples of Jesus. So, we build everyone into a real, living, life giving and meaningful relationship with Jesus.

- **He will make us**

- Jesus has committed Himself to *make* those who follow Him. He is changing us from glory to glory into His likeness and image. These processes work through our relationship with Jesus and through our local church commitment.
- We often have a too temporal and self-centred expectation of what He's making us - happy, rich, famous, safe, all my needs met?!
- Romans 8:28 *And we know that God works all things together for the good of those who are called according to his purpose.*
- There is a battle that ensues. For at the heart of God making us is a resistance in our fallen sinful human nature, displaying itself as unteachableness and a lack of submission.
- We don't want to miss God's challenges to us for change! Look at three examples from Revelation
 - You have lost your first. Love. Revelation 2:2-5 *2 "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place, unless you repent.*
 - Wake up! Revelation 3:1-3 *1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.' "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.*
 - You are lukewarm and spiritually poor! Revelation 3:15-19 *15 "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realising that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.*

- **We will become fishers of men**

- The purpose of us becoming like Jesus, as He makes us, is for the ministry of the Gospel. Luke 19:10 *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*

ILLUSTRATION: Only what lasts forever will last forever! E.g. The values of the Kingdom! **ILLUSTRATION:** Does Kingdom fit into my important and busy way of life, or does my life fit into Kingdom? Most times, this is missing in discipleship, and so it is reduced to collecting knowledge only. Everyone of us is ready to share the Gospel. Evangelism must move from an event to a lifestyle, and from applying to a special few to a priesthood function.

NOTE: Change from self-centred to Christ-centred and from there, others-centred. Lost, hurting and dying people do matter to God. The mission of the Kingdom must become our absolute priority.

Practically

- **Relationships**

- Everyone a follower of Jesus
- Everyone relationally connected

- **Integrated into the local church**

- Vision - What we've been called to do?
- Values - What is important to us?
- Vehicles - How we get it done?
 - Congregational meetings
 - Small groups
 - Bible study (Equipping) and prayer

- **Equipping**

- Through our relationships
- On the job training
- Through what is taught in the local church

- **Opportunity and function**

- Every believer a fisher of men
- Every believer serving and functioning with their gift
- Every believer prepared for the *home* and *away* games

-- Sunday night --

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit

John 14:18 *I will not leave you as **orphans**; I will come to you.*

We shouldn't be able to, but we are able to have church without the Holy Spirit.

- The churches Paul planted and worked with, were full of the '*charismata*' or phenomenon of God – wildly so! Much of the teaching we have on the grace gifts or '*charismata*', comes from Paul correcting excess in the churches. Today, we more need encouragement to get going and flow with the Spirit.
- *What the soul is in our body, the Holy Spirit is in the body of Christ, which is the church.* Augustine.
- *I bet you'd agree that a group of talented, charismatic leaders can draw a crowd. Find the right creative team, musicians, and speakers, and you can grow any church. It doesn't even have to be a Christian church. The fact is that without making a conscious choice to depend on the Holy Spirit, we can do a lot. (Although without the Spirit, we wouldn't actually be drawing our next breath—but I am talking about cognisant and intentional dependence on our part.) My point is that a growing and energetic gathering is not necessarily evidence of the Holy Spirit's work.* Francis Chan *The forgotten God.*
- 1 Corinthians 11:17 *In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.*
- When Paul arrives in Ephesus he meets 12 people, *Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed.*

Discipleship 101

John 14:16 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Helper**, to be with you forever.*

John 14:26 *But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

John 15:26 *But when the **Helper** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.*

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit

Luke 4:1-15

1 And Jesus, **full** of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was **led** by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. 3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone." 5 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, 6 and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." 8 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve." 9 And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you," 11 and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." 12 And Jesus answered him, "It is said, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." 13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. 14 And Jesus returned in the **power** of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

- Stay **full** of the Holy Spirit
- Be **led** of the Spirit
- Operate in the **power** of the Spirit

From purely cerebral and conservative, to truth and experience!

Prophetic

- Seven years of uphill, challenge and strong opposition - season ahead of flowing freely with Him. You come representing an apostolic/prophetic understanding of Kingdom, but to that God wants to add signs, wonders and miracles!!!
- See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil is good, but what is better is to see, hear and speak about Jesus. Not just not do the don'ts but do the dos.
- Pray for each other to activate what God has been challenging us with over the past few weeks

-- Tuesday night --

Leaders

TESTIMONY: Isaiah 54:3 *For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the **nations** and will people the desolate **cities**.*

Engaging and serving your community, our testimony.

- Focus from God is cities and nations
- Loving your city
- Ukwakhe Isizwe

Leadership by example

Romans 12:8

ESV *The one who leads, with zeal*

NLT *If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously*

NIV *If it is to lead, do it diligently*

NKJV *He who leads, with diligence*

Taking our responsibility seriously as leaders

Hebrews 13:7-8 **Remember** your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. **Consider** the outcome of their way of life, and **imitate** their faith. **8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:17 **Obey** your leaders and **submit** to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to **give an account**. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Leading by example

- **Mao Tse Tsung causes millions to die in China**

The four pests campaign (or kill the sparrow campaign) from 1958-1962

China was growing through its Great Leap Forward.

Under Mao Tse Tsung the Chinese communist leader.

Rats, flies, mosquitos, sparrows

Theory: sparrows were eating grain crops

Chinese scientists had calculated that each sparrow consumed 4.5kg of grain each year — and that for every million sparrows killed, there would be food for 60,000 people. Armed with this information, Mao launched the Great Sparrow Campaign to address the problem.

Killed hundreds of millions of sparrows, almost to extinction

Never realised that along with grain crops, sparrows ate insects. This caused plagues of crop eating insects to swarm, resulting in famine.

Along with a drought, this resulted in 15-45 million dying because of the famine, way more than they thought would be fed from the extra grain that was spared because of the sparrows. Subsequently, they had to import Russian sparrows. Therefore, the leader's bad mistake was paid for by his followers.

- **David's bad decision causes people to die**

1 Chronicles 21:1-4, 7-15 *1 Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel. 2 So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army, "Go, number Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number." 3 But Joab said, "May the Lord add to his people a hundred times as many as they are! Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?" 4 But the king's word prevailed against Joab. So Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came back to Jerusalem. 7 But God was displeased with this thing, and he struck Israel. 8 And David said to God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly." 9 And the Lord spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, 10 "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the Lord, Three things I offer you; choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'" 11 So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, 'Choose what you will: 12 either three years of famine, or three months of devastation by your foes while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else three days of the sword of the Lord, pestilence on the land, with the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me." 13 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man." 14 So the Lord sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell. 15 And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the Lord saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the Lord was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. David numbered his troops against Joab's counsel. Satan tempted him to sin in this way, and he gave into the temptation, only to be confronted by God over his evil. God judges him and 70 000 people die in the ensuing outbreak of tumors as God's punishment.*

- **Not many fathers**

1 Corinthians 4:14-21 *14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have **countless guides** in Christ, you do **not have many fathers**. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, **be imitators of me**. 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to **remind** you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. 18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?*

- **Live a life of example**

1 Timothy 4:1-16 1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, 3 who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. 6 If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe. 11 Command and teach these things. 12 **Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.** 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.