

Circle of Faith – Week 5: Marketplace Ministry

Moving the Bridge to the River

Primary Scripture: Luke 14:15-23

Supporting Scriptures: Acts 1:8; 17:1-9 | Genesis 37-48 | Matthew 28:19a | Judges 6-7

1. The Choluteca Bridge: Moving the Bridge to the River

In 1998, Hurricane Mitch hit Honduras, causing catastrophic flooding. In the town of Choluteca, a state-of-the-art bridge stood completely undamaged. However, the massive flooding caused the Choluteca River to carve an entirely new channel. The river moved away from the bridge, leaving this grand structure standing over dry ground, spanning nothing and leading to nowhere. They spent a lot of money to try to relocate and reroute the river back under the bridge without success. After much frustration and failure, they contacted the engineer of the bridge who told them to change their strategy. He said to move the bridge over the river instead of trying to move the river back under the bridge.

The enemy has done a masterful job of creating storms that have moved the river away from the bridge. For far too long, the church has tried the same old strategy to combat the aftermath of the storms the enemy has caused. We cannot move the river back under the bridge, but we can take the bridge to where the river is now.

Because of the enemy's storms, the culture has shifted away from God. Jesus has not stopped being the indestructible bridge, but the culture has moved out from under His covering. It's our job to take Him back to the river instead of expecting the river to come back to the bridge. The culture isn't going back to a simpler, safer time where our doors could stay open all night and we have no thought of being robbed in our cities. But the culture can be shifted if we move the bridge who is Jesus. Jesus used the cross as a bridge over the chasm that is between us and God because of sin. His love is the vehicle that moves the cross to humanity that all who step onto the bridge can have the security of salvation. So, today folks, it's time to move the bridge. Here's how we do that in a practical, everyday life way.

2. The Threefold Impact of Prayer (Upward, Inward, Outward)

Before we step into the marketplace to represent Christ, we must align our hearts through prayer—laying the groundwork for every life we touch.

- **Upward Impact (Surrender & Authority):** We bow before the supreme authority of Christ before trying to compel others to His feet. We pray for boldness, authority, and Holy Spirit power to make us effective witnesses, surrendering our lives to the One who sends us. **Acts 1:8**

- **Upward Intercession (Divine Alignment):** We pray specifically for those we will minister to throughout our week, asking God to direct our steps and lead us directly to the people He has prepared for us to reach.
- **Inward Impact (Community Intercession):** We invite the church to cover us in prayer. Our prayer partners and intercessors stand with us as we go, praying for one another's protection, wisdom, discernment, and for receptive hearts in those who hear.
- **Outward Impact (Daily Sensitivity):** As we step out into our everyday routine, we pray continuously on the move—remaining spiritually attentive and sensitive to the people God places in our path.
- **Preparation Before Action:** Before we ever go, we pray. True marketplace ministry does not start with human activity; it flows from a heart aligned upward with God and supported inwardly by the body of believers. Not our performance, but His grace.

3. The Mandate to Leave the Banquet Hall (Luke 14:15–23)

In the Parable of the Great Banquet, the master didn't sit inside his beautiful home waiting for polite, comfortable society to accept his invitation. When those on the inside made excuses, the master commanded his servants to go out to where the needy were actually sitting—the streets, alleys, highways, and country hedges.

- **Urgency Over Comfort:** The Master says, "*Go out quickly.*" We are not called to wait behind closed doors for a culture that has stopped looking for church; we are commanded to step outside into the noise of daily life.
- **Seeking the Hurting:** The Master specifically sends them after the broken, crippled, blind, and poor. Marketplace ministry goes to the wounded people sitting on the fringes of society who feel uninvited, unworthy, or invisible.
- **Compelled by Love:** To "compel" them doesn't mean forcing anyone against their will—it means offering an invitation so warm, persistent, and full of genuine Kingdom love that they can't resist taking a seat at Jesus' table.

4. Two Kingdom Callings For Cultural Impact

Scripture shows us two distinct models of evangelism and cultural transformation, both equally powerful and both necessary to shift a territory.

I. Bottom-Up Influence: The Model of Paul & Silas (Reaching the Masses)

In **Acts 17**, Paul and Silas entered Thessalonica and went straight to where the people were—the synagogues, the marketplaces, and the streets.

- **"As You Are Going":** The Greek phrasing of the Great Commission literally means *"As you are going..."* Marketplace ministry isn't adding a heavy religious task to your schedule. It is recognizing that your daily routine, standing in line at the grocery store, waiting at the laundromat, or chatting in the breakroom, is where Jesus meets the world. This is where your story moves Jesus into their situation in real life.
- **Dismantling Spiritual Roadblocks:** This movement completely flipped the script on the Pharisaical system of heavy burdens and human performance. They removed the spiritual roadblocks, declaring that salvation and authority are found directly in Jesus Christ—where grace is free and access is direct.
- **Reaching the Roots:** They engaged everyday people at the grass roots. They won so many souls and built such a vibrant movement of believers that it created a groundswell of transformation.
- **Shifting Culture from the Bottom Up:** The gospel changed hearts in the marketplace, which shifted the entire culture of the city. Eventually, the governing bodies had to take notice and adjust because of the sheer demand and movement of the people.
- **Turning the World Upside Down:** The leaders of the day grew terrified of the Gospel's power because it didn't rely on political power; it relied on the transformative power of God moving through regular citizens to turn cities and continents upside down.

II. Top-Down Influence: The Model of Joseph (Influencing the Influencers)

In **Genesis 37–48**, God took Joseph through a very different path—from a pit to a prison, and ultimately to the palace of Egypt.

- **Reaching High Places of Influence:** Joseph wasn't called to preach in the streets to thousands; he was strategically positioned at the very top of Egypt's leadership structure.
- **Transforming Structure from the Top Down:** By giving divine wisdom to Pharaoh, Joseph transformed the entire governing system. His leadership saved a nation from famine, preserved surrounding lands, and ultimately redeemed the very family that had betrayed and sold him into slavery.
- **Territorial Shift:** God used one strategically placed man to influence the key decision-makers, shifting an entire empire and securing the future of generations.

5. The Strategic Marriage of Both Callings

- **The Mass Movement & The Strategic Placement:** Some of you are called like Paul and Silas—to go directly to the people, build relationships at the roots, and ignite a groundswell that forces the culture to change.

Others are called like Joseph—placed in high-level positions, boardrooms, management, and local government to influence people of influence.

- **Kingdom Walls:** Married together, these two callings break down the spiritual walls that keep God out of our culture, and build up the walls of righteousness that keep God's presence in our communities.

The Power of Faith and Obedience at Winfield

You might look at yourself and think, *"I'm just one person. I don't have a big title or a massive platform. How can I possibly make a difference like that?"*

Look at biblical history:

- **A few ordinary men** like Paul and Silas shifted entire continents.
- **One faithful man** like Joseph saved nations and preserved generations.
- **Gideon (Judges 6-7)** made every excuse for why he couldn't be who God called him.
- **Called into Identity:** Gideon hid in a winepress out of fear, but God called him a *"mighty man of valor"* based on who God created him to be.
- **Not by Human Might:** God pared Gideon's army down to 300 men. They didn't win through high-stress programs, human power, or heavy armor.
- **Just Show Up with the Light:** They simply stood in the dark, held up their lights, blew their trumpets, and let God fight the battle.
- **Little is Much When God is in It:** Moving a massive bridge feels impossible for a few hands. But when many hands carry the light into their everyday routines, God shifts the spiritual atmosphere of this entire town. If God can do all that with him and a motley crew of 300 men, what's your excuse?

Imagine what God can do through **Winfield Church** if we simply step out in faith and obey the Lord where He has placed us! Whether you are called to the roots in your neighborhood or to high places of influence in your career, your obedience has generational impact.

Who among us will commit to shining the light into the darkness of this world as soldiers in God's army? Think about this as we pray...

Closing Prayer

"Lord Jesus, You gave us the bridge—the indestructible cross that spans the chasm of sin to lead us home.

The storms of this world have shifted the river, but You didn't tell us to hide behind safe walls waiting for culture to return. You gave us a direct command: go out quickly into the streets and the hedges, find the broken and the left-out, and compel them to come in so Your house may be filled.

Forgive us for making excuses for why we can't walk in the power You already gave us. Deliver us from a spirit of fear, and give us power, love, and a sound mind.

Speak over us today like You spoke over Gideon. Help us stop seeing ourselves by our limitations, our age, or our fear, and open our eyes to see who we are in You—mighty men and women of valor. Remind us that shifting a territory doesn't take human might or massive systems. Like Gideon's 300, it just takes a people willing to step into the dark and hold up Your light.

You commanded light to shine out of darkness—now shine in our hearts. Fill us with Holy Spirit power to be Your witnesses right where we live. Give us boldness in our daily routines—in the grocery store, at the doctor's office, in our families, and in our neighborhoods—to turn our world upside down for Your glory.

Guide us and send Your fire to burn in us. Prepare the soil of people's hearts to receive the seed of Your Word, send those who will water, and bring home a great harvest.

Keep us in Your will. Be glorified through Winfield Church. In the powerful name of Jesus, Amen."

ALTAR CALL

There are flashlights up here on the altar. These flashlights are symbolic of the light you have received from Christ. But remember, a flashlight only works if you turn it on, and so it is with Jesus. We must turn on the light of His life to shine brightly into a dark world.

If you feel the call on your heart to be a light for Christ, and a burden to carry His light into this world, come forward and take a flashlight.

Only come if you truly feel that call and that burden, because this is a commitment to Him, not to me.

Use the light of Christ responsibly and do everything to glorify Jesus and draw others to Him. Safer times may not be coming back, but Jesus is. Let's be about our Father's business.