

DISCOVERY AND RECOVERY IN CHRIST

WORLDVIEW

THE MISSION

Discipleship

Isaiah 61:1

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness the prisoners ...”

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THE STORM

I feel obligated to share what God has put on my heart. My family and I have been living in Red Wing, Minnesota for almost four years. When my family and I were living in Woodbury, Minnesota, my wife was questioning my ability to provide for our family. I was really hurt by this lack of confidence in me. I felt anger and shame because of my unbelief. At this time the Spirit of God spoke to me, in a quiet still voice and said, “Lift up your head. Do not have confidence in what the world says is success and security. There is a storm coming that the world knows nothing about and the only place of security is doing My will. If you participate in My will for your life I will provide all that you will need to live the life I have for you, trust me.

God knows all things. Because of what God taught me about trusting Him and not the ways of the world it prepared me for dealing with the insecurity of the world. By the leading of the Spirit I had the opportunity to take a job as a chemical dependency counselor at Prairie Island, Minnesota. In the process of deciding whether we should take the job or not, I was weighing the salary and insurance benefits against

the ones we already had. The Lord spoke to me in a small still voice and challenged me. The Lord told me that anything that I considered besides Him

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asking me to take the job at Prairie Island is what I am a slave to. This really hit me hard. Matthew 6:31-34 states,

So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the Pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

It is easy to say we trust God when we are in control, but when He asks us to step outside of our common sense our faith in Him gets tested. God dealt with me and we moved to Red Wing.

In our obedience to God’s will the Holy Spirit does his thing, he comforts, convicts, teaches, encourages, counsels and disciplines us. There is no substitute for doing the will of God. When I lean on my own understanding I, at best, see the tip of the iceberg of God’s purpose for whatever he has called me to participate in. Proverbs 3:5-7 states,

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and

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shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.” Knowing the Scripture intellectually and knowing it in Spirit and in Truth are two completely different things. I can know the Bible backwards and forwards and not depend on God but if I know it in Spirit and in Truth I will need to be absolutely dependent on the Living Spirit of God.

Being a Christian and working as a Chemical Dependency Counselor, in a number of settings, I have noticed that the definition of SIN is often misunderstood. We seem to think that sin is this evil, dysfunctional behavior that even non-believers can agree is wrong. We act as if God and Truth are subject to our opinion of them. We create our own environment where we try to be in control and when people, places and things get in the way of our agenda we get angry, bitter, discouraged and desperate. We have the tendency to blame people, places, things and maybe even God for our “misfortunes”. I have asked a number of people if they ever felt that there is a conspiracy against them and a number of people said yes. I tell them that they are right. The conspiracy is that Reality cannot be manipulated. God and the Laws of Life are not subject to us. Man’s arrogance wants to create

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his own reality and if there is a god in it, man wants to control that as well. The conspiracy is we can't live separate from God without consequences. All we have to do is read the newspaper, look at our own lives, and look at our own communities to see that. The SIN of man, regardless of culture, is to demand his own way, judge others, and to control his own life. The Living God does not bow down to the demands of man. He knows the ways of the sinful nature.

Adam and Eve were warned by God not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. When we eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil we compare ourselves to each other and raise a standard of "righteousness" that is based on our standards, not God's. When I was working at a treatment center recently, to make a point, I told a counselor that I had a large poster of Hitler in my room (I really don't). He gave me a funny look. I told him I did not believe in what Hitler believed in, but because he is so evil it makes me look better. This illustration portrays a self-righteous spirit that identifies evil but separates itself from that evil by a standard other than God's. God does not grade us on a curve but on the absolute Holiness of God.

Each one of us individually will stand before God. If we measure

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ourselves by God's measuring stick, The Ten Commandments, we all fail the test totally and the penalty is death. Romans 3:10-12 states, "As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one: there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Jesus fulfilled the Ten Commandments and He is our Righteousness. Jesus demonstrated what mankind is supposed to be like. Jesus didn't have to try to be righteous he is Righteousness. Sin (separation from God) altered our hearts and the only surgery possible is turning to the Provision of God through Christ. We need God because we failed His standards, not the standards of the world. James 2:10 states, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." The sinful nature devises a way to live that may include God but on the individual's terms. This sinful nature rejects obedience and relationship with the Living God where God determines our path.

God is well aware of the sinful nature and its demand for "independence". John 2:23-25 states, "Now while he was in Jerusalem

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at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus did not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man for he knew what was in man."

We want our own way, on our terms. Matthew 7:21-23 states,

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven, only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons, and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me you evildoers!'

If we justify ourselves by anything other than Christ's sacrifice we will be living a life of pride and condemnation. Receiving God's mercy is the only doorway into the kingdom of heaven. If we do not know His mercy, we won't know his love and we will not be able to discern the will of God.

The message of the Spirit of God is to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus. Mankind is to turn from the sin of running our own lives, demanding our own way and to start living for God's Purpose for

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our lives. I see the world as the Titanic, the ship that could not be sunk (The Pride of Man), but there is a storm coming that will sink anything that is not established on the Provision of Christ. He is the only way, because that is the way that God provided. When the storm hits the only lifeboat that will float is Christ. The “ARK” today is the Perfect will of God (Roman’s 12). God is calling Christians and non-believers to repentance. The Spirit of God is calling us to a life surrendered to Him in mercy and grace, living a life devoted to His purpose.

God wants the Church to be disciplined and prepared to reach out to the people He sends our way. He wants to disciple the Church so our battle cry is the same as Paul’s when God revealed to him in 2

Corinthians 12:9-10 which states,

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak. Then I am strong.”

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As Christians we need to depend on God and each other to be prepared for the storm. Ephesians 4:15-16 states, “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head. From the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” We need to be founded on the Rock so that we will be prepared to help others.

Luke 6:46-49 states,

Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation, the moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

God has already provided for all our needs to participate in His life and His Purpose. The Lord is saying that we, His Children are fine, but there are others who do not know Him or are in bondage to the lies of

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the devil.

God is calling His people to unity at the foot of the Cross, unified in mercy, grace, faith, and purpose to glorify the name of Jesus and set the captives free. We have been given the Ministry of Reconciliation. 2

Corinthians 5:14-21 states,

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anybody is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God was making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him that had no sin (a sin offering) for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God."

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We need the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We need The Body of Christ unified in one Mind, one Body and one Spirit to complete the task that God has called us to attend.

Goliath is standing out there challenging the church daily. It is time that we took our eyes off of Goliath and ourselves and put our faith and trust in Jesus. We need to fight the battles before us in Spirit and in Truth. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 states,

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

We need to throw the “rock of faith” that God gave us so the “works of the devil” will be destroyed and the captives set free. Jesus already did the work and has all Authority. Glory to God! He is looking for people who will humble themselves, deny themselves, and that are willing to trust and obey. Participating in God’s will is where our relationship with God, our deliverance and freedom lies. “The greatest

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commandments, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself”(Matthew 22:37-39). Jesus had a body like we have but now He is sitting at right hand of the Father. His Spirit is living in us if we are Christians. Jesus still has things he wants to do and he is asking the church to let Him fulfill His purpose through us. Ezekiel 18:32 states, “For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone.” 2 Peter 3: 9 states, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Ezekiel 33:11 states, “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.” We need to encourage one another through repentance, renewal, revival, unity and singleness of purpose. It is (Romans 12:1) our reasonable service, our spiritual worship.” In order to discern and participate in the will of God we will need to accept God’s assessment of our condition separate from Him and repent by living for God, not ourselves. If we do not repent we will not be able to walk in faith and be able to overcome the flesh because we are still justifying ourselves separate from God. John 15:5 states, “I am

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the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” Thank you Jesus for your sacrifice, mercy, grace and forgiveness.

(All Scripture references were taken from the New International Version Of The Holy Bible, Zondervan Bible Publishers, The New York International Bible Society 1978.)