

Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: January 17, 2010

Advancing The Kingdom By Giving Away

by Dan Trygg – Lightly Edited and Reprinted from July 28th, 2001

"And Jesus was speaking to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and upon the earth was given to Me. Therefore, going, disciple all the nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all things whatsoever I commanded to y'all; and behold I am with y'all all the days until the completion of the age'"

Matt. 28:18-20

"But go... proclaim, saying, 'The Kingdom of the Heavens has come near.' Heal the powerless/sick, raise dead ones, cleanse lepers, throw-out demons; freely y'all received/took, freely give. Do not acquire silver nor gold nor copper unto your money-belts, nor a bag (i.e., a knapsack, or a beggar's bag) nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff; for the worker is worthy of his livelihood."

Matt. 10:6-10

"But y'all will (for yourselves) take ability, the Holy Spirit coming upon y'all, and y'all will be witnesses of Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and as far as the limit of the earth."

Acts 1:8

Today (July 28th, 2001), across town, there is *another fellowship* of believers gathering together to "serve God and one another", as we are. Tomorrow, a third group is going to meet in yet a different part of the metro area. We have had *individuals* move from our group to other parts of the country in the past, and they have carried part of our vision and understanding with them where they have gone. In these cases, however, the motivation to move was not primarily to start another ekklēsia (the NT Greek word for "church"). They had other reasons to go, and the Body-life style of church which they experienced among us has *influenced* them, ...but not *propelled* them..., to where they are. These have been like scattered seeds blown far distant from the mother plant. They have grown, largely on their own, in the soil where they have been carried. These would be like those new converts at Pentecost, many of whom returned home after a short stay in Jerusalem, and carried the new message and vision with them where they went.

Today, we are witnessing another step in the natural "birthing process", something more akin to the undisturbed multiplication we read about in the NT (Acts 2:42-47), a *multiplication of groups throughout the city*. One huge advantage of this is that we can continue to interact to support one another, and nurture these new fledgling fellowships. We also have a great opportunity to expand our ministry reach more effectively and intensely into areas of the city in which we have had only a minimal influence through those who have lived there. By establishing "outposts" of ministry, through neighborhood groups, we can develop localized ministry expressions that are more visible and tangible. **Instead of drawing people out of their neighborhoods to come to our [current] meeting, these new meetings will be bringing people into those neighborhoods to reach out and serve in that part of town, ...or, by means of the people gathered in those meetings, into entirely new neighborhoods and relationship systems.**

We are witnessing the first fruits of a *new generation attempting to step out of the nest, trying their wings, and flying into new territory*. This is a test for us, as well, because we are soon to find out how well we have prepared our offspring for real life in the larger world. **Hopefully, we will learn from this how we can be more effective in preparing others.** In addition, our job is not yet done. We still will have relationship with these people, and we need to discover how we can nurture and help them, as fledglings in need of assistance, ...and how to become co-workers with them, transitioning from a "parent mentality" to a "colleague mentality".

What do the passages above have in common, and how do they relate to what is happening with us?

(1.) **They are all out-ward focused.** It is clear, in each context, that there is a job to do, and that is to communicate the message, influence, and effect of the Kingdom of God into ever-widening circles of influence until time runs out, and this world comes to an end. The key of what Jesus says in Matthew's account is that **we are to go and find those who will follow Jesus, and train them to devote themselves to obediently following Him as their King.** The focus is not simply on "doing church". There is a much larger vision here than simply meeting together for some religious services on a weekly basis. "Going to church" is not mentioned in the contexts of *any* of these passages. Going to church, or gathering together for Body-life, is *not* the goal; it is simply a means to accomplishing the objective. **The objective is to bring Kingdom influence to the ends of the earth. We do that by discovering, developing and deploying Kingdom people to fulfill their assignments in the King's service.**

The discovering of Kingdom people comes *out of* preaching the message. "Preaching the message", however, is *not* the objective; it is only *a means to an end*. People will not hear and believe in Jesus to become

disciples, if they do not hear (or read) the message of the Good News, ...but preaching is *not* what it is all about. **Neither is the objective to get people to "decide for Jesus"**, as though a mental belief in His Deity were enough to transform their lives, or accomplish God's will (Jas. 2:19). **A "decision for Jesus" is at best only an entry onto the road of discipleship**, the road that is a "long obedience in the same direction", the persevering pursuit of God expressed in devotion to Him and for Him. **Some people want to live at the doorway, and never move along the path. They say that they "know the Way", ...but are they on the Way?** Jesus is quite clear, "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not *gather with Me* scatters" (Matt. 12:30). The apostle John wrote, "If we *say* that we have fellowship with Him, *and yet walk in the darkness*, we lie and do not practice the truth" (I Jn. 1:6). Who are we trying to kid? **Jesus said that the job is not done until every follower of His is taught to *keep* (obey) all the things that Jesus had commanded the apostles to do. Are you *there*, yet?** Are those you know who are professing Christ walking in that? **That is the purpose of gathering together, ...to continue to *agitate and support one another to keep pursuing and implementing the King's business.***

(2.) **These passages are all about the receiving/taking and passing along of power.** In each passage, power or authority is made available, and in each passage this power or authority is given in order to enable those who receive it to serve others. **Power is not to be amassed for oneself. It is actually of no use then. Power in God's Kingdom is the ability to do effective Kingdom work in the lives of others.** In this world, power is often amassed, or stored up, so that one may have more influence (often through fear, intimidation, or through the covetousness of others for what you have) or prestige for oneself. **In the Kingdom of God, power does not need to be amassed, because it is *limitless*. It is only given to enable work, ...the work of serving God through serving others.** To attempt to "store up" power (or money) causes one to flirt with idolatry, the snare of looking at one's own resources and abilities instead of remembering that God is the source of supply. Too often, self-importance and power politics begin to creep in, and the perspective on power and authority changes from empowering and serving others to getting others to serve one's own agenda. **Instead of *dispersing power through service*, ...where the "powerful" see their role as stewards of God's grace, humbly serving and equipping others through the abilities and strengths which God supplies..., the world system tends to *amass power*, so that the needy will honor them and seek them out for special favors (Matt. 23:1-14; Gal. 4:17; II Cor. 11:20). When such perversion happens in the church it is especially destructive, because it presents a false vision of what God and His Kingdom are truly like.** Note how Jesus forbade the twelve from taking along a beggar's bag when they went out to proclaim the Gospel. The servants of God *are* worthy of being supported, when they are devoted to preaching and teaching the Word, but it is not appropriate for them to be *charging* people for the Gospel, or to be *begging* or *manipulating contributions* from those to whom they preach (II Cor. 2:17; 11:7-9; 12:11-18; III Jn. 7,8; I Thess. 2:3-12). **The principle of the Kingdom is: "Freely you received, freely give."** Paul was quick to remind the Corinthians, who were becoming boastful and "uppity", that *all* that they owned and enjoyed *had been given to them*. They could boast in *nothing* (I Cor. 4:7f). The world wants to accumulate. Success is determined by how much you can gain and keep. **In the Kingdom of God, however, success is measured by how much you can effectively give and serve in obedience to the Holy Spirit.** Faith is *required*. A trust in God's active presence in one's life must be developed in order to walk consistently here. **Are you willing to give, that more might be given to you, ...not so you can enrich yourself..., but so that you might have more with which to serve others (cf. Lk. 6:38)?**

If these principles are true for money and humble service, they are also just as true with the people in our lives. We can hoard people, or we can freely give them away, as God directs. Are you willing to let someone go, even if it means that they will not be *as* available for *your* interests, if that is what God is leading? Can you trust God to raise up *others* to meet the needs that these people met? **Is power in the Kingdom about amassing a bunch of disciples, who will do your bidding, ...or is it about equipping others to hear and serve the Master effectively, and allowing Him to give out duty assignments?**

(3.) **These passages all assume an active role on our parts. Nothing will happen if we do not actively take initiative.** The twelve would not have experienced the power of God if they did not go on the mission Christ sent them on. They would not have *seen the power* if they had not *taken the risk*, faced the unknown, uncertain and uncomfortable. They would not have *seen* God work, if they had not *called upon Him* to work. **The power was already designated to them, but they had to activate it by going where the need was, and actively engaging in ministry** as Jesus had taught them. In the Acts passage, concentric circles of ministry would not develop if the disciples of that day did not "take" the power which came upon them, and step into the opportunities which God brought to them. **This is true for us as well. Jesus said He would be with us. He said His power and authority are available to us for making disciples and doing Kingdom work, but we must partner with Him in His work.**

Those starting a new work are *stepping into the fray in a new way*. Let's pray for and support them in whatever way we can, and be challenged and encouraged by their example. **Let us also step up to take the vacant places they have left behind, where it is appropriate. Let us also boldly step out into new adventures the Spirit is prompting us to take, knowing that His power is here and available to give to others.**