

And so, what can be Different?

God at the Center

Exodus 33:15 Moses is talking to God and says, *“If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. How shall it be known that I found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”*

My challenge to each one of us “Is that what you want more than anything, just the presence of God?”

Introduction:

1. I am going to make some statements that may sound startling
2. There is a distinction between the church as an institution and the true church (you)

Statements:

1. *The gospel does not need to be made relevant – it is relevant*
 - The issue is not relevance but influence
 - Our goal should be to tap into the image of God with people and offer them an alternative
 - Some will accept it
2. *The Church in the Western World has shrunk almost into oblivion*
 - Same is happening in the USA
 - We need the Spirit of God
 - Needs to be a shift from program driven and clergy led institutional approach
 - Need a change of mindset
 - No longer a place to go to but a people to belong to
 - The church does not have a program to reach out to reach out to the world
 - Much of what is in the church today is not in the Book of Acts
 - Programs are to serve the collective people
3. *Since the world became smaller and people more exposed to other religions, cultures and philosophies the rise of relativism – a belief that truth is not absolute is rampant*
 - “What is true for you is not true for me”
 - Pilate asked, **“what is truth?” (John 18:38)**
 - No longer an internal compass
 - Think about the generations that follow
 - The solution is the church – not the institution but we who are Holy Spirit carriers
 - Young people are trying to fill the void with the occult
 - Sexual perversion is rampant – STD’s out of control
 - Opioid epidemic – leading cause of death
 - Postmodernism is largely an emotional reaction
 - They value relationships – something the church today does not provide
 - They want to know and be known
 - Best if it happens in the context of loving, caring relationships
4. *Computer software upgrades can be a blessing and a curse*
 - My experience in 2013 with Apple
 - What would happen if we stopped upgrading?
 - The church is always the slowest to upgrade – stuck in 2.0 operating system
 - Christianity needs more than just patches

- We need a new operating system completely – not even 3.0 will do
- This is the reformation I believe Alan was talking about
- Church can't something that serves its people, but the church needs to become people who serve God, one another, and a hurting world.
- ***John 1:1&14 it says, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God... and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."***
- Greek word for dwelt is *skane* – to tabernacle
- The Holy Spirit came to tabernacle in you
- We are in a transition period
- it is not a patch or an upgrade but a whole new thing
- It is not the “priest of the house” running and controlling everything
- God did not make a mistake with you

5. *The church is not a program carried out inside of a building once a week, but it is a people that bring God with them to their world*
 - There is going to be a new level of Spirituality
 - He imparted spiritual gifts to the Roman believers to give them a better foundation.
 - ***"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established..." (Rom. 1:11 NKJV).***
6. *Most people will spend one third of their lives at work and at least another third in or around their homes.*
 - Two-thirds of our lives are non-ministry space
 - Most believe that the church is something we go to
 - What if every workplace, school, neighborhood, and café were filled with Spirit-filled, Jesus loving, disciple-makers every day?
7. *I have been talking about computers and programs this morning but I think this next point is going to freeze up your internal computer because of maybe an overload right now*
 - Christianity today consists of a bunch of boxes to check off
 - I believe the point is for God to take this Word, show us what this Word does and then to drive us to the Spirit of God.
 - To drive you and me to hours of wrestling with God in prayer about how this would apply to our lives.
 - ***Mark 6:7-13 – Jesus sent them out two by two and gave them authority***
 - He desires to bring us along with Him, with His Word, with His Spirit and to transform us hearts, to change our hearts, to radically change us, in a way that will have external ramifications.
 - Are we willing to meet Jesus on His terms?

So, who is the Jesus of the Bible?

1. *Jesus is worthy of all our trust*
2. *Jesus is worthy of all our plans and dreams*
3. *Jesus is worthy of all our affections*
 - We are conquered by a superior affection
 - We who love Christ, who have a passion for Christ, and whose lives are being transformed by Christ, that is how He is going to advance his church in Bellevue and beyond.