

Text: Matt 16:13-20, Title: Storming Hell with A Water Gun, Date/Place: The Road 1.8.17, AM

- A. Opening illustration: Since my short life began, I have seen a number of “wars,” Cold war, Iraq wars I, II, and III, Afghanistan, and several skirmishes like Libya, Somalia, Bosnia, Benghazi, and now we face ISIS. What if the Army was mobilized, a plan was prepared, but we never went? President Roosevelt made this declaration on December 9, 1941: “We are now in this war. We are all in it, all the way. Every single man, woman, and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American History. We must share together the bad news and the good news, the defeats and the victories, the changing fortunes of war.”
- B. Tough Questions the Church must ask and answer or die:
- C. A. Are we moving or simply meeting?
B. Are we making a measurable difference in our communities or simply conducting services.
C. Are we organized around a mission or organized around an antiquated ministry model inherited from a previous generation?
D. Are we allocating resources as if Jesus is the only hope of the world, or are the squeaky wheels of church culture driving budgeting decisions?
- D. Background to passage: Galilee, been there for a while, going to Jerusalem in a few chapters. Immediate context is miracles, teaching, Pharisees up from Jerusalem demanding signs, warning from Jesus about them.
- E. Main thought: We must constantly have the passion of the advancement of the kingdom rekindled. We must constantly recalibrate our attitudes, thoughts, desires to the Holy Spirit’s plan to expand the kingdom and display the manifold wisdom of God to rulers in heavenly places and earthly witnesses. 3 main recalibrations
- A. **This Is a War**
1. Jesus uses the language of war in this passage. Paul uses the language of war in 2 Cor, 1 & 2 Tim, and the whole Eph armor of God passage. This war is of two kingdoms, darkness and light, spiritual and physical, Christ and Satan. This is a war for the souls of men. This is a war for the glorification of God throughout the world. This is a war against sin in the world, and in your soul.
 2. Now, in this text, Jesus says that he will build His church (lot of truth there, not enough time), and it will advance. The gates of a city are a defensive measure, so Jesus was saying not that His kingdom will stand firm, but that hell will be ravished by the church. So, in a sense, Jesus is assuring the apostles of victory. But in many other places he teaches that the enemy will persecute, attack, imprison, humiliate, and kill the saints. So, this is war!
 3. Third component Jesus mentions is our mission. He speaks of binding and loosing, heavenly realities and earthly declarations. The church will be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, whose confession is that Christ is Lord, but she is given authority to proclaim the gospel, the forgiveness of sins to those who trust and follow Jesus. She doesn’t save, nor forgive sin, she simply can transmit this gospel that sins are forgiven in Christ for those who repent and believe.
 4. 2 Tim 2:4, 1 Tim 1:18, 2 Cor 10:3-4, Eph 6:11,

5. Illustration: “I am wired by nature to love the same toys that the world loves. I start to fit in. I start to love what others love. I start to call earth ‘home.’ Before you know it, I am calling luxuries ‘needs’ and using my money just the way unbelievers do. I begin to forget the war. I don’t think much about people perishing. Missions and unreached peoples drop out of my mind. I stop dreaming about the triumphs of grace. I sink into a secular mind-set that looks first to what man can do, not what God can do. It is a terrible sickness. And I thank God for those who have forced me again and again toward a wartime mind-set.” - Piper, **Rambo and his cloth dipped in kerosene, burning on through darkness, water, wind, rats, all the way to the end.**
6. Application

B. **Fought on Many Fronts**

1. Apologize for scatteredness, but that is my scattered brain. Just as in Civil War, WWI, WWII and others, the battles were fought in various places on the map. Grant’s western campaign from west TN down to Vicksburg. Lee’s push northward toward DC in the east. Sherman’s march to the sea. The Pacific theatre and the European theatre are famous. I want to mention a couple of fronts we face in kingdom expansion:
 - i. Creation of a culture of advancement within The Road. This would be a mindset that refuses to be satisfied with a maintenance ministry. Simply meeting and greeting without progress in holiness within our body nor addition to the body is not acceptable. Explosion is not necessary. Laxity upon truth and biblical teaching is to be avoided like the plague. However, we must not be lazy and at ease with sin or the lostness of men.
 - ii. We must have goals of elimination of lostness. Set lofty goals of the salvation of men and women. We cannot sacrifice the precision and purpose of the church at the expense of easy believism, but we must attack. There are thousands of lost people in Tift County, not to mention communities that lie just outside of those lines. May we aim for them.
 - iii. We must live on mission with God. We must propagate the gospel. We must share it in our services, in every ministry we have, in our personal spheres of influence. We must be clear, unyielding, and open. We must look at home and abroad, on the land on the sea. We must get serious about giving and ministering with our hands
2. Illustration: Ed Stezter and his love for church planters. Ideas to be relevant. Ideas to engage the community. What is the gospel? **Family that struggle with boyfriend/girlfriend? Opportunity to disciple.**
3. The world is not slowing down or giving up on its attacks against our faith, nor is Satan giving up ground easily to the church. Therefore, we must be soldiers of the cross.

c. **Assaulted by Many Attacks**

1. There are many obstacles that stand in our way attempting to thwart us from our goal. If we are not careful we will be derailed. Being a very young church, we are even more vulnerable.
 - i. **Lack of resources.** Our mindset often is that we must have a building, or financial resources to do all that we want to do. This is overcomable, but it may cost convenience and comfort for some of you. We lack a place for bible studies or Sunday School. We lack a place to do any events. This can be an asset we will think beyond traditional methods. Keep the goals in mind. Kingdom advance, not building advance, not program advance, but disciple multiplication. We aim to make more people who glorify Christ, not more programs and structures and institutions.
 - ii. **Fear.** Let's face it. We are afraid to share the gospel with others. We are afraid to get on a plane and go overseas. We are afraid to sacrificially give to enable missions to occur. The way to face our fears and have victory is to trust in Christ, having confidence in his word, realizing that we are more than conquerors through him who loved us and gave himself for us. Because He loved us, we can love others enough to give and go. We can understand the wonder of salvation of our own soul, and let that compel us to share out of grateful hearts.
 - iii. **Failure to see.** Failure to see others as God sees them. He is a seeking God who joyfully redeems people from their hopeless states, not only granting them access to life with him in the hereafter, but abundant life now. God sees people as loving father adopting his enemies as his children, not numbers or projects or potential members of an institution.
 - iv. Attacks from outside include **cultural Christianity**. Many in our circle of friends, coworkers, fellow students, etc, think that they know God, and yet show no evidence of transformation. It is an obstacle for you to convince them that they are not genuine believers, before you can begin to present to them a biblical gospel witness. This is one of the main reasons we strive for clarity in the gospel here. It is also another reason that we do use popular methods of simply drawing crowds or counting decisions. Many from our area will hear, "depart from me, I never knew you."
 - v. **Finally, comfort.** Frankly church planting is hard. It is not like going to an established church where ministries have been going on for many moons. You can pick what you like, or not pick any ministry at all. It will be done for you. You can give if you like, whatever amount you like, or not give at all. It will cause a church plant to stall and fizzle and cease to exist before it ever gets established. If we desire the church to advance you must participate in ministry, maybe multiple ones (however, if we are killing people with "church work" then we are trying to do too much. If you are committed to advancement in a church, you must give. God has blessed all of you who are employed. Some to a greater degree and some to a lesser, but as Jesus instructed, it's not the amount that you give, but that you are giving to the best of your abilities. As we mentioned in the members meeting, we are depleting our financial resources fast.

Final Applications

1. We cannot settle for less than a white-hot, reckless abandonment for the advancement of Christ's Church.
2. We can attack in confidence with is provision, providence, and promises.
3. We can impact Tifton in tangible ways, pronouncing sin to those you lead to Christ, but we must engage.
4. We must be a people marked by prayer and action.
5. We must begin more vigorously inviting people to Christ and to The Road
6. We must be serious about finding our place in ministry here
7. We must give with joy, with consistency, with sacrifice
8. We must realize that Sunday morning gathering is not enough! Let me be clear, it is not about being enough to placate a God who is always up there demanding that you do more work to earn his favor. This is about being passionate about the Glory of God, through the advance of his church and the discipleship of men. We do the things I have shared about this morning with hearts grateful to a God who reached down into the miry clay and raised us up to walk with newness and life.

- A. **Closing illustration:** Too many missionary appeals are based upon this fancied frustration of Almighty God. An effective speaker can easily excite pity in his listeners, not only for the heathen but for the God who has tried so hard and so long to save them and has failed for want of support. I fear that thousands of younger persons enter Christian service from no higher motive than to help deliver God from the embarrassing situation His love has gotten Him into and His limited abilities seem unable to get Him out of. Add to this a certain degree of commendable idealism and a fair amount of compassion for the underprivileged and you have the true drive behind much Christian activity today." -Tozer
"The highest of missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission, nor love for sinners who are alienated and perishing, strong as that is, especially as we contemplate the wrath of God, but rather zeal, burning and passionate zeal for the glory of Jesus Christ, only one imperialism is Christian, and that is concern for His imperial majesty, Jesus Christ and for the glory of His empire!...And we should be jealous for the sake of His Name, troubled when It remains unknown, hurt when It is ignored, indignant when it is blasphemed, and all the time anxious and determined that It will be given the honor and glory to which It is due!"
– John Stott
- B. Invitation to commitment