

What Lies Ahead

Part 4: Here We Go... Together

1 Peter 2:9-10

WE:

The culmination of what we've talked about so far... Rubber meets the road.

How are we going to be a community that invites our neighbors to DES together?

Before we dive in, want to address this question one more time: "Jon why can't we just go back to what we were doing?"

I know a lot of us... really just "want things to go back to normal" The thing is... **that** "normal" is gone... the world has changed... it was changing before COVID... but COVID accelerated it...

And we all have a tendency to look at the past w/ nostalgia

Nostalgia is nice but honestly (Dave Rhodes) nostalgia is memory w/o imagination... it is nowhere to live.

God calls us to remember the past in order to create the future.

And right now... we have an opportunity to remember the past and create new/better future.

So we can hang on to the past or we can venture bravely into the future...

As Luke Summers said, "We have decided to further the mission instead of furthering the tradition."

What started it all... Pressing conviction that **Following Jesus is a life to live, not a routine to observe.**

GOD: How do we actually become and put into practice this idea we see throughout biblical writings?

Jesus- **Matt. 5:14-16** city on a hill, salt of the world, light of the world

Paul- **Eph. 2:10** God's masterpiece

Focus on... 1 Peter 2:9-10

Royal priesthood- a lot there... but as JF's we now have role to show the world who God truly is... Jesus.

Declare: advertise/proclaim/ to tell out or tell forth

Not just called out to bless the world... yes... but also make known what they have witnessed about God.

Goodness/transformation

Advertisement of God's qualities/excellencies

- Though our actions (love of each other, others... including enemies)
- And through our words... telling the story of God's love for and toward us.

Not how good we are... but to show the goodness of God.

We are a community created to use our lives to advertise the goodness of God.

WE: So task we are faced with is: What does that royal priesthood look like for you and for us in our world/context?

What good works have been created for you? For Us?

We want to help people/you... Become who you can be... who you are becoming... (DW) who Jesus would be if he had your life.

Become a people whose lives Invite to DES together

How... Most options seem to be EITHER Just pray and hope it happens? OR completely orchestrate it and try to get everyone to fit in the same box?

Must be something better.

So where are we going... what does being the church the crosscreek way look like?

Both/And- Individual and as a community.

What we (both/and) are created to be...

Following Jesus and advertising his love involves BOTH our individual lives AND our collective life.

How do we (and how do we help others) discover our role in God's kingdom... find our sweet spot in inviting neighbors to D/E/S

Best way to describe **for now** is **Radio Tower.**

FOR NOW... ongoing evaluation.

All of what we will be talking about is held together by relationships. **(Struts holding tower together)**

Every time I've really felt like I was discovering/playing my role it was through relationships... how God designed it

As you are connected to the relationships provided by the environments we are going to talk about... you are able to better and better "show the goodness of God"

We grow together "We are a royal PRIESTHOOD" group... everything designed to increase, enhance, and come out of relationship.

Not a step by step process... of course I have to explain things in an order but none of this is a "have to" type thing... take this as a menu for a full banquet... puzzle pieces that bring together the whole picture.

Arranged them in level of strength/closeness of relationship

Lowest/largest section of tower- **Together For Salem**-

- Largest Reach... Introduction
- Main teaching... bringing everyone together around same idea/mission
- A way for us to declare to (potentially) entire english speaking world
- How you can be part-
 - Watch (make it a routine) be a part of the community we are creating all moving in one direction in our own ways.
 - Like, Comment, Share.
- Not worth sharing? Tell us why
- Help?
 - Expertise?
 - Finances

Next Section- **Parties/Gatherings/Jamborees**-

- Put faces and smiles to what watching/hearing
- See we are part of larger community/ Not alone / something about being together
- How you can be part?
 - Come
 - Invite
 - Talk to people don't know.
 - Help out
 - Finances
- Only part of this (tower) you actually have to be local to be a part of.

For Salem Opportunities

- We are for Salem b/c God is for Salem
- We want to show our neighbors we are FOR them before they are ever FOR us... even if they never are.
- Has a both/and characteristic... some are for individuals/families... Some for whole church.
- A little help in seeing what it means to be a JF in daily life.
- How you can be part? -
 - Participate
 - share
 - ideas?
 - Organize? Want once a month service opportunities take planning and logistical skill... don't have personpower right now to make monthly happen.
 - Finances

Connect Group

- Small embodiments of the Church throughout area
- Who you are sharing life with

- Safe community
- Praying for/supporting/caring for (Shepherding one another)
- Discussing messages/explore/question... go a little deeper.
- Serving together
- Seeing God use others and use you to love each other.
- Where I've made my closest friends... true deep friendships
- Live somewhere else?... can start one... We'll help you.

Huddles/Partnerships/Alliances

- Groups of 2 or 3
- Learning, growing, supporting each other. Safe, Personal and personalized... on demand
- Even in Connect groups not always able to go deep, really get to know, dig deep into pressing questions...
- In depth.. Personal and personalized paths provided by us following the characteristics we see all followers of Jesus continually maturing in...
 - **Confidently Trusting**
 - **Independently Growing**
 - **Authentically Connecting**
 - **Selflessly Serving**
 - **Faithfully Investing**
 - **Purposely Multiplying**
- Not just about information transfer.. Life sharing/maturing/growth
- Don't want to be a teaching center... we want to be a training center.
- Not formal... "hey you want to go through this book with me?"
- We provide a few questions to help get the conversation started and you take it from there.
- No special training required... just talking about life together.
- Had MANY who invested this way w/ me... **Bryan Baldwin.**
- Find people who like you, listen to you, serve you?

Slow, but potential for life change beyond imagining

All designed to support and hold up... you... you are **the antenna** declaring the message of Jesus' love wherever God takes you... home, work, neighborhood, hobbies, etc.

Side note: we are still striving to find how to apply this to our kids and teenagers... is slowly taking shape.

YOU:

Might seem underwhelming at first... "it's kinda different but what's the big deal?"

The biggest difference is in the details

We are not asking you to make Crosscreek big (expand)... we are wanting to provide the tools and support for YOU to become who you were always created to be to live the BIG life God prepared for you from eternity past...

You are invited to discover and play your role in the Kingdom of God... you have a story to fuse with God's grand story... we want to help you find it and fulfill it!

Our goal is to develop participating partners, not just solitary spectators.

You are invited to BE IN THIS... Might be uncomfortable to be in the action now

Now Might seem scary... heavy?... old way was safer/easier?

Before: Got to watch... Well show's over it's time to be who we were always created to be.

God's story is one of including us to do and become more than we can imagine... together.

For some this might seem too far... for others not far enough...

This can be as much or as little as you want... And that's ok.

Everyone will approach this their own way and some will be ready to start small and others will dive deep right away.

Question is... **Are you willing to take the first step in letting God use your life for more than you imagined?**

Ask: "God, show me my next step."

- That's really all this life is... just trusting God for the next step and having the trust to take it.
- We are all really just toddlers with a loving God ready to catch us when we stumble and encourage us to start again.

WE:

Invite you to walk with us as we explore what it means to be a community committed to living out the Kingdom of God together.

To be a group of people bringing our individual roles in the KoG together into one community.

We have the opportunity to do something rarely done in our time... take Jesus at his word... use our little for his immense kingdom... to rely on him to show up as we choose to show up for others... to be a city on a hill... a people whose lives are committed to making him famous, not to our preferences, comfort, or ambitions.

The new future desperately needs JF's who choose to make their lives about God's revolution.

So come with us as we invite our neighbors to discover, enjoy, and share the life Jesus offers... Together. It's gonna be an amazing ride.

Questions

1. How has God worked in your life and community this week?
2. What stands out to you most in Crosscreek's way of being the Church/Ekklesia? What questions or concerns do you have about this approach?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. What does being "Christ's ambassador" mean and look like to you?
4. What's your next step? How can your group pray for you in that this week?