

# People Of The Word

## *Discipleship*

*Psalms 84, 115, 123; Proverbs 4, 14*

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Good morning/evening. I first of all want to thank Carol, Laurel Ann, Betty, and the rest of the leadership team for the kind invitation to share with you. In the 22 years that I have been on staff here at Eastside, this is the first occasion I have had to participate with People of the Word. Certainly not for the lack of opportunity nor invitation, I just haven't taken advantage of it.

In my observations over the past several months, I've come to appreciate the authentic community you have established here. You are indeed, "**sticky**". What do you mean by that Jeff? Thank you for asking...

In his work, *Sticky Church* by Larry Osborne – pastor of North Coast Church in San Diego County page 13, he writes,

If the **back** door of a church is left wide open, it doesn't matter how many people are coaxed to come in the front door—or the side door, for that matter.

Yet most churches give the back door scant attention. We've discovered lots of ways to reach people. We've offered the high-powered programs and slick marketing of **attractional** churches, the cultural savvy of **missional** churches, and the relational intimacy of small churches. But we've often become so focused on *reaching* people that we've forgotten the importance of *keeping* people.

Our churches need to be stickier.

Stickier churches are healthier churches. They not only draw in spiritual window-shoppers and lead them to Christ; they also grow them up to maturity.

And that, after all, is what Jesus called us to do. He didn't tell us to go into all the world and sign people up. He didn't tell us to draw big crowds. He told us to make disciples—a task that includes baptizing people *and* teaching them to obey *everything* he commanded (**Matt. 28:19-20**).

Frankly, that's a task that takes some significant time. To pull it off, we need to be sticky.

People of the Word is a "sticky" community! You fulfill the Acts 2:42; 4:32-35 mandate that provides the scriptural basis for our goal of unique adults in connection.

You have devoted yourselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. You are a community of one in heart and mind. And as a result there are no needy persons among you.

WAY TO GO!!!

## Now, to the theme of our study - DISCIPLESHIP

### MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 84:11

*For the Lord God is a sun (light for our path – Ps. 119:105) and shield (protection – Ps. 46); the Lord bestows favor and honor; **no good thing** does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.*

Reminds me of perhaps the most familiar Psalm...

*Ps. 23:6, “Surely **goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life** and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”*

The promise of Psalm 84 is conditional however, **no good thing** does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. “...To those who live right” (CEV)” That’s a tall order. How do we get there?

It begins with a trust that God knows best, and is expressed through a life that is committed to the purposes of God.

*Heb. 11:6 And without **faith** it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who **earnestly seek** him.*

The rest of the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews chronicles the men and women who trusted God, sought Him, and expressed their trust often at the cost of their very lives.

Jesus said: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19.

Day 1 of our study began with a reading of Proverbs 4:1-19 and the following definition, “To be a disciple, one must be willing to **learn** the principles, willing to **apply** the teaching, and willing to **pass on** the wisdom gained.”

That statement was bookended on day 5 with this question, “In your opinion, is being a believer the same thing as being a disciple?”

**Q.** What was your response?

My response? No. Demons believe (Jms. 2:19, *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.* Simon the Sorcerer believe and was even baptized – Acts 8:13). A disciple is one who is surrendered to the purposes of God whatever “the cost.” This was certainly NOT the case with the demons nor with Simon.

Reminds me of the story of the The Prince of Granada who was a famous historical figure. He was put into a dreaded prison in Madrid. He was locked up in that prison and put into solitary confinement. He was by himself, and he had one little window in this cell that he

spent the rest of his life in. The Prince of Granada had one book to read and that was the Bible, and he read it everyday of his life. He read it backwards and forwards, forwards and backwards, over and over again. As he read this book backwards and forwards, after 33 years he finally died. As they cleaned out his cell, they noticed some notations on the walls, in his cell, that he had made in the soft surface. The notations were of this variety: The 8th verse of the 97th Psalm is the middle verse of the Bible, Ezra 7:21 contains all the letters of the alphabet except the letter "J", The 9th verse of the 8th chapter of Esther, is the longest verse in the Bible.

Scott Udell in Psychology Today noted this: Isn't this incredible, here is a man who poured over one book his entire life, 33 years one book, and he read backwards and forwards, and the only thing he came away with, from reading that book, is biblical trivia. IT NEVER PENETRATED THE HEART!

Proverbs 3:5-6 - The Living Bible, *If you want favor with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely; don't ever trust yourself. In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.*

*"To be a disciple, one must be willing to **learn** the principles, willing to **apply** the teaching, and willing to **pass on** the wisdom gained."*

**Q. Do we have a responsibility to the next generation?** According to Dt. **6:4-7**, ABSOLUTELY.

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. **5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.** 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your **hearts.** 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

In speaking to the men, Paul wrote, *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.* Eph. **6:4**

Abraham Lincoln once said, "I am not concerned about who my grandfather or my great grandfather was, but who my children and grandchildren will become."

## **A Question of Priorities – A Contrast Of Two Kings**

In Israel above every doorpost, every gate, every hotel room there is a little box called a Mezuzah.

Contained in the mezuzah is a tightly rolled piece of parchment made from the skin of a ritually clean animal on which are hand-written, traditionally in twenty-two lines, words from Deuteronomy 6, verses 4 through 9 and chapter 11, verses 13-21, and begin "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our G-d, the Lord is One."

Maimonides, a great sage who lived during the twelfth century, wrote, *"Whenever one enters or leaves a home with the mezuzah on the doorpost, he will be confronted with the declaration of*

*G-d's unity....and will be aroused from.....his foolish absorption in temporal vanities. He will realize that nothing endures to all eternity save knowledge of the Ruler of the Universe."*

That is maintaining priorities. That is putting God first. That is Discipleship.

**Q.** Is God first in MY life? Or is it my family, my career, money, possessions, fame, success? What is my number one goal, my top priority?

A test to determine who's number one in your life. Let's say tonight you go to bed and at 2:00 AM and you are awakened by an angel. The angel says, "I want to bless you in a very special way. God wants to give to you anything you desire. What do you want?"

Now, what you would ask for determines your priorities. Success?, fame?, money?, power?, a cure of cancer?, the hungry of the world to be fed?, world peace?

You respond, "Nice thought Jeff, but God doesn't do that." God did this in the past, He could do it again.

Who is the most famous person who made such a request? Solomon! He followed his father David to the throne and was terrified. He had no idea of what to do.

Turn to 1 Kings chapter 2.

David said to him,

*"I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So **be strong, show yourself a man, and OBSERVE what the LORD your God requires: WALK in his ways, and KEEP his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'** 1 Kings 2:1-3*

Sound familiar? *"To be a disciple, one must be willing to **learn** the principles, willing to **apply** the teaching, and willing to **pass on** the wisdom gained."*

Turn forward to 1 Kings 3:5-15

Solomon asked for two things: wisdom and knowledge (a discerning heart), and God was pleased. Solomon wrote the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. He learned, applied and passed on the wisdom gained.

On to 1 Kings 10:1-9...

I wish the story ended there, but tragically it did not! He turned his back on God.

**Three things** began to dominate Solomon's life:

- (1) Gold. 1 Kings. 10:14 - 666 talents of gold yearly! 666 = apostasy. 1 Kings 10:21, *"All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days."*
- (2) Horses. 1 Kings 10:26, Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem.
- (3) Women. 1 Kings 11:1-10.

If Solomon is not the model than who is? (11:4, 6). **DAVID!**

David? Why David? He lied, he deceived, he committed adultery, he committed murder. He harbored bitterness even on his deathbed (1 Kings 2:8-9).

### **Why is he superior to Solomon?**

- 1) **David never gave himself over to sin.** Yes, he did sin but he was never consumed by it. He confessed his sin and repented. He confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord" - 2 Sam. 12:13. Solomon was consumed by sin. He later wrote that all was meaningless (Eccl. 2:9-11; 12:13-14).
- 2) **David was sensitive to sin.** When David sinned he saw it for what it was - ugly, repulsive, grievous to the Holy Spirit - see Eph. 4:29-32. Ps. 51 - restore my joy, what God desires is a broken a contrite heart.
- 3) **David never committed the ultimate sin.** Are all sins equal? They are equal is this one sense that they condemn us before God and require of us a Savior. There are certain sins more weight - Prov. 6:16-19. The sin of idolatry is the ultimate sin! Solomon worshipped everything. David never bowed his knee to a foreign god. When Jesus asked his Disciples if they wanted to leave Him as others had already done, Peter confessed, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God"* - John 6:68-69.
- 4) **David was a man who had a passion for God.** This was revealed is what he asked for. He was given the same opportunity as Solomon. Ps. 27:4 - David asked for one thing - you God! That's all, nothing more. *One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.* Ps. 26:8, Ps. 69:9, Ps. 63:1, Ps. 73:25, 28 (Ps. 73 was written by Asaph who was David's worship leader. A passion for God is infectious. Paul wrote, *"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."* Phil. 3:10-11

**Two things to remember:**

1. Ps 132:1-9. David brought God back to the nation of Israel. God's very presence was symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant. David was king, he could have anything, do anything, and he states that he will not rest until the Ark has a resting place. That's passion (see Ex. 33:15; 2 Sam 7).
2. In the dessert as David was hiding from Saul he was doing a bit of reminiscing. He longed for a drink from the well of Bethlehem. He went to sleep, but three of his soldiers did not. They risked their lives, sneaking through the Philistine camp to bring it to David. David wakes up in the morning and sees these guys with a smile and they tell him the story. (2 Sam. 23:13-17). He would not drink it, but offered instead to God.

Discipleship requires that we "seek **FIRST** the Kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33).

Paul spoke of David, *"After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man **after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do...**'"* *"For when David **had served God's purpose in his own generation**, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed."* Acts 13:22,36.

*"To be a disciple, one must be willing to **learn** the principles, willing to **apply** the teaching, and willing to **pass on** the wisdom gained."*