

Pushing Back the Darkness!

Part 3: "Space Made, Place Prepared, SUPERNATURALLY!"

"Beginning with John and continuing with Me, the kingdom of heaven advances by forcible entry and the ones *whose minds are made up to advance it* take their objectives by force..." Mt 11.12

This is the progression from shining the light in passive forms to pushing back, holding back, rending the darkness!

So far... Pushed back on all separators; racial, social, economic! From the word of God we found we were all in the same mess... Orphaned by sin... Adopted by God... Baptized into the death, life, and "habits" of Jesus... **So now there CAN NOT BE any discrimination in the church...** NOT EVEN THE "ICK" FACTOR! Whatever your personal threshold!

Once Again... That doesn't mean we live *indiscriminately!* Accepting anything/everything... "crazy-grace" to coexist w/everyone! Not making careful assessments, based on Godly distinctives! Unsaved: we bring good news! Saved: we bring encouragement! But we cannot entertain *discrimination*: treatment/ acceptance based on category/ class/stereotype!

Living our lives with racial, socio-economic, educational, age, biases... *obvious or hidden...* Is to deny our common DNA/Noah! To deny the bloodline we share in Christ! And to make ourselves the enemy of God by befriending the "habits" of His enemy!

Color is transient, our DNA fundamental, our accuracy is intelligent, our bloodline eternal, our graciousness is necessary...

Today... We need to talk about our readiness to love and accept, to receive and instruct the people God loves! We need to recognize that our attitudes and preparedness could be the seeds of a long awaited revival! And that our creativity and constructiveness are key factors to being prepared for God to use!

Our Readiness... Requires leaders who will lead in the way we should go... My commitment: "to teach the word, to lead by example and share experiences that accomplish the goal!" Some weeks may look like a Mars Hill Show and Tell! We have to get creative to touch our digital/video world!

Asides: The Creative Approach... "What about this babbler...? Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, "I perceive in everything I see that you are very religious! Passing by your objects of worship I found an altar that said, 'to the unknown God.' I'm here to tell you all about Him!" In a condescending, antagonistic world, Paul finds a creative way to deliver the gospel! With that winsome approach they were hooked!

Jesus lived a *friendly, social life, innocently, among people broken by all sins... and they came to Him by multitudes!*

Requires the open hearts and minds of 'first contact' people! Every believer would say they want revival to happen... but true revival is messy and full of "ICK!" Creative handling of major topics of life! Racism, alternate lifestyles, rising fear, drug, alcohol use, anger...

Requires that space is made, a place prepared! Jesus is the Great Shepherd and Overseer of the Sheep **Heb 13.20 1Pet2.25 Ps50.10** And He is looking for places to distribute His beloved lambs... Safe, clean, modernized "pens" for care, nurture and protection! **A20.28 1Pet 5.2**

Our Readiness Here... Don't have a lot of space left! Had been "seeing" the coming bottleneck for months! Talking with you a little! Conferencing with God a lot! Now that it was here (June), praying, saddened,

mourning... Why wouldn't I mourn when Life could no longer be effective? A Church that doesn't keep reaching grows stagnant... Insures it's own demise! Summer gave us a respite... but...

All I could see was \$2.5 million step! NOPE! Add a third service... NOPE! Worst scenario, *changed venue... changed identity! NOPE!*

When you know God has brought you somewhere and you hit a dead end, you need to stop... "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of God!" **Ex 14.13** May 28th, had a visit from a friend! Told you about it June 7th and that we would talk about it in the Fall!

This is the Fall... today is the perfect timing... As we're preparing our hearts to serve in new ways... We need to make space and prepare a place for multitudes more... We're asking for miracles... at the end of the road that we see! God needs our hearts/minds still... Eyes and ears open to His plan...

The Lord's plan: "Build the main building for double tasks, reset the buildings as you have said, and as you fill up on Sunday let the added tithe and offering finish the project!"

Our hearts response... "This is the thing the Lord has said, 'take an offering unto the Lord from whoever is of a willing heart... and all the people left... and they came back, every one whose heart stirred him up and whose spirit was willing and they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of the congregation...'" **Exodus 35.4,21** "And they received all the offering which they had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it, and the people brought free will offerings every morning... and the workers worked... and they said to Moses, 'the people have brought more than enough for the work the Lord has commanded,' and Moses said, 'Let no one work any more for the offering of the sanctuary and the people were restrained from bringing any more...'" **Exodus 36.3,21**

Stepping Up... We have reached the place where we can offer no effective shelter... It is (past) time for us to build... This will determine our future as well as the moment! We know God's will is for us to prepare, to grow, to continue to help the lost/broken/stagnant... Time for us to go, and ask, and then bring the offering stirring in our hearts/willing to "work for!"

Stepping Out... God has called us to push back the darkness and committed to us the word of *reconciliation*. **2Cor5.17-20** Prejudices, separators, even personal "ICK" factors defeated... Creative approaches engaged(ing)... But we cannot do what we've been called to do...

If we do not have space made and a place prepared to serve the saved!

Final Observation... As a pitch man I would have to be numbered among the worst! No emotional appeal, no pledge cards, no special offering... FAIL! But not trying to raise money for a building... Delivering a series of messages to raise the bar on our experience of faith... a call to live...

S - U - P - E - R - N - A - T - U - R - A - L - L - Y

To be part of the church that *unites* SUPERNATURALLY... that *loves* and *accepts* people SUPERNATURALLY... and that *gives* and *builds* SUPERNATURALLY...