



Sermon Series: Being An Authentic Church

To be used with Session: Sharing Christ

Sermon Title Possibilities: Rediscovering My Influence

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study, “Being an Authentic Church,” this sermon guides a church toward authenticity by promoting a deep awareness of the ripple effect of influence. There is a necessity of staying true to its Christian identity and the transformative power inherent in authentic discipleship. By following this framework, the church can foster a culture of genuine influence that reflects the love and teachings of Jesus, leading to a more authentic and impactful presence in its community.

Introduction: Every parent knows what it is like to come to your child’s school at the end of the day and see children playing games. One of the games I am always interested in is double Dutch, especially group double Dutch. Every person who is jumping has to work together. To be authentic is to do the same. When we are centered on Jesus, our ministry and lives work in tandem with His word, our lives, and our community.

1. Influence has a Ripple Effect (Matthew 28:18).

In Matthew 28:18, we are reminded of the authority and influence that Jesus has been given. We can rejoice that His resurrection has a ripple effect because it includes us. The grace that God has given to each of His children is that He welcomes and involves us in the conversation. We are gifted access to the knowledge of where authority, power, and the future comes from. Jesus makes us aware that we do not have to worry or question, we can have a conversation. Therefore, we must wield this influence wisely. Just as a stone creates ripples when cast into a pond, our influence extends beyond ourselves, affecting those around us. How we choose to use this authority matters, as it has a ripple effect on the lives of others.

2. Influence Requires Authenticity (Matthew 28:19).

There is nothing worse than a car in the fast lane driving slowly. There is also nothing worse than a Christian who is walking outside of the lane God has called them. Having influence simultaneously means we must stay in our lane as a Christian. Jesus gives a clear directive to the disciples and to us that because He has all authority, what we are commanded to do. Later in the Book of Acts (Acts 1:8) Jesus describes the location of nations. Jesus is forcing the authenticity of his people to shine brightly in the communities they have influence. At

the same time, He reminds them that their authority will not come from their reputation, but their willingness to share in Christ's reputation. God has given each of us the grace to tell His story in the places we are known. Go!

3. **Influence Leads to Transformation** (Matthew 28:20)

Anyone remember life before GPS apps on the phone? As a child my grandmother used to stop at local gas stations and grab a paper map that would assist in our long car rides to her hometown. This is what Jesus is giving His disciples. He gives them road markers to the end goal of discipleship. "Teaching them to obey everything I commanded." First, we do not preach or share our opinion, rather we share the truth of what Jesus has already shared with us prior to and following his death. Second, Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always even until the end of the earth." His concluding statement is a statement of affirmation. His influence through us will not allow us to lose, sharing the gospel always leads us closer to him.

Conclusion:

Disciples that trust from a source of authenticity are given a chance to lead transformation at any moment. Just as the rhythmic coordination of a double Dutch game creates harmony, our authenticity in Christ compels us to work in tandem with His word and within our community. As we authentically influence others, we are continually drawn closer to the source of our influence—Jesus Christ.

Author Bio

Dr. Justin R. Lester is the Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Vallejo, California. He is the Author of, "Necessary Endings" and other works to enrich the local Church.