



Authentic Kingdom Leaders: It's All About Jesus!
“Leaders committed to the Mission”

Matthew 4:18-23

Jim Kilson

CCCB Chapel – April 10, 2012

INTRODUCTION: The current church culture in our country is on life support! I make that statement not simply because it has great shock value, **but because it's reality!**

What we are seeing take place all around us is the collapse of a culture that we have labeled "church." We have confused this culture with Biblical Christianity, and in many ways the church has become nothing more than a fraternity dressed up in religious clothes. It's a place where Jesus, is nothing more than an enlightened sage, a teacher of timeless moral truths concerning love, forgiveness and non-violence, though far from being God, the author of life, who died for our sins.

Don't believe me? Consider the April 9th 2012 edition of Newsweek, just out in time for Easter

"Forget The Church... Follow Jesus"

In this work following Jesus is equated to following His teachings rather than embracing, loving, and giving one's allegiance to the Person who gave those teachings. Aristotle, Socrates, Buddha and even Mohammad told their disciples "follow my teachings," but Jesus told His disciples "follow me!" But one can't separate Jesus from His teachings, for He is the embodiment of those teachings. Today people want a defanged, privatized, spiritual teacher poses little threat to the status quo.

I believe that we are once again living in an "apostolic age," where one very similar to the one that existed during the ministry of Jesus and the days of the apostles, one that was saturated with the decaying and corrupt religion of the Jews and the new-age philosophy of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.

It's time for the church to get serious about the mission of Jesus, to hit people **where they are**, with **what they need**, in a **language that they can understand**.

PROPOSITION: And what does it take to do that – Authentic Kingdom Leaders; Leader's committed to the mission, those who are sold out on the premise that the supreme task of the Church is indeed **the evangelization of the world!**

TRANSITION: Jesus provides for us the ultimate model of transformation leadership and mission commitment. Jesus recognized better than anyone else of His day, or ours for that matter the need for...

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS [Matthew 9:35-38]

- a. As we pick up our text we find Jesus in the midst of His Galilean ministry, a wide sweeping evangelistic campaign.
 - This passage tells us much about Jesus' mission methodology. (**ministering to needs**)

- He went to them, not sitting back and waiting for them to come to Him.
 - He was meeting them where they were, with what they needed, in a language they could understand.
- b. He saw people in need (both **physically** and **spiritually**) and He identified with them.
- Here deep compassion is embodied with an identification of what truly ails them, the limiting factor of leadership [vs. 37] "**sheep without a shepherd**"
 - This is **O.T. imagery** used to describe the desperate condition of a nation without proper leadership.
 - Seeing the need Jesus says that prayers need to be offered up... that God would raise up "**leaders**" i.e. "**workers**" for the harvest.
 - Although the imagery of the "harvest" is often employed to depict the coming judgment of God in this instance it's used to stir the disciples to **act on mission**.
- c. No longer can the concern for the multitudes be Jesus' alone, the disciples must identify **personally** with the plight of the crowds.
- This means they must have the heart of Jesus
 - Passion for mission flows out of a vision for the harvest – Christ's vision, a compassion for people without Christ!
 - Compassion for the lost should motivate us to action – **prayer & personal responsibility**.
 - Why are the workers so few?
 - **We have not because we ask not [James 4:2] We ask not because we care not**
 - We have no compassion – we're an apathetic people, as were the people of Jesus' day.
 - Apathy can happen to even the most devout of persons, consider the words of the famed German preacher Martin Niemöller [1892-1984]

"In Germany, they first came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist; then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me - and by that time no one was left to speak up for me."

TRANSITION: A point of clarification; if you hadn't picked up on it already. When I speaking of leaders – I'm refereeing to **followers of Christ committed to His Mission**, not just those who wear the title of Minister, Elder, Deacon, etc. Jesus invested in leaders... He invested in...

HE INVESTED IN DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS [Matthew 4:18-23]

- a. To see this action at work we turn back to the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry. To a time where Jesus chose his very first followers, those men who would become transformational leaders.
 - The followers of Jesus can only be described as somewhat of a "motley crew"
 - Was Jesus out of His mind to select such a bunch of followers?
 - At least 4 of them were commercial fishermen, one of them was probably a crook, and yet another was likely a political assassin... a domestic terrorist.
 - Was he out of His mind... Absolutely not! **He chose his followers out of the harvest!**
 - He chose people who could identify with the His target audience.
 - You have a better chance of reaching a person when you've "**walked the same dirt.**"
- b. As they went along Jesus also gave them an effective model to emulate, when it came to carrying out the mission [**vs. 23**]
 - Taking Jesus' mission seriously will inevitably **force us to re-examine our strategy** for penetrating our own culture with the message of Christ.
 - In the majority of the "church age" i.e. AD 300 –Present day, the church has largely depended on "church real estate." – we're "**edifice-centric**"
 - For years the church has worked under the mantra "**if you build it they will come,**"
 - What **works well for baseball fields in Iowa**, doesn't in a **post-Christian America.**
 - Jesus' strategy was to go where the people were already hanging out.
 - That's why he went to weddings, parties, and religious feasts...
 - For His actions He was attacked, vilified, condemned, the Pharisees even accused Him of being a "**party animal.**"
- c. Not only were Jesus' disciples given an effective ministry model, they were also given on-the-job training. Jesus didn't wait until after the resurrection, He sent them out to do ministry... to work on behalf of the "mission." [**Matthew 10:1ff**]
 - He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits, to heal every type of ailment and disease, and sent them out to serve – so they could have real life experience under their belts for the time after Jesus would be gone.
 - Here I know that each of you are required to do a certain amount of "Christian Service" hours – though it may not always be the most exciting thing in the world it's real to life "on-the-job" training that you'll benefit from sometime down the road.
- d. Jesus then commissions them to "**go into all the world**" and releases them to accomplish that task! [**Matthew 28:18-20**]
 - Each of us who claim Christ is called to make disciples – to go out into the world and point people towards Jesus... evangelism!
 - As a church planter I have to get my plug for church planting in – so here it is.
 - The U.S. has **195 Million un-churched people**, **4.1 million** of them are right here in Missouri.

- Based on population, the U.S. is the **3rd largest mission field on earth**. Only China, India, and Indonesia have more lost people
- Every day in our county 19 churches close their doors **FOREVER!**
- The church has a task to do... a mission to complete – we must not just go to church, we must be the church!
- This means getting outside our building and down into the trenches.
- This means that the church must no longer be afraid to talk about **sex, drugs, homosexuality, divorce, porn, rape, domestic violence**, and all manner of things that we would rather avoid, but which play out in real life in our society.
- Will you be a leader in the mission, **a Jesus follower** with compassion for the world?
- We have **handfuls** – where dozens are needed we have **dozens** where hundreds are needed; **hundreds** where thousands are needed and **thousands** where millions are needed!

CONCLUSION: The people of Jesus' time like those of our own day are looking for spiritual fulfillment. People are recognizing that the yuppie American dream of success is shallow and unfulfilling, they're coming to the realization that following the god's of this world does not bring fulfillment. People today are looking for fulfillment. If they don't find it with the church, that **redeemed body of believers for whom Christ died**, they will seek it out elsewhere, a journey that leads to a Christless eternity!

We as an extended Christian family, if we truly desire to reach this generation, we must have a **culturally informed Missiology** and we must seek out venues where we can put our **mission**, and our **message into practice**. To meet people where they are, with what they need, in a language that they understand.