

Eyes to See Where the Kingdom Isn't

Read Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV):

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Read Acts 1:8 (NIV):

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (NIV):

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Question: What do these passages teach us about God?

Question: What do these passages teach us about people?

Reread the passages, above. Then discuss the following questions:

Question: Based on these two passages, who does God command us to target in making disciples?

Read our vision for the group: To be disciples who make disciples who make disciples and thus to see God raise up a Disciple Making Movement that will bless the people of Louisville, this state, this nation and the ends of the earth.

Question: This vision is based on Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8. How are these verses similar to our vision?

As humans, we think about, focus on and work for things that we can see. We call it reality. The way things are. But the kingdom grows more quickly when we focus on things we can't see. Things that aren't there. Or things that aren't there, yet.

There are places all around us where God's will is not being done on earth as it is in heaven - giant gaps where brokenness, pain persecution, suffering and even death are a part of normal, everyday life.

Every disciple - every follower of Jesus - needs to be able to see not just where God's Kingdom is, but where God's kingdom isn't. Kingdom work is about entering into those gaps and into those dark places and working to close the chasms and bring light and life during our time here on earth.

We can see where God's Kingdom isn't in two ways -- through people we already know and through people we haven't yet met.

Those we haven't yet met are people OUTSIDE OUR RELATIONSHIPS - people we don't know, neighbors we've never said more than "hello" to, businessmen and women we pass on the street, strangers in every village, town or city we've never even visited, yet.

Some facts:

- There are 16,700 people groups (a people group shares a common language, culture and customs).
- 6,900 of these groups are unreached by the gospel.
- Just in Louisville there are over 50 different unreached people groups: Somalis, Bosnians, Hindus etc.
- 2.8 billion people have never heard the gospel.
- 75,000 of those people who have never heard the gospel will die today!

Jesus said - make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19).

Jesus said - you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Sharing with people we know is the way God's Story travels FASTEST.

Sharing with people we don't know yet is the way God's Story travels FARTHEST.

God's favorites are the least, the last and the lost. These are the ones He pours out His heart to over and over again. If we want to be like God, then these are the ones we have to invest our lives in.

God commands us to go. And part of going is to go not just to those who are close by but also to those who live in the spiritually darkest corners of the world - people who sometimes have never even heard the name, Jesus.

Disciples multiply when they're concerned for the people God's placed in their lives. Disciples multiply even more when they're concerned for the people God's placed nowhere near them.

Every Christian should be involved in spreading God's kingdom to the ends of the earth. There are many ways to do this:

- Learn – Learn more about missions and how you can get involved.
- Go – Full time and short-term missions. "...how will they hear without a preacher?" Romans 10:14b
- Send – Giving financially, showing hospitality, and building relationships with and praying for those in the mission field. "How will they preach unless they are sent?" Romans 10:15a
- Pray – Pray for missionaries and for the lost and unreached. Here is a good place to start: <https://www.prayercast.com>
- Reach out locally – Welcome and reach out to the unreached people groups in your neighborhood.