

Sheep in the Midst of Wolves

Message Notes

Jan 16/2022

A. The Church from Cruise ship to a Battleship

Gathered Church vs. Scattered Church.

Same Mission: To Love God, Love People, Be Discipled, Make Disciples.

This is not just a function of the GATHERED CHURCH but the PRIMARY FUNCTION of the SCATTERED CHURCH as well.

Common thought process in the Western Church (there is truth in it as well) – we see church as the building, we go to the building – to church. There we worship, learn, get challenged and pray. And we hope that our church grows – not just to have a BIG church, but growth means lost people are being saved! YES! Then we leave and go home and live our lives and come again next week.

We think the gathered church is the primary place the GC2 (Great Command & Commission) gets completed within our communities.

1 Corinthians 14:24 (ESV) But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all,

Is this all bad? NO! it isn't! it's just incomplete!

We often default to the GC2 being a “**Come, therefore**” model. Church is a place we go to that always has open doors for lost or hurting people who also want to COME and find Jesus.

What happens when unbelievers can't enter our assembly because of restrictions? Lost people need to find Jesus. What if at one point the government would deem our beliefs harmful to society and shut us down completely?

We must not rely on the COME THEREFORE model... this only gives Church 5% of the week to be effective!

Matthew 28:18-20 “Go, therefore, and make disciples of the nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And, behold, I am with you always. To the end of the age.”

GO, THEREFORE ... This model works for the other 95% of our weeks!

Picture: Combines sitting in the machine shed waiting for the harvest to come in... machine sheds are good! They protect the combines and provide a place for rest & repair... but the combine only fulfills its purpose when it is in the field harvesting.

Matthew 9:37-38 (ESV) Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

PRAY – Jesus – to send out more combines into the field!

MISSION of the Church MINDSET SHIFT: IF fulfilling the Great Command & Great Commission is going to be our GOAL – then we must move from “COME, THEREFORE” (Cruiseship) model only and adopt a, “GO, THEREFORE” (Battleship) where we embrace being SENT OUT.

Does this mean we don’t need the gathered church and to COME together? NO! Believers need to gather, we need to support each other, stir each other to good works, etc. YES. Like the combine in the machine shed... a place to rest, recharge and repair.

B. GATHERED CHURCH: vital! Ecclesia means GATHERED.

Hebrews 10:19-25 (ESV)

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Two Relationships are talked about here:

1. **Relationship with God** – “let us draw near” this is something we do privately AND within community.
2. **Do not neglect meeting together** – encouraging each other, stirring each other on to good works
 - a. Teaching, learning, be discipled, encouragement, stirring each other on, support, accountability, prayer, worshipping together, serving each other, bearing each others burdens.

3 strategies for engaging with the GATHERED Church:

Acts 2 says they went to the temple together and met in homes together...

1. **Weekend services – come – sign up.** We LOVE having you here!
2. **Invite a friend, or two or another family and watch the weekend service together at home.**
 - a. Working within the Public Health Order 😊
 - i. Meeting – sing together, watch message, pray for each other, enjoy a meal together! LOVE LOVE LOVE THIS!
 - ii. Families: set up a TV for kids and one for adults. Kids watch KCO together, while adults watch the Weekend service.
 - iii. I have had multiple families talk about some of the benefits of watching online.. they are able to pause and do Q&A... GREAT!
3. **Small groups: believers meeting weekly.**
 - a. Face to face is best – but for those who can’t or aren’t comfortable. ZOOM is better than NOTHING.
 - b. We need to encourage each other, to stir each other on, to speak truth into each other’s lives... we need accountability... we need people we can share our burdens with so we can carry them together

- c. If you don't have a group, **get together with a friend or two or a family member** start doing the above!
- d. If you are looking for help with your group – let us know! We have LOTS of great resources to help you get started. Whether The Way discipleship materials and more, we have stuff from basic bible study ideas to more advanced topical resources.

This gathering of the church is IMPORTANT for training up believers, for growth, for togetherness and encouragement. – We NEED EACH OTHER.

C. We need to ENGAGE as the Scattered Church... “Go, therefore...”

The primary place we fulfill the mission of the church – GC squared – is in regular life!

This is the BATTLESHIP being sent out on MISSION! And we aren't being sent into calm seas!

Matthew 10:16-17 Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. So be wise as serpents, and innocent as doves.

This charge comes a few verses after Jesus' cry to send out more laborers into the field. The harvest is PEOPLE. Lost people. And the strategy to reach those people was to use the Church – Believers – who would be willing to GO and bring the GOOD NEWS to the people in their spheres of influence.

We are being sent out on mission into a lost world, a world that is increasingly hostile towards us as believers... our beliefs aren't popular...

Matthew 10:24-42 (ESV) “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household... “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops... And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Strong words. Sobering words by Jesus.

Three Key Points for being a Battleship Church:

- 1. Our ENEMY is NOT people**, rather, it is the devil himself. **1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- 2. Sheep in the midst of wolves** – sheep don't fight with teeth & claw. We fight by laying down our lives for others. Just as Jesus did. We love them.
 - a. What will we do when people disagree with us? or hate us? or accuse us falsely?
 - b. Forgiveness will be a POWERFUL tool for us!
 - c. We will also need to be sensitive to the Spirit! “wise as serpents, innocent as doves”
 - d. The Lord will lead us in how to engage with people, when to engage, and when NOT to engage..
- 3. Our primary weapons (big guns) are LOVE, TRUTH & PRAYER.**

The first two are summed up in the GC squared! Love God & people and make disciples – lead them to the TRUTH.

QUICK EXAMPLE: saw a guy walking in the minus 100 we had... despite being on my way home, I pulled around and asked if he needed a ride. He was so grateful! When he left my vehicle, he poked his head back and said, “Im gonna pay this forward.” YES

QUICK EXAMPLE: asked a guy at a store how he was doing... he began to share some challenges he was facing... I then asked if I could pray for him and he agreed! Got to pray with him!

Do people know what we are FOR? Or, just what we’re AGAINST?

When we engage in the Great Command & Commission, people see what we are FOR and WHO we belong to, not just what we are AGAINST.

FIRST & most critical step: PRAYER

Prayer is the foundation of every move of God!

Prayer: 1) to resist temptation; 2) Know God; 3) grow our character & change our heart; 4) strength to do God’s will; 5) wisdom – how to navigate; 6) knowledge – what to do; 7) provision; 8) move mountains; 9) miracles; 10) MAKES US MORE LIKE JESUS – He is ALWAYS interceding for us

SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2022

Cruise Ship → → → → Battleship

I would encourage you to memorize the passages for each request...

1. **Great Command** (Mt 22:37-40): Love God – Love people: hospitality, generosity, serving & empathy
2. **Great Commission** (Mt 28:18-20): Disciple family, friends, neighbors & beyond
3. **Word & Truth** (1Pet 3:15): Know the Gospel, grow in discernment, speak the truth in love
4. **Persecuted Church** (2 Cor 4:7-10): Religious freedom, freedom of speech, spiritual fortitude, wisdom
5. **Church Renewal:** Directors for India & the Chinese worldwide, make many global disciple makers (The Way)

If you need prayer, please email: Prayer@mysouthland.com

If you need any help, please email: Care@mysouthland.com