

Your Part in the Process

January 21 & 22, 2012

Intro:

I've been teaching about faith and vision. I began this series on New Year's Day by telling my own story of faith. Many of you responded by committing yourselves to step up to the next stage in your own spiritual journey.

Two weeks ago we saw Peter *rise up and step out* by faith. We all need to display similar confidence in Christ.

And last week we studied four foundational Bible verses about vision and I asked you to picture *all Christ's followers representing him in the power of the Spirit, continuing his work of making disciples*. We are commissioned people, not complacent people!

Experts in motivation suggest expressing vision in 25 words or less. The statement on your outline provides continuity by tying in our 3-word motto: *Reaching, Connecting, Growing*. It reminds us what we're to be doing here: **The Vision of Dayspring Fellowship is...**

To glorify God by reaching out in love to more people, connecting them into authentic relationships, and growing up in maturity as followers of Christ. Let's read together: R

This vision depicts a disciple-making process and *you play a role because you are the church!* **Your part in the process is... *Reaching out in love to more people!*** This isn't your only part, but it's the part I'm emphasizing today. *You can reach out in love to more people. Who are these people? Today we'll discover the wide variety of people you can reach with the love of God. First, we'll focus on the fact that...*

• **Some live far away**, as far as the other side of the world.

It's time to introduce you the **Campbell 4**. *Campbell 4* is not a Bible reference, like *John 4*, I'm talking about the Campbell family, *Kevin, Marie, Chase and Chloe*. They recently returned from a ministry trip to the Philippines.

They not only went *to express the love of God* to people who live far away, they *experienced the love* of God there as well!

Like the Campbells, *you can reach out in love to more people. Some live far away, but some live in your own home!*

• **Some are related to you**. You can reach out in love to people in your own family. We see an example of this is **John 1:40-42** *Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.* Andrew wanted to make sure his brother, Peter, got a chance to meet Jesus!
T - You can reach out in love to family members. Let's turn a page to learn more about the kinds of people you can reach with the love of God. Who are they?

• **Some are in need**. **John 2**. Mary told Jesus her friends had run out of wine at their wedding reception. This *wasn't a life and death situation for them*, but it probably was embarrassing. *No one knows why Jesus chose this as his first public miracle, but he met the need by turning water into wine.* And it wasn't cheap stuff in the cardboard box. He made good wine. After tasting it, the master of the banquet said, **10 - you have saved the best till now!** None of us can snap our fingers and manufacture miracles. But in Jesus' name, we can meet needs. And when we help those *in need*, let's go a good job of it. You know some people *in need* and you can reach out to them in love. **T** - What else can we say about the people who need God's love? Turn a page...

• **Some are religious**. **John 3:1** *Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night...* They talked.

He was relying on his relative righteousness yet he didn't really know the way to God. Jesus cut through the formalities and said: **7 You must be born again.** Why? Because *religion doesn't have the power to save.* You know some people who are *religious* but still need Jesus and you can reach out to them in love.

T - Turn another page to see another kind of person...

• **Some have a past.** **John 4** Jesus broke with the customs of the day and engaged in a very personal conversation with *a woman who had been around.* He spoke to her as no one ever had before and his *avant-garde acceptance and confident challenge* motivated her to lead many people from her town to Jesus. Once they met him, they said to her, **42 We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.** Because he reached out to her, *she changed from an ostracized outcast to a missionary in one day.* What a difference love can make. You know some people with a past and you can reach their way in love.

• **Some are stuck.** **John 5.** Jesus came to an outdoor pool. **5 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.** **6 When Jesus saw him lying there...** he reached out in love. This guy needed to face an important question. Jesus **asked him, "Do you want to get well?"** After a talk, Jesus healed him. I'd like to do that, but *what I can do* is to *help people decide if they want to stay in the condition they're in.* So can you. God can use us to help free people who are *stuck*, maybe in an addiction or a toxic relationship. You know some people who are stuck and you can reach out to them in love. **T** - John 6 gives us another description of the kind of people we can reach with the love of God.

• **Some are hungry.** **John 6** records a notable miracle when Jesus fed the masses. It was getting late in the day and the

disciples suggested Jesus dismiss the crowd so they would go home for dinner. But he had a different idea: **you give them something to eat.** They couldn't come up with much: **9 Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?** Jesus once again earned his followers faith. **11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted.** He did the same with the fish. He followed up by talking about how he could also meet a different kind of hunger. **35 I am the bread of life.** When we're willing, God can use us to feed and fill people. Like his first followers, we get to distribute *the bread of life.* You know some people who are hungry and *you can reach out to them in love.* **T** - Let's see another picture of needy people.

• **Some are cynical.** **John 7:2** When the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, **3 Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do.** **4 No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world."** **5 For even his own brothers did not believe in him.** That's sad. **Acts 1** tells us that they eventually came around, but it took time. You know some cynical people and you can reach out to them in love. *Don't give up.* **T** - What kind of people can we reach?

• **Some are in sin.** **John 8:3** Self righteous leaders came to Jesus to test him: **"Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.** **5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"** In response, Jesus used a creative way of convicting the woman's accusers of *their own sins.* **7 "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."** One by one they slipped away, **until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.** **10 Jesus straightened up and asked her,**

“Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11
“No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,”
Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.” It is a
sad fact of human nature that people like to condemn others.
Judging *comes naturally* to us, but *it is supernatural* to offer
grace. *That’s what Jesus did and that’s what he calls us to do.*
You know some people who are in sin right now and you
can reach out to them in love. Will you? **T** - Turn a page.

• **Some are blind.** **John 9** is all about Jesus healing a man
who couldn’t see. But the real blind ones in this chapter are
the Pharisees. They think they can see the truth but they’re
in the dark. Jesus applied the lesson, saying, **5 I am the
light of the world.** You know some people who are
spiritually blind. You can reach out to them in love.

T - Finally, and as a summary, chapter **10** reminds us...

• **Some are lost.** In **John 10** Jesus said, **I am the good
shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the
sheep.** Jesus died so we could live. Who do you know who
needs to *get a life*? Who could use the care of a shepherd?
Jesus can lead, protect and provide for the rich and poor,
young and old, sick or strong, legal or illegal, straight or
gay, gang or geek, single or married. Jesus came to seek
and save the lost and told us that as the Father sent him, so
we are sent. **T** - It’s time to commit yourself to *reaching out
in love to more people.* Look at the bottom of your outline.
Who can you reach? **I can reach out in love to...** Write down
some names. We’ll pray for them when we close the service.

In my **conclusion**, I want to be true to our theme and
call you to *rise up and step out.* But with *the sinking of the
Italian cruise ship* this week and *the allegations against the
captain*, maybe *getting out of the boat* has temporarily *lost its
positive connotation!* So, instead of using *Peter* as our closing
illustration again, let’s think about *Francesco Schettino.*

The news is full of stories about this ship captain.
People are saying that he *forgot his calling* to take people
safely to their destination. It appears that he *lost courage*
and *neglected his responsibility.* Have we forgotten our
mission? Don’t abandon ship! Carry out your calling. Have
courage. Help people to get to safety. Reach out in love.
Prayer: (Team available).

Prayer for offering:

Our theme this year is: *rise up and step out by faith.*

The elders are doing this by pursuing plans to fill both
open pastoral positions: Children’s and Youth Ministries.
They are leading by faith, but they are constrained by the
need for our support. While they are responsible to plan,
we are responsible to actualize the vision by funding these
positions. The last few weeks’ offerings have been good
indicators; we’re rising up, now let’s step out. What we will
need to carry out these plans, on the average, is about
another 10%. Each of us can do our part. Let’s make our
dreams come true by *reaching out in love to more people.*

More meat (unused material):

We’re to impact the world. To do this we must enter it.
John 1:14 - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling
among us. The biblical metaphors for the church - salt, light
- denote penetration. Ian John: *After Jesus called his disciples,
he did an unusual thing. He took them with him into the world.
Not the nice world of spiritual retreats and controlled learning
environments, but the world of prostitutes, hypocrites, and the
demon possessed.*

1 Cor 9:22 - I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. Identify, but don't compromise. Adapt methods, don't dilute message.

Humanity has a problem but you can be part of the solution! Offer someone an invitation this week. Invite someone back to God through Christ! Or use a 2-step approach. Invite your friend to church as a step toward getting them back in touch with God.

Don't be shy. Just ask!

If we had half of our people functioning missionally, our dreams would come true. Our vision would be realized.

Fear of evangelism:

I think we are all in need of a transformation of our attitude about personal evangelism and our resulting habits. In the past, many Dayspring attenders have not just shied away from evangelism, they have dreaded the thought of sharing their faith. Many Christians fear rejection. They worry that others may feel pressured, cornered judged, or made into a project. Some Christians regard evangelism only as something the pastor does at the conclusion of his messages.

I'm hoping we begin thinking of evangelism as an opportunity to offer the greatest possible gift. I trust as we can sense the power of the Spirit and the motivation of Godly love. We want to naturally share the supernatural news of Jesus.

An invitation to an event is great, but it is all about eventually offering an invitation to receive Christ. We get to introduce people to their maker.

Evangelism is sometimes seen like those crazy TV stunts - you know, "Don't try this at home!" Seems like it

should come naturally, but most Christians say that they've never led anyone to Christ. Why don't we reproduce? We think of witnessing like flossing: an obligation we neglect. Why? We labor under misconceptions. We say, I can't do that, but we've too narrowly defined what that is. We picture just one method and think it doesn't fit us.

People think God can't use them because they're not like Billy Graham. How many people are responsible to be Billy? One! You are to be the one God created you to be. "But I'm not outgoing." Think: would God command us all to do something that only highly extroverted people can do?

Where does confidence come from? Phil 4:13 - I can do everything through him who gives me strength; John 16:8 it is the HS who convicts of sin. It is God's responsibility to convert. To save souls. Our job is to sow seed, 1 Cor. 3:7, God supplies the increase.

The Vision of Dayspring Fellowship

- *broken down phrase by phrase:*

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To glorify God... I had to include this and put it in first. In an age of self-fulfillment, we declare that is not our aim. God is.

•by reaching out

Sound familiar? This vision statement includes the three verbs from our motto (*Reaching, Connecting, Growing*).

Advantages? Allows for meaningful *abbreviation* and aids in *memorization*; it's *easy to grasp*; provides *continuity* - we *don't need a different picture, just a sharper focus*. I'm articulating (with a few fresh challenges) just what Dayspring has *already been about* from the outset.

Why participles? This form emphasizes that we are on a mission that is still underway. The work is ongoing.

Reaching: Taking new ground. Not being content to just protect what we've got. Reaching our *community* here in Keizer, and our *communities* all through the region that our proximity to I-5 allows us to influence.

in love to more people, elaborates on reaching.

I've talked about the *centrality of love*. It is our *motive* to reach out. It makes disciples distinctive.

We reach for what we value: **People** = all ages and stages. Rich and poor. We reach out to people who don't like church, people with bad habits and messy lives. Christians and non-Christians at once. *Not either/or, but both/and – relevant and reverent.*

More: Jesus said: go into the *whole world*, start in Jerusalem and *keep going* to ever widening circles. It doesn't sound like he intended for them to reach *only a few people*. More is a relative term. More than *what?* More than *now* – this is a vision of the future. More *tomorrow* than *today*. More *this year* than *last year*. When will this stop? *I'm not interested in it stopping*. This kind of vision statement is supposed to be useful for 5 years before having to be refreshed. I think we can handle reaching *more and more* people for five years. *Then we'll revise it* if we feel called to reach out to *less*.

But that would be weird because there will *always be* people who *need to hear the good news*. People who *need to experience forgiveness*, who have *yet to meet Jesus*. Get off *drugs*, get out of *debt*. Families need healing. Know anyone with those needs? So do I. So let's reach out to *more* people.

• ***connecting them into authentic relationships***,

The vision to connect means we can't be a closed club. We must eliminate entry barriers. I don't want to see people disengaged and disillusioned, but motivated and mobilized. □ Simple to say, hard to do.

Authentic: there is probably not a more important word describing what people long for today. *Real as opposed to false, fake, slick, shallow.*

What this phrase reminds us of is that the key is real *relationships*. Just being in a class is not so much the point. We want people to *connect* in *friendships* that are not *superficial*, but *significant*.

• ***and growing up***

Notice, not growing *them*. No segregation. Incoming people *become* Dayspring. We're in this *together!*

Remember our emphasis on teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded? Life change! **Col. 1:28 - We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.**

Growing up in what way?

in maturity

We're to grow in the *process of becoming Christlike*. **2 Cor 3:18 - being transformed into his likeness.** *The ministry of discipleship is the goal of the ministry of evangelism.*

Note the cyclical nature of this: growing spiritually should motivate us to reach back out. Being like Jesus makes us want to do what Jesus did. There's a false dichotomy between quality and quantity. If growing Christians don't *reach back out* they get *ingrown*.

as followers of Christ.

That is the product of this process. Could've saved myself some words using *Christian* or *disciple*, but those words are often misunderstood.