

“God’s Enterprise is Our Enterprise!”

Matthew 25:14

Intro. – “enterprise,” n. – “a project or undertaking that is especially difficult, complicated, or risky and which involves activity, courage and energy.”

Our God is in the midst of an important project. It is a bold and difficult task that requires courage and much energy. In a topsy-turvy world, God is rebuilding a Kingdom that will never end. God is simply seeking to *restore* mankind back to fellowship with Him.

In the person of Jesus Christ, His Son, God brought His plan to a climax. Jesus was always aware that He was here on a mission. The focal point of His earthly ministry was His Father’s enterprise: saving the lost and restoring fellowship with them.

Yes, Jesus perfectly provided salvation; yet, it still must be taught and applied in every age to every person. In short, Christ made salvation possible by “paying it all,” we (Christ’s Church in Eaton) are now His *Delivery System*. Our Master is physically gone. He will return someday, but until that day we have been “entrusted” with the delivery of His Good News!

Someone has said that if “enterprise” is a good term to describe God’s work in the world, “entrepreneur” can best describe the role he has given to us -- “entrepreneur,” n. – “One who assumes the risk of an enterprise.”

The question of the hour is – “Are we approaching God’s business with the attitude of entrepreneurs? Is God’s enterprise really our enterprise?”

Purpose: to better understand the significance of the Lord’s Church

I God is DEPENDENT

- God is all knowing, powerful, and ever present (omnipotent) – majesty, power and authority is His, BUT, God is also dependent upon HIS people:
 - A. God’s Built in Respect
 - 1. By His own design, God doesn’t intrude where He is not welcome – He gives freedom of choice.
 - 2. Revelation 3:20 *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me.”*
 - a. note: given in the context of communicating to the Church...
 - b. even in the lives of His own people, Christ will NOT intrude where He is not invited.
 - c. Christ asks for entrance, but it is up to us to invite Him into our lives.
 - B. God’s Self-Imposed Helplessness
 - 1. By His plan – God must find people who will provide lips... hands... feet etc. through which He can build His Son’s Church!
 - 2. God seeks *“entrepreneurs”* to bring His will to the forefront of mankind... to have success...
 - 3. God looks to you and me (Christ’s Church in Eaton) to be those people...
 - 4. Imagine the risk God takes, to entrust you and me with that mission to which He has committed Himself so fully...
 - C. God’s Consistency in This
 - 1. Salvation provided by Christ is fruitless until it is brought to the people BY people...
 - 2. Romans 10 logic = people can’t be saved until they believe in X; can’t believe until they hear of X; can’t hear unless they’re told; can’t be told unless we tell them! – God is depending on us!
 - 3. This principle is without exception in the N.T. – each recorded conversion... God is depending upon men to lead men to His grace.
 - 4. If God made no exceptions in days of early church, why would we expect exceptions today?!
 - 5. The Church was built with people taking Christ to the people – this is the way the Church today and tomorrow will be built.

God has made Himself dependent upon you and me!

II The Church is a PARTNERSHIP

- in this world the Church is built by two elements: the power of God thru efforts of you/me!

A. Like a Field Under Cultivation

1. 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 *“What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.”*
2. Inspired writer is not minimizing role you and I must play of planting/watering Gospel seed...
3. God doesn’t make the field produce without these functions..., BUT, without God’s involvement, these functions are futile.
4. Combination of both is the *secret* to success of this enterprise, the Church!

B. Like a Harvest

1. Matthew 9:37-38 *“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.’”*
2. Like a field ripe and in urgent need of reaping – world is ripe in many respects in need of reaping..
3. If not gathered when ripe = the harvest will be lost.

C. Like a Growing Body

1. Ephesians 4:16 *“Christ, from Whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”*
2. Christ is the Head = body can’t survive without Christ even if it has all the other parts.
3. Nor can a Body function or grow if it consists of only a head.

Again, God and His people are seen as partners in the enterprise called the Church!

III The Error in EXTREMES

- people err in two extremes regarding our role in building the Lord’s Church

A. It All Depends Upon Us

1. This is when the church acts as if God were out of the picture... as if the local church is going to grow solely through human effort, ingenuity and planning on man’s part.
2. Illus. – if aliens came to visit Christ’s Church in Eaton would they conclude we are dependent upon ourselves or upon God for our strength and wisdom?...
3. Illus. – Revelation 3:1-3 *“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. Remember therefore what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.’”*
 - Church at Sardis had magnificent reputation/appearance of BIG SUCCESS. Human ingenuity and effort behind... know true because Christ called for repentance!
4. Been asked, “What is the greatest unexplored frontier?” – genetics, atoms, space, ocean etc.
 - a. how about the promise of Christ that if we have need, nothing will be withheld (Romans 8:32)... and if we had the faith of a grain of mustard seed...
 - b. we have yet to experience what God can do through us! We need to give God 100% opportunity to demonstrate what He wants to do through us!
5. 1 Corinthians 3:3 *“Are you acting like mere men?”* – It is scandalous and shocking how Christians do not go beyond the earthly, the feasible, the tangible instead of acting like servants of God!
6. Psalms 127:1 *“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.”*

No, the work of the local church does NOT all depend upon us. It’s not by might or our will!

B. It All Depends On God

1. Too many forget man's role in God's plan and how man's freedom of choice affects the outcome.
2. Too many think future is already determined and nothing we think, say or do will have any effect... Such thinking is the other reason why so many churches are inert, static, lifeless etc. ...
3. People act as if planning, effort, and giving is unnecessary/presumptuous and even sinful.
 - Illus. – John Wesley received note: “The Lord has told me to tell you that He doesn't need your book learning, your Greek and Hebrew.” Wesley replied, “Thank you sir. Your letter was superfluous, however, as I already knew the Lord has no need of my book learning, as you put it. However, although the Lord has not directed me to say so, on my own responsibility. I would like to say to you that the Lord does not need your ignorance either.”
4. God has not, is not, nor shall ever be praised by human presumptuousness on one hand and human inertia on the other!
5. Luke 5:1-11 – disciples been fishing and cleaning nets... Christ comes along and tells them to cast their nets on the other side. They did and what were the results?
6. If we so choose, we can attempt to do all the work of this church and wear out and have nothing but empty nets to show... OR we can cast nets at our Lord's bidding (i.e. do our part) and He will provide the rest! Water and plant the Gospel seed... HE WILL GIVE THE INCREASE!

Conclusion: Children of Israel listening to 12 spies... (10 were bad & 2 were good)... God's enterprise set back 40 years due to no fault of His!

If people hinder God, He lets them, not because God is weak, but because He's ordained that His people have the role of partners! God works with what He has. If you and I choose to serve Him poorly or not at all, He will wait for others to come along who will serve Him better.

What kind of partners are you proving to be? God is working through us. We can't do it without Him AND He has ordained it that He won't do it without men, women and young people faithful to Him!