

#MORETHANACHURCH

**5 GOVERNING KEYS
TO THE APOSTOLIC
MANDATE**

ZAC BRECKENRIDGE

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Zac Breckenridge Ministries operates as a non-profit division of LifeBridge Christian Center, Inc. [501(c)(3); non-denominational church] based out of Jonesboro, AR 72405.

Published by Kindle Direct Publishing.
Seattle, WA 98018
kdp.amazon.com

Printed in the United States of America.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to my loving wife Natalie. Natalie, I would not be as bold in my relationship with Holy Spirit now if it weren't first for my relationship with you. You have always encouraged me to seek God's face. It is also fitting to dedicate this book to you as you have been a forerunner in our family for the scribe anointing.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Key One: Presence Centered

Key Two: Relatable Teaching

Key Three: Family Discipleship

Key Four: Authentic Community

Key Five: Generosity

Introduction

I began an endeavor a few years back where I began to examine the reality of local church culture. When we planted LifeBridge in 2016, our team led with the status quo core values. A few years into our church history, I found myself handing out a bulletin which explained what families could expect to experience in our local church, which differentiated us from other local gatherings. It was in those moments that I realized the tension (as well as connection) between core values and church culture. While our generic values encompassed the diversities of Christian life, they lacked a richer understanding of how we expressed that locally.

With the unity of our leadership team, I redefined our core values to properly express the culture of our church.

As our church implemented these values locally, to define and express our culture of Christianity, we began to experience all the desires of our heart. Presently, our church exists in the heart of real revival. I have come to find that these are more than just values, they are governmental keys. It has become my conviction that if those under the apostolic mandate would embrace this culture, they will open the doors to experience heaven on earth. These are valuable keys to grant access to both the individual and the local gathering of believers.

Chapter One: Presence Centered

Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

- *Matthew 6:10*

Our local church was sent out with the heart to be more than a church. While it took us a few years to fully embrace and express this ideology, it was intricately knitted into the core of our being. Being more than a church comes with the understanding that church has more to do with big people than a big building. It comes with an understanding that while the church is a gathering center, it is intended to become a sending hub. More than a church is a mentality that Christianity is not just another addendum to compartmentalize, but is culture to infuse throughout our lifestyle.

We have seen our local gathering defy almost every church statistic that I have come across as a Senior Leader. As a pastor with a developed history of church planting, I understand the realities that small, underfunded local bodies face. From closing to staff turnover, we have defied many statistics which could have become our fate. I see that utilizing these keys has

allowed our church to get to exactly where God is calling us. What causes churches to thrive is culture; what matters the most is being presence centered.

If God is not there

If God is not there, I do not want to be either.

What has historically been known as the Lord's prayer has been recently redefined by modern theologians as Jesus' apostolic prayer. The scholars understand and view John 17 as Jesus' intercessory prayer for the Church, while Matthew 6 is the model he taught the apostles to pray through. The very first declaration, or petition, brought forth by Jesus in this prayer is for God's kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In heaven, God's kingdom is fully established. In heaven, God's perfect will is currently being done and will continue to be done throughout eternity. As Jesus cried out "TETELESTAI" on the cross, he proclaimed that 'It is finished.' Along with many other aspects, God's kingdom is now initiated here on earth as it is in heaven. According to 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, we are now ambassadors of Christ given the ministry of reconciliation which means our duty is to understand, contend for, and establish the culture of heaven here on earth.

Heaven's Culture

But what is heaven's culture?

After the seven states of rebuke to the church given in Revelation 1-3, John continues to reveal about heaven. The first aspect that he witnesses is a door standing open in heaven! The heavens have been rend Church, and this is the hour of the Kingdom of God to grow upon the earth. After this, John sees twenty-four elders and four angelic beings known as the living creatures. John, next, hears the worship of the four living creatures.

Revelation 4:8 - And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Immediately after the ambassadors of heaven relinquish their worship to God, the ambassadors of earth respond accordingly.

Revelation 4:9-11 - And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and

honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

From heaven to earth; from heaven to earth, the Kingdom of God is centered around the presence of God. And God deserves praise and worship.

First Kingdom on Earth

God’s first kingdom on earth was gifted to the nation of Israel. Before the nation was ever established, God blessed them with a promise through the forefathers of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God’s kingdom was always intended to adore God as the King of Kings. It was created with the two foundational offices of Prophets and Priests. However, due to the people’s rebellion against God’s order, God granted them to have kings like the pagan nations surrounding them. The nation’s worst moment of rebellion came when they refused to inhabit the Promised Land.

God set aside modern day Israel to be the first cultural epicenter of heaven here on earth. When Moses sent out the twelve spies to scout out the Promised Land, ten of them spoke what they saw in regards to the kingdoms established on earth. Only two, Joshua and Caleb, were faithful to speak from the position of authority they had been given to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Let the modern church glean that we cannot submit to the words of the Seers if there is nothing within the report to build upon and establish the Kingdom of God. Due to this rebellion, God refuses to allow an entire generation to

enter into the Promised Land. A new generation of glory babies and kingdom kids is raised who know nothing but following the presence of God to establish God's kingdom on earth.

During the forty years of wandering through the wilderness, God disciplines his people on how to follow his presence.

Exodus 13:21 - And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

The glory of God will manifest on earth differently based upon the season, but we must see beyond the glory to follow the God of the glory. We must learn to be a people of his presence. This was the first order brought by God's kingdom on earth.

We live the Kingdom

Currently, we live between the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of God prophesied in Revelation. More accurately, we live between the cross and the second coming. We live in the era of the Kingdom where God has poured out his Spirit to fill the temple of man as opposed to a building. Our fleshly beings are temples hand-crafted by God as opposed to the former temples constructed by the hands of man. Now, more than ever, we must understand the importance of God's presence being in the center of our lives and our gatherings.

The first, and greatest, aspect of the Kingdom of God coming to earth is the truth that God is in our midst. We are establishing a culture and a community where the King is welcome and comfortable to dwell. We live in a dual time where God's presence is made accessible both to the individual as well as to the corporate gathering. Jesus made a promise to the church that has often been taken for granted by the believer.

Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

As this statement is the truth of Jesus, it comes with an implication that we must not neglect. If God is faithful to release his presence where even two of us are gathered, then there must be moments in our age where God is absent from us individually.

We can be filled with his Spirit; we can be baptized with his Spirit; we can manifest his Spirit, but we can also grieve his Spirit; we can also quench his Spirit. What if the greatest aspect of the gift of distinguishing between spirits was not for demon-hunting, but to understand on a personal level when God is in our midst? The only way to know if God is always with you, not just always watching you but always with you, is if everything you do is encamped around his presence.

The most detrimental part of hell is not the presence of Lucifer and demons. The most detrimental hell is not the presence of weeping and gnashing of teeth. The most

detrimental part of hell is not the presence of the flame. The most detrimental part of hell is the absence of God. If we are going to release heaven on earth, it must first come with establishing a culture individually and corporately which gathers around his presence.

So how is this done on earth? The same way it is in heaven. We must be a hub which reconciles new covenant Christianity to the promises made about the final days.

Prayer establishes a thing

Job 22:28 MEV - You will also declare a matter, and it will be established unto you; and the light will shine upon your ways.

Creation centered around the presence of God is in constant communication with God. The angels do it; the martyrs are doing it; the elders do it. You cannot look at God and not speak about his grandeur. Praise and worship are the byproduct of focusing on God. Our response should always be prayer.

Prayer is not about our requests; it is about communicating with God. Prayer should include as much, if not more, time listening than speaking. When we center our lives around God, our prayer becomes centered around communicating what is being said around the throne room and establishing that culture here on earth.

Paul instructs us to *pray without ceasing*, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Prayer is what keeps us attached to the

vine to receive what is being released by God for that moment. Aside from being fully engaged with all three persons of the Godhead, praying in the Spirit permits us to adore God in his own language.

If you want to know the love language of God, it is the language he established that has not been marred by sin in the world and demonic manipulation. The church has neglected the power of praying in the Spirit because we've failed to realize its significance.

According to the Bible, there is a differentiation between our flesh, soul, and spirit.

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

As the soul and spirit are divisible, they must not be one. The spirit is the highest influencer over our physical being. Jesus, on the cross, made atonement for the healing of our flesh, rescuing of our soul, and deliverance of our spirit. The purest form of prayer we can offer to God is with our spirit; this is why the church at Corinth was so obsessed with not doing anything with their natural tongue.

But that is not the purpose of the gathering. However, we must catch what Paul did speak in his rebuke.

1 Corinthians 14:18 - I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

Paul is not saying that I thank God for speaking in tongues more than each of you. Paul is emphatically declaring that he speaks more in tongues than all of them combined. Paul is exhorting that we must pray in the Spirit more individually than combined in the corporate gathering if we are going to live a life that is presence centered and not just attend a service that is gathered around his presence.

Application

Presence centered is a lifestyle. It is the most important aspect of the culture of heaven and the most important mandate to see here on earth. It does not start corporately, but begins in a secret place. Before Jesus instructs his disciples to pray for God's Kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, he instructs them where their prayers must come from.

Matthew 6:6 - But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Being centered around the presence of God starts individually. If we truly desire for our gatherings to be centered around the presence of God and not just habitually conditioned to expect him to be there, then we must first center ourselves around him.

We must learn what he is saying, what he is doing, what his movements look like. Then, we can come together in unity to experience his kingdom come. The most important thing we can teach the saved believer is to be presence centered.

The first governing key to be accessed is being centered around the King who you represent.

Chapter Two: Relatable Teaching

All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable.

- *Matthew 13:34*

Being truly God and truly man, Jesus represented the fullness of the Kingdom of God. Jesus embodied heaven on earth. As our desire is to see God's kingdom to come in our personal lives, as well as corporate gatherings, we must understand that Jesus lived a life that was previously impossible, yet he made accessible through his Spirit.

Jesus was born of the virgin by the conception of Holy Spirit. He lived a perfect life without sin, as only God could do. However, he was tempted in every facet as only a man could be. For close to 30 years, Jesus lived on this earth as a human before he ever began his ministry. After just 3 years of preaching the gospel, Jesus was executed because of his claims to be God. Then, he sent his Spirit to dwell in his followers.

We see that Jesus, although he was God, never acted solely out of his deity.

Philippians 2:6 - who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Jesus understood that by proclaiming the Kingdom of God is at hand, he must give the people something accessible to grasp and replicate. Jesus never superseded the flow from heaven to earth. He performed no miracles prior to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, though he could have easily done so.

Jesus' model of ministry was quite simple. When he began to minister, he always met the needs of those he was speaking to in some capacity. Jesus often began his encounters with healings, deliverance, or miracles. Then, he spoke to them in parables.

Parables used to be understood by the Church as a form of riddle. Conversely, this could not be further from the truth of their capacity. Parables are much more akin to illustrations. Jesus understood that if he was speaking to shepherds he could build upon what they already knew by sharing on livestock. Jesus understood that if he was speaking to farmers he could relate to them by speaking in agricultural terms. Jesus understood that if he was speaking to pretty much anyone, he could easily connect with them by sharing about money. Parables take the principles of heaven on earth and articulate them through a relatable teaching.

I actually understand

'I actually understand what he is talking about,' was the most common consensus about my preaching during the first few years after planting our church. While this was an amazing compliment, it grieved my spirit. I love making God's word accessible to his people, but many preach the power with no potency. Jesus taught with authority. In order for his kingdom to come here on earth, we must learn to share his word in his likeness.

Mark 1:22 - And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

The second governmental key to experience heaven on earth is by relatable teaching. Relatable teaching connects heaven and earth. The Kingdom of God cannot come to the earth the way it is in heaven if the two remain disconnected from each other.

The Apostles taught

The apostles taught the same way they saw Jesus teach. Paul gives us an excellent oration of relatable teaching in the conclusion of his letter to the church at Rome.

Romans 15:18-19 - For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from

Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;

Paul understood that what made Jesus' preaching ministry so palatable, what caused the crowds to gather around to hear him speak, was because Jesus brought forth relatable teaching.

Paul says that the only way the Gentiles can come to obedience is through a balanced presentation of the gospel. He declares that it will take both word and deed. He explains that his definition of deeds means the power of signs and wonders because they are the power of the Spirit of God. We have got to see that the only way Paul considered his ministry as fulfilled was when he brought both the proclamation and the demonstration.

The New International Version was actually the first to translate this verse as *I have fully proclaimed*. Paul considered a gospel presentation without manifestation as incomplete. He considered a deed without a word as futile. The only way the gospel can be fully proclaimed is if it is fully proclaimed.

We must present relatable teaching in the manner of Jesus, which is by authority. The authority of the word of God synchronizes the logos with the rhema. It utilizes both the word and the deed. It fully proclaims and demonstrates the principles revealed by God.

1 Corinthians 2:4 - and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

What we preach

If what we preach is not built upon a former understanding, then we keep earth disconnected from heaven. Kingdom preaching must be both relevant and revelational. As we are the ambassadors of heaven, we must connect our culture to the people we are attempting to convert.

We must teach, teach, and re-teach Kingdom principles and the ways of God. But we have to understand that if it does not relate to the audience then it is irrelevant. If we cannot teach the Bible where people understand it, then we should just keep our mouths shut and demonstrate it.

Do you understand?

Do you understand the power of the testimony?

Revelation 19:10 - Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

When we share our testimony, especially of salvation, with an unbeliever, it gives information which they can easily connect

with. There is something about our past (about our dead man) that is relatable to the unbeliever. When we share about our past and how we became saved, we literally grab hold of someone's past and prophesy their future by standing before them. Our lives become a living prophetic word when we testify of Jesus by word and deed.

It takes a balance

It takes a balance of the logos written-word and rhema spoken-word. It takes a balance of word and deed. It takes a balance of proclamation and demonstration. It takes a balance of Spirit and truth.

John 4:24 - God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

It takes a balance, a fully proclaimed gospel, to give the world the same relatable teaching that Jesus presented.

It takes a balance between Holy Spirit being our teacher and not falling prey to demon doctrine.

John 14:26 - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

While understanding this truth, the Apostle Paul still understood the balance of submission. After his radical conversion, Paul spent three years between Arabia and

Damascus. According to his letter to the church at Galatia, after three years of study, he goes to Peter to affirm his ministry before he ever starts preaching. Paul understood that the Kingdom of God coming to earth like it is in heaven takes a partnership between heaven and earth.

Paul understood that you can feel the Spirit on something and it still be the wrong message.

Matthew 7:22-23 - On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

You can have signs, miracles, and wonders and still not have the right message. Revelation 2 reveals there will be false apostles in the last days. The apostolic is most often identified by the signs, miracles, and wonders. But signs, miracles, and wonders does not mean the gospel has been fully proclaimed.

Paul understood that it can be a deep word and still be the wrong spirit. He of all men understood the dangers of being caught up in the letter and missing the Spirit.

Acts 16:16-17 - As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed

Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

In this instance, it sounded like what the girl was saying was good, but it was not God. This revelation was brought to her by divination so the Apostle Paul got frustrated and cast it out of her. Revelation 2 also speaks of a woman Jezebel who is teaching in the Church. It can be a prophecy and come out of the mouth of a Prophet of Baal. Just because it sounds good does not mean it has the correct Spirit.

Application

To release heaven on earth, we must access the culture of heaven and teach it on earth in a relatable manner. This takes proclamation and demonstration to fully proclaim the gospel.

Romans 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

There is no power without the gospel; there is no gospel without the power.

Relatable teaching, once again, becomes an individual responsibility as much as it is corporately. The modern church would do much good if we upheld the nobility of the Bereans. We should spend as much time researching the validity of scriptural truths as we do political conspiracies.

We cannot become so isolated that we become ignorant to culture. A culture cannot be changed if it is not understood. Relevance and tolerance are not interchangeable.

Biblical education must return to its wholeness. Teaching was always intended to connect heaven and earth. The office of the teacher connects the apostle/prophet with the shepherd/evangelist.

Teach, teach, and re-teach with the power of word and deed.

The second governing key to be accessed is fully proclaiming the gospel with relatable teaching.

Chapter Three: Family Discipleship

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

- *Matthew 6:9*

I believe that the most powerful words uttered came out of the mouth of Jesus. While the modern church searches the scripture to understand how he lived, twelve men got the privilege of doing life with him on a daily basis. These men who received power to perform signs and authority over demons never questioned much about the miraculous. Their greatest desire was to learn how to pray like Jesus.

A strong prayer life is what bestows the glory. The apostles understood that they could carry the giftings, but only through prayer would their character remain integrous. They grasped that every other task they completed was temporal, while prayer grants access to the everlasting.

The first words out of Jesus' mouth as he taught his disciples how to pray contain so much revelation within them. As Jesus opened his mouth to God, he presented a concept that unlocks heaven on earth. Jesus prays to Our Father.

Jesus, being the only begotten son of God, knew that his ministry on earth was one of reconciliation. Every man, woman, and child are created in the image of God, yet marred by sin in this world. Jesus declared that sin does not stop God from being our Father. He was prophetically declaring identity over the children of God.

Jesus, I believe, signed our adoption papers with his blood.

Galatians 4:4-7 - But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Throughout the Bible we see that God implanted his DNA within humanity. He even goes so far as to restore his image through the word of God (James 1:21). The Bible teaches that he is our Creator, our Provider, our source. God is much more than a donor. He's not a hands-off, distant being that is so incomprehensible that he cannot be met or grasped. He is our Father, which makes his Kingdom a family affair.

The third governmental key to experience heaven on earth is family discipleship.

Discipleship is a family affair.

Discipleship is a family affair. God attempted to instill this concept within the Israelites long before Jesus ever came to the earth.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 - And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

God is a family man. The only aspect of creation that God saw as not good was the fact that Adam did not have a family. God fashions Eve from Adam's rib and then gives man the first commission. God mantled man to fill the earth and subdue it. Within the charge to fill the earth includes all the authority to complete that task; meaning God told Adam and Eve to grow a family.

When the whole earth was being destroyed by a flood, God rescued a family. When he promises the coming Messiah, he promises Abraham a family. When Jesus was birthed into the world, he looked for the right family.

God is not concerned

God is not concerned solely with the natural family. God is spirit, so the most important family to him is his own.

Peter, as he is sharing about the encounter with Cornelius, quotes Cornelius saying:

Acts 11:14 - he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

Later, Paul and Silas say nearly verbatim the same message to the jailer:

Acts 16:31 - And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Most Important Disciple

The most important disciple ever to be made lives in our household. Beyond the short term missions trips, more than the evangelism nights, greater than the benevolence needs; the most important disciples we will create live in our household.

The most long range weapon given to us for spiritual warfare is our children.

Psalms 127:4 - Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.

What we invest within our own family will show more to the world our true belief in the gospel than any amount of proclamation or demonstration.

Discipleship is a lifestyle.

Discipleship is a lifestyle. Which means that family discipleship it's not just what we disciple; it's how we do it.

Family, according to Jesus, is marked by those who are children of God far more than those who share a residency.

Luke 8:21 - But he answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

Jesus treated his followers like family. We would do good to see discipleship as a lifestyle. To follow Jesus, the apostles gave up their entire lives to sit under his teaching. They lived as a family and he disciplined them as such.

You can say more to family than you can someone you barely know. There is a level of repute, trust, and honor that comes with family that cannot be earned; it is inherited. Family is capable of tolerating much more from a wanderer than an outsider. Both prodigals and the possessed need family from the church for them to be restored to where God is calling them. Church discipline is discipleship.

Jesus understood that the core of discipleship is the word discipline. A parent should discipline their children, not

seek to punish their wrongdoing. Discipline creates an atmosphere where will is coached and strengthened to choose what is godly. Punishment instills fear, which is not the spirit we have been given to pass on to the next generation. The church needs good discipline so we don't find ourselves like the sons of Sceva, sons of disobedience, or many of the other individuals in the Bible in which failure was too familiar to them.

Peter's spiritual son was Mark (1 Peter 5:13). Paul's spiritual son was Timothy (Philippians 2:22). Jesus was the son of God and taught men how to disciple based off of fathering in the faith.

Church membership was intended to look much more akin to a family tree than a country club. Family discipleship understands that at the core regardless of who is right, we are family. Family discipleship trains us to not seek to win the fight, but to come to a mutual understanding of the truth in love. Family discipleship goes well beyond the gathering to invite the fellowship into the daily intricacies of life. If the church is not a family, then it's not a church.

Application

Matthew 5:23-24 - So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Church-hurt has become one of the most common issues I pastor through in our city. It is time to forgive those who have hurt you. It's also time to love again. God's love is a covenant love; as carriers of this love we must become covenant people. Committing to discipling our family and submitting to a family-style discipleship will advance the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

The third governing key to be accessed is family discipleship. It's not just what we do, but how we do it.

Chapter Four: Authentic Community

And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

- Acts 2:44

We serve a real God that really cares about you. We believe that God is real; his word is real; and his love for you is real. As God is real, we must be real people with real relationships. We articulate this governing key as authentic community. The fourth governing key to access heaven on earth is authentic community.

Authentic community is the catalyst. While being presence centered, having relatable teaching, and family discipleship grant us access to the atmosphere of heaven on earth; authentic community is the prerequisite for that culture to remain.

If the Old Covenant reveals anything about the New, it testifies to the sensitivities of Holy Spirit. God can use any willing vessel to manifest his Spirit. The trees sing his praises (1 Chronicles 16:33). A donkey speaks (Numbers 22:30). An unholy king prophecies (1 Samuel 10:11). However, the Old Testament

believer was all too familiar with God's Spirit lifting. As New Testament believers, it is our portion for God's Spirit to remain so long as we understand how to host his presence. Corporately, it takes authentic community to make this possible.

God is a communal being. Community is an intrinsic characteristic of God. As much as God is love and God is Spirit, God too is community. There is no part of God which is unfamiliar with authentic community. Peter, Jesus' best friend and the apostolic leader who oversees the church after Jesus' ascension, explains how the community of God affects the believer.

1 Peter 1:1-2 - Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

God is Three

God is one, and yet he is three. There is but one God, yet he exists in three eternal distinct persons. God's three-in-oneness has been coined by theologians as the concept of the trinity. We worship and serve one God. And that God is Father, Son, and Spirit. Co-equal in authority and essence, but distinct in personality and character. Our Father, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit are one God. As laity wrestles with understanding

this conceptually, we often ask ourselves, 'How can this be true?' The validity comes from the truth that God, at his core, is authentic community.

God does not know how to exist alone. The most alone that any member of the Godhead has ever experienced was when Jesus hung upon the cross. God is so about authentic community and relationships that he formed everything we see with our natural eye and beyond just so that he can have a real relationship with you. Authentic community is so valuable to God that he sees it as not fit, or scripturally not good, when any aspect of his creation is lacking in that community. From Adam, God fashions Eve - a separate and distinct person - and he gives them command to learn what it means to become one. Separate people, yet one inseparable unit.

Paul, in his letter to the Church of Ephesus, preaches this truth:

Ephesians 4:4-6 - There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

While this plays out most within the local gatherings, we must understand that this also applies to the First Church down the road. Just because they disagree with us, they have different values, and their attitude/atmosphere stinks does not mean they are not a part of the body. Let's be honest, most of us spend

more time relying on our butts than we do our feet; it's a vital part of the body nonetheless.

Relationships are Messy

Relationships are messy, or at least they can be very messy. Honestly, I do not know if I have ever had a real relationship where there was never a mess. People are real, which means what they experience is real and it is not always easy.

The Bible tells us that we are in a war of the spirit (Ephesians 6:12), which gives implications that there are carnal casualties. There are experiences that people go through that do not exist in heaven and were never intended to be experienced on this earth; they are demonic.

There is nothing within your natural being that can cope with a demon. We were not created to experience their presence. There is nothing natural about dealing with sickness, suffering, nor death. We were not created to experience these happenings. Nevertheless, we live in a world that is constantly bombarded by all this and more. It takes an authentic community to maintain real freedom.

While it may not be true, it may be fact. While experience may not be expected or warranted, it does not mean it does not occur. While emotions may be deceptive, it does not stop them from being valid.

Whole Community

The most whole community on earth is the one that is most broken.

An authentic community values relationships more than what we are going through. It places a higher priority on what can be placed within the community than what can be gained from the community. It establishes honor and trust by creating an environment where vulnerability is revered.

In the North American church, it seems like there is always the ‘too much.’ I want to hear about your testimony, but that was ‘too much.’ I want you to receive deliverance, but that was ‘too much.’ I want to hear the gospel, but that was ‘too much.’ Authentic communities never experience ‘too much’ because they have healthy boundaries in place.

Real Authentic or Fake Authentic

Is it real authentic or fake authentic? When I was a child, my Dad travelled to Mexico on several occasions for his job. I remember after one trip he explained to me the difference between their cuisine and what we eat in the States. We all know that Tex-Mex is fake, but what about those whose signage clearly says authentic? My Dad said that our authentic Mexican food is not the same as the real authentic food from Mexico. He told me that I could always recognize if it was truly authentic if

they had menudo on the menu. While there, he had this daily for breakfast.

Many years later, my wife and I moved to the Pacific Northwest to begin our life together and ministry. While there, a co-worker asked Natalie if we like authentic Mexican food. Being as far away from our home as we could possibly get without exiting the borders, I longed for the food of the South. When we sat down, I scanned the menu and quickly saw for the first time ever: menudo. The food was not like anything else I had eaten before. It was truly authentic Mexican food.

Menudo is a traditional soup from south of the border. Menudo, as best translated by my Dad, is cow's stomach soup. If you want real authentic, you've got to be willing to get the mess out of something to make it useful for Kingdom purposes. It's time for the church to return to this level of authenticity.

Jesus' Community

Jesus' community was perhaps the messiest of them all.

Peter, the next in command, almost drowns because of his lack of faith (Matthew 14:30).

James and John wanted to burn down a city (Luke 9:54).

Matthew has the reputation of being a sinner (Matthew 9:11).
[According to his own gospel.]

Thomas doubted both the prophecies and testimonies of the resurrection (John 20:25).

Judas betrays him, and Jesus still calls him friend (Matthew 26:50).

These are the apostles. These men were the staff and leaders of the early church. These men received the best discipleship to ever exist on the planet.

Other followers' lives were an even bigger mess. There was a sister who was too task-focused and goal-oriented to even have a relationship (Luke 10:42). There was a former demoniac who begged to follow him everywhere (Mark 5:18). There was even a woman accused of being a former prostitute who stayed so close she gave him a bad reputation (Matthew 27:56).

Following Jesus does not mean that our lives become unreal. On the contrary, believers understand that life is real and that is why we follow him. He is the only one who turns that mess into a message that can retrieve the lost and dying into hope and glory.

Healthy Boundaries

Every authentic community needs healthy boundaries. Every relationship has levels to it. Not every relationship should be granted the same level of access as others. It takes an

authentic community with all levels of relationship to maintain authenticity.

Jesus ministered to masses. He proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom to great crowds. However, he withdrew himself and his disciples to pray (Mark 3:7). He preached eloquent messages, but never explained the parables to the crowd. He never taught them to pray either. There are some people that we are meant to express our Kingdom to, who will never become a part of what we are doing. They can experience the signs, miracles, and wonders and they will still go back where they came from after they get fed.

Jesus appoints the seventy-two. He sends them out in pairs to heal the sick and proclaim the nearness of the Kingdom. This group returns and is in awe of their power of demons (Luke 10:1,17). There are people you will empower to get exactly where God is calling them. You will be faithful in delivering to them the pureness of the gospel, but they will be amazed by the wrong things. It is your responsibility to rightly divide the word of truth, not for how they apply it. You can still appoint someone and bless someone who is still being disciplined. A willingness to be disciplined grants access to be appointed.

Jesus disciplines the twelve. These twelve became Jesus' core team. They did life with him; they were his home group. They were at all the large gatherings. They received all the same authority. But they got more of Jesus. They received his

attention, his explanations, and his demonstrations. Jesus invested more in these men because they were willing to follow him anywhere.

Jesus selected the three. Out of these twelve, three of them take a special place in the life of Jesus. These three witnessed the resurrection of a little girl (Mark 5:37). These three met Elijah and Moses during the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1). These three plus Peter's brother receive an exclusive teaching on eschatology (Mark 13:3). Most importantly, was what these three men got to experience in the garden.

Mark 14:33-34 - And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch."

Not everyone was intended to handle our emotional anxieties. With three, the three best friends, the ones who experienced measures of glory and faith the others had not, with these three Jesus shared with them issues that were going on in his soul. Jesus expresses such a great distress that it was a measure of depression, sorrowful unto death. Only three knew, but three knew.

One of the greatest hindrances to authentic community in our generation is a lack of healthy emotional boundaries. We express our emotional turbulence to everyone we encounter. We

expose sin to people we work alongside. We fail to invest in the few so we create false intimacy with the many.

False intimacy is almost always initiated through gossip. Gossip is the precursor to quenching the Holy Spirit in our midst.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 - Do not quench the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:29-30 - Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

We were created to be in community. There is an authentic model for the community that Jesus builds for us as his church. We can have both boundaries and transparency.

We need those moments where we can blend in with the crowd. We need those opportunities to be a tribe; to be family yet challenge our way of thinking knowing that there is but one truth and our ultimate goal is to reveal that truth as family. We need a small group of people to connect with: open the Bible, ask and answer questions, to receive personal revival. We need a few who can handle everything without questioning our calling or purpose. The three never stopped allowing Jesus to lead them because of what they knew about him that the others did not.

Application

It is okay to not be okay; it is not okay to stay there. Authentic community makes this a reality.

Authentic community creates time for staff to receive deliverance because multiple of Jesus' apostles became possessed after following him. Authentic community prays together, reads the Bible together, eats together, works together, and enjoys hobbies together. They have all things in common.

An authentic community is more excited about the makeup you cried off than the makeup you put on. Authentic community is where church is fun, but it's also serious. Where freedom is our inheritance and we agree to maintain that together. We praise the goodness of God, and war against the prowls of the devil. Authentic community is where a bunch of real people serve the real God.

Will you be authentic today? Can you be real with God today? Can you be real with those around you? Authentic community first starts with an authentic you.

The fourth governing key to be accessed is authentic community.

Chapter Five: Generosity

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- John 3:16

The generosity of God is not complex. Throughout the Bible we read that God is more generous than any part of Creation we experience. God, while being both just and gracious, exudes generosity.

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 10:1 - And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.

Luke 11:13 - If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

John 3:34 - For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

Ephesians 4:11-12 - And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Romans 11:29 - For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

James 1:5 - If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

God is literally the most generous person I know. Generosity may just be the currency of the Kingdom of heaven on earth. The fifth governing key to access heaven on earth is generosity.

Generous Spirit

Matthew 10:7-8 - And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

Nothing makes a demon manifest faster in a group of believers than when the preacher starts talking about money. Why is that? Generosity comes from the Spirit of God. It is a governing key to accessing heaven on earth. A currency has no value if it is not accepted by the government. Finances are the language between people and governments. So to establish a government/kingdom, there must be a currency.

Generosity is not easily accepted by the world because it does not make sense. It makes no sense to give without pay and receive everything you need. Generosity breaks the yoke. As God leads, you cannot out give God -- we are even given the discretion to test him in this area (Malachi 3). Generosity has little to do with what is exchanging hands and much more to do with what is exchanging hearts.

Acts 2:46 - And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

Breaking Poverty

Poverty is infectious. Poverty is a spirit, a mindset, and a carnal condition. Poverty is a high ranking demon in the enemies camp. Poverty does not come from a lack of money. Poverty is not just a lack of education. Poverty is the absence of freedom. Governmental systems have been constructed to aid poverty because it is only by the authority of God these people can be liberated.

Mark 14:7 - For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me.

Poverty is demonic. This means that the people who are impoverished are enslaved. Do we remember how slaves were set free? Someone buys them out of slavery and gifts them

freedom. We cannot work our way out of poverty. It can not be handed or entitled to us by a physical entity. Generosity must overcome poverty.

God of Generosity

It is not just what he does; it is who he is. Generosity is not merely an act of God. It's part of his character and desire for humanity. To God's original people, he gave this promise:

Deuteronomy 8:18 - You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

While the love of money is wicked, wealth is not. Wealthy is not about riches. Wealth is an absence of poverty. With or without money, we can still be a people of wealth.

The Pentateuch promises us that as we remember God he generously gives us the power to get wealth. Wealth is not idly possessed. To obtain and maintain wealth it takes power. The power is mandated by the governmental authority of God. Recall, a currency has no value if it is not given the power by the governmental authority. God gifts his people with the power to get wealth. This is part of receiving our inheritance on earth as it is in heaven.

The book of Deuteronomy describes God giving the power to get wealth as a confirmation of his covenant that he

swore to the fathers. If the Old Covenant was able to confirm God's covenant through generosity, how much more so should the New Covenant confirm our adoption by this same measure? This is a promise of affirmation by the Father to confirm his people among the world.

God gives wealth because he has it. The streets are paved with gold in heaven, because he does not need it (Revelation 21:21). He has more than enough. He owns cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). Everything was created by God, which means he has ownership of it all. Catch this, it was created to be given to man.

Genesis 2:19 - Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

God presented all of his creation to Adam. It was Adam's to govern. God instructed Adam to take dominion over it all (Genesis 1:28).

When sin came into existence and hindered God's generosity, God out-gave sin.

Accessing Generosity for Glory

We must understand the concept of accessing generosity for glory.

John 2:11 - This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

When Jesus performs his first miracle, he turns water into the best wine served at a wedding. Jesus gave the best, and the Bible says this miracle manifested his glory. According to scripture, Jesus made it clear for all those present to see that he was a King and his Kingdom offers the best. Jesus' first miracle was not presented through healing, salvation, nor deliverance but generosity. Generosity manifested his glory.

As we desire to see God's Kingdom manifest here on earth the way it is in heaven, we must access that through generosity. It was the preliminary miracle to mark Jesus' ministry. We cannot deceive ourselves into thinking we can experience heaven on earth in an absence of generosity.

Application

We do not give to get. We give because our Lord gave to us. We give openly knowing that as we give so too shall we receive.

The church has a sending mandate. This must begin meaning that the church is not successful if your business is not successful. Not because the church will not remain open without the tithe, but because a Kingdom has more businesses than it has banks.

The world needs more churches that look like heaven and more businesses that look like churches. What if we began to set up our businesses with the principles of our Kingdom and saw wealth come in because we hired based on offices and not positions?

What if the church appointed, anointed, and ordained as many entrepreneurs as we did pastors? Heaven on earth takes a mindset that it takes a Kingdom people setting up a territory on earth to function like it does in heaven, which means it is operated by those same Kingdom people.

We have to shift our thinking from asking for checks to asking to be able to write the checks. What if we did not have to fundraise because just like the first Temple and the early church we have more than enough which means we send out finances into other Kingdom endeavors?

I am looking for the Kingdom of heaven on earth, not just the gathering of heaven scattered amongst the earth. Kingdom investors, Kingdom contractors, Kingdom laborers, Kingdom businesses, Kingdom banks, Kingdom hubs, and Kingdom

churches because we are a people of his Kingdom and the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

In the Old Testament, it was all for the Kingdom. The Great Commission says to make disciples of all nations, because it is all for the Kingdom. The church has done a great job of establishing tents of meetings, but it's time to enter into the Promised Land of a Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

I believe God for Kingdom millionaires within our church because we are a blessed people. I believe God for apostolic entrepreneurs because we are establishing governing epicenters which are as committed to tithe as we are to taxes. (Our businesses are so profitable and blessed that we can benefit multiple kingdoms at once through our integrity and generosity.) I believe that the church is going to start discipling his people again because we will no longer settle for being a hobby. [If you commit to it like a hobby it will only benefit you like a hobby, but if you treat it like a lifestyle it will benefit your entire lifestyle.] I believe God for a church that will raise up a sent people: we are sending out apostles, we are sending out business owners, we are sending out politicians. We are a Kingdom of Prophets, Priests, and Kings and so we will raise them up and send them out.

It will take more than a church to see this happen. It will take a mandate to get people exactly where God is calling them. It will take every key: presence centered, relatable teaching,

family discipleship, authentic community, and generosity. These keys must be the core value of our culture as we relinquish the atmosphere of heaven to earth.

You will never receive more until you first give; you will fail in your giving if you fail to give generously.

The fifth governing key to be accessed is generosity.

A N A P O S T O L I C S T R A T E G Y

H O P L O N

**A C C E S S I N G Y O U R W E A P O N S T O
D E L I V E R S P I R I T U A L W A R F A R E
F R O M H E A V E N L Y P L A C E S**

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