

## **Be the Church – “Mission”**

Notes from Part Two

8/26/12

*~ A very important element in any church is to know the difference between values, mission, and methods. The danger all churches face is in allowing the mission to become fuzzy. When the mission becomes fuzzy churches tend to allow the role of the mission and methods to switch places. Their methods take on a missional quality which ends up being very unhealthy.*

**Values** are foundational. They shape beliefs and passions. They play a huge role in our identity. Values never change. Our driving values are *The Great Commandment* and *The Great Commission*.

**Mission** answers the question “What are we called to accomplish?” or “What do we *do*?” Mission is worth sacrificing for. We celebrate & mourn over the mission. Mission rarely, if ever, changes.

**Method** is about the systems, resources, and tasks we employ to accomplish the mission. Methods change all the time.

**Our Mission: *Lead spiritually disconnected people into a life-giving relationship with God.***

*John 7:37-38 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.”*

These are the spiritually disconnected. God is lost on them. The only Christians they have ever experienced were legalistic...judgmental and condemning. They are plagued with doubt and feel like they can't belong. They may be skeptics. All they know is what Christians are against. They grew up in church, or prayed to be a Christ follower in High School but somewhere they lost connection with church and a spiritual life. They feel hurt and rejected by life. They are thirsty because they have no sense of their deeper purpose.

***Lead spiritually disconnected people...*** We want to emphasize the notion of being proactive and deliberate. We want to be a part of leading these people to drink. We don't want this to be mechanical or non-relational by being very active in sharing gospel, but having no real deliberate goal of effecting change in a person's life. I knew someone that said it was just about doing their Christian duty. They even once told me, “I tell them and then I wash my hands of their fate.”

***... into a life-giving relationship with God.*** We are not leading people to a religious system or a magical ritual. It's not about having the exact right words. We are leading people to a person. It's a relational thing.

*John 10:9-10 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

*Matt 13:2-4 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.*

## The Banquet

*Luke 14:16-17 A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'*

I love the imagery. Think of someone like Rocco DiSpirito preparing a culinary masterpiece. I want you to picture exquisite dishes, the finest wine, candles, Italian string instruments, lighting, with Andrea Bocelli singing on the portico and the most wonderful smells wafting out of the kitchen.

The announcement goes out - dinner is ready... come in. These people come up with lame justifications for not coming. Does Jesus stop there and say 'oh well, no one is coming.' No. The master does the most extraordinary thing. He tells the servants to go out and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.

*Luke 14:21 The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'*

This feast represents the Kingdom of God and Jesus wants these people in the kingdom. And these people were the last people you would expect to be invited to a feast like this.

*Luke 14:22-23 'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full.'*

Here's the deal... We've already gotten to feast at that meal. We are a part of the Kingdom of God. It would be a sad thing if we spent the rest of our lives sitting at that table. Christ's heart in everything he said and did was to never let it end with you or me.

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***YOUR Greatest joy will never be the meal you eat... it might be really good...it might be amazing. Your greatest joy comes from the meal you serve.  
It will be the people you are helping to find God.***