

“Sowing, Growing and Harvesting” - Mark 4:1-20
Pastor Burt Garwood – June 25, 2017

Many people say they go to church, which equates to attending a Sunday morning worship service and then going home. To say “you go to church” is compartmentalizing your faith into a tiny little 1-hour box on Sunday mornings.

- Instead of saying you go to church...Be the church...Wherever you go.
- It is a living, breathing daily relationship with your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who wants to work through you to bring others to know, love and follow him.

The church, made up of members like you, walks alongside you from the moment the seed of faith in Jesus is sown.

- We take you from the baby stages of your faith and transform you into a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:2-3)
- Jesus intends for you to grow in your faith to the point that you lead others. (Hebrews 5:12-14, 2 Timothy 2:2)
- Jesus wants to move you to a new mindset. Instead of, “What can the church do for me?” You say, “What can I do for others?” How can I be Christ’s church, his voice, his hands and feet to the world around me?

You see yourself as a missional follower of Jesus. You become a person who lives an Attract, Connect, Transform, Send lifestyle. This is maximum impact living.

I. Attract – Seed sowing

- Jesus told a story about a farmer sowing seed. READ: Mark 4:4-9
- We run across people all the time who are like the seed falling on different types of terrain. Some people are more receptive to the message of Jesus than others.
- As a follower of Jesus, you learn to live in such a way that your faith in Jesus becomes attractive to others in various situations of life. (1 Corinthians 9:22)
- It means you check yourself to see if your personality is coming off too strong or opinionated.
- You become the person that is more concerned about others in the room than you are about yourself.
- People want to talk to you because you ask them questions about themselves instead of talking about yourself. As they open up to you, you find opportunities to weave your story of faith in Jesus into the friendship.

II. Connect – Taking root

- READ: Mark 4:15-19. There are too many things competing for your heart. So many distractions, so many worries of this world, so many pursuits and activities...so many wounds. These things all keep faith from taking root in a person’s heart.
- Jesus needs you to help the seed of faith take root in another person’s life by being a connector.
- Sometimes you are a caregiver to those who have been beat up by life. So you tend to their wounds and help them heal.
- You help connect people to the body of Christ and give them a sense of belonging.

- Connection is about community. (Hebrews 10:25) The primary place of connection at Lord of Life is in our small groups, whether it’s a men’s group or women’s group, a group for singles or marrieds or parents, or a Thursday Women’s morning Bible study group.
- We place a priority on connection to a small group, because we also know that people grow well with others in a small group.

III. Transform – Growth (Mark 4:20)

- Researchers report that people need 7 relationships to stay within a church. One of the key ways we build relationships is through small groups.
- In ancient times, followers of Jesus gathered in homes to worship Jesus together and enjoy community...they grew together. (Acts 2:46)
- Sometimes the Transformation process can hurt as our Father-God works in our lives to remove sin and grow us through tough times. (John 15:2)
- The goal of transformation and growth is that you bear fruit. (Colossians 1:10)

When we first begin to grow, our satisfaction level is high. Everything about God is new and fresh and we’re emotional as we go through God’s redemptive process.

- But as time passes and you become more mature in your faith, you begin to have less satisfaction in your faith journey if you are relying on the church to feed you. You find yourself wondering if you’re getting anything out of “going to church.”
- We want to move from dependence only on the church for nutrition, to learning how to be "self-feeders" spiritually. You must learn to become a "self-feeder" the other 6 days of the week. It's the sign of a mature follower of Jesus. (Hebrews 5:14)
- Self-feeders are followers of Jesus who take it upon themselves to get into God's Word and study it on their own.
- That’s why it is so important to understand that Jesus wants us to bear fruit. We’re in training, and we reach a point where it’s time for us spread our wings and lead.

IV. Send – Harvest (Mark 4:20)

- Mature Christians are sent...they serve...they lead...
- Fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ go...and they take it upon themselves to do so...they aren’t waiting for marching orders...they take action in their daily lives to be the church wherever they go...to attract, connect, and transform others who will also grow to see themselves as sent ones. (2 Timothy 2:2, Philippians 1:4-5, Romans 15:14)
- God grows us all. We each have a part to play in this process. (1 Corinthians 3:6-9)

2 Corinthians 9:10 *“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.”*