

(co)re values
nine:commission
November 26, 2017
Courage Church,
Detroit, MI
scriptures: Matthew
28:16-20, Matthew 9:12,
Matthew 9:15-17



We are continuing our series this morning on Core Values...

and a key to this series is the word "core" - where we hope it all translates to everyone, we are speaking to our core... to the infrastructure that we believe God is using to build the church here... and its important knowing that going in, especially to today's message...

we believe that EVERYBODY in this room has a very significant role to play in our church, whether you are in that role yet, or not.

Next week is the fall finale... the end of the series...

but today is really **the culmination of all of the values**. It is that top-of-the-mountain value, that if we can all get here... if we are a place that is basically just an incubator of this value... then our reach will go further than we could ever imagine...

and that value is: **commission**.

and today is a very special day for us... we are going to send out two of Dawn and I's absolute favorite people... a couple who has been absolutely nothing but supportive of us since the moment that we got here... Andy and Kathryn Jump...

and we knew for quite some time that this day would one day come, and and have had a lot of time to think about it... and then, because of the frequency, especially this year that it has happened...

where our plans are, sort of disrupted by God's bigger plan for peoples lives... we realized that this was going to be something that we needed to as a church really EMBRACE, rather than reject or pretend doesn't exist...

So we are going to dive in by looking at the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, **but some**

doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Lets Pray

When Dawn and I first moved here, there was a team of people, they were called “The Executive Team” - they were basically an internal board for our church, and they were tasked with the role of picking the pastor that would come and work along-side of them and continue on the work that God began here, through Pastor Chilly.

and on that team were some of the founding members of our church... people who left their entire lives, to move to this bizarre, broken city, determined to make an impact here.

And Dawn and I will both tell you with all sincerity... if it were not for this team of people, and their encouragement, accountability, friendship and support... we wouldn't have even survived our first year here. Ministry in Detroit is its own beast, unlike anything I have ever experienced... and I am so thankful for every one of them.

But after today, from that strategically placed team who made a difficult transition possible... there will only be one of them left here in Detroit. And in none of the situations was there dissension, or did people leave angry... and in fact every person that is gone is now living somewhere not even close to Detroit... The Karulkar's moved to New Mexico for a job... and now the Jump's are moving to North Carolina... in all the cases there was really no way to prevent it.

Pastor Brad said something to me that I tried so hard in my heart to reject... it was so weird because he said it to me while I was with him, and then he said to me again as a way of preparing me some for what was to come here in Detroit...

He said to me: “not everyone who is with you when you start will be with you in the end.”

and he explained... “that doesn’t mean those people won’t be involved... or won’t have a role, or won’t in some way still be connected... but the team on the ground with you will change...”

And again, he very oddly said that to me while we were still on his team... before any of us had any idea that Dawn and I would not always be in New York, that we would eventually move to Detroit and be lead pastors... and I remember right away, when he said that, saying to myself: THAT IS NOT GOING TO BE ME.

DAWN AND I WILL BE HERE WHEN THE VISION COMES TO PASS. WE WILL BE.

WE AREN’T WORKING THIS HARD FOR THIS CHURCH IN NEW YORK, to not be there when the dreams come to pass.

Nobody wants to give their life to something... and see it in their head for so long going one way... and then come to this point in their life when they realize that their time in that season is over... and yet when you look at what has happened... you feel like: its too soon to go.

now of course that is just me being selfish... but its a reality...

But one thing that was such a significant moment for Dawn and I, and I think for Pastor Brad and Stella as well, was this summer when they came to Detroit...

and they saw 4 days, and the backpack giveaway, and they took time with our leaders, and they taught at our church on Sunday... and we all kind were given this picture of something that would NOT have been, had we all held onto the way that things were when we were in New York. In fact, they told us that... they were here, and they said to each other “we are a part of this... this is our church...” and they said their cup was so full being here.

and this weekend I was just thinking about my pastors in New York City... I was thinking about those that passed through their pipeline... those they disciplined, some for a year, some for a decade... and where they are now...

I thought about Jonathan Martinez, our friend who now pastors a Dream Center in Long Beach, California... I thought of our friend Matt, who is now a youth pastor at just about the largest church in America... I thought about our friend Tyler who moved to New York while we lived there to be our worship pastor for a season, and who now is a worship leader at a HUGE church and tours the world leading worship with Israel Houghton.

I think about some of the students who have come through the discipleship program we had in New York... they still have the program and it grows every year... one girl who was there when we were a part of it is a NOW youth pastor in Australia, another young man is living in Europe and is about to release a book that he wrote about overcoming pornography... He recently married a girl he met in the program... another former student works full time on the creative team of a massive church with campuses up and down the East Coast. Another is a worship and creative leader at a church not far from here.

If there is one thing that Pastor Brad taught me, it is the power in investing in the ONE... it is the power that comes with no longer concerning yourself with the size of your crowd, even though that can be very helpful in spreading the message...

but real influence belongs to the leader who can reach the one... and who can teach *them*, TO REACH THE ONE.

it is the principle of the acorn... in one acorn is the ability to grow an entire oak tree, which would then bear thousands and thousands of acorns, which is enough seed to plant a forest.

but in our world, that often means not only raising up, but also *sending out*.

and one thing that became very *obvious* to me after only being here in Detroit for a brief time, is that this is a transient city ANYWAY... some people were raised here... and will live here forever... others have moved

in and are choosing to raise their families here which is AMAZING... we really do need MORE people like that too...

but others come for college, or to get a kickstart on a career... or to launch a start up that will one day succeed so much that another company buys them and moves the entire thing to their headquarters *somewhere else*... considering the amount of start up's coming out of this place... that is just a reality....

and we realized that there are certain things that we can't fight...

so we have two options...

do nothing, and let ourselves eventually be destroyed by it...

or we embrace it... realizing, in cases like those, "we have 1-2-4, 6 years if we are lucky with the people who haven't necessarily settled down here... so we want to be asking ourselves... how can we take that time, so that when they leave this place, they are BETTER than when they got here?

So what we realized is that if we are going to be an effective church... we are going to need to be **a sending church.**

We pour into everyone and treat them as if they will be here forever, and hopefully in God's great commission for our world, some of those people's place will be here with us....

but being a sending church means that when new churches are birthed out of this one... we support them... it means that when people are here for however many years we have them, and then they take what they have learned, and all of the life experience here, and they go to a new city or a new state or a new country... we *champion* them... we *encourage* them... we *send* them... hoping that whatever influence they have allowed us to have in their lives will help them to shine a new light in the places that they go.

because the WORLD needs Jesus.

I was reading in this book “Gaining by Losing”... which really influenced a lot of this message... this book, our experience in New York and many of the teachings of Pastor Brad all combined to really shape this message... but that book points out that:

(page 27) of churches in America...

only 20 percent are actually growing... and only ONE PERCENT are growing by reaching people who previously didn't have a relationship with Jesus...

ONLY ONE PERCENT OF CHURCHES ARE GROWING BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE COMING INTO A SAVING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST. The rest of the few that are growing, are transfer growth... people bouncing around when one church isn't cool anymore...

and when I hear that... I am taken back to Matthew 9... when Jesus calls Matthew, a tax collector, to follow him... This was what Matthew did for a living... Matthew was a Jew, who betrayed His own people by going to the Roman government, and **BUYING FROM THEM** the right to tax his own people, the Jewish people, the tax owed to Rome... and he was allowed to charge them the amount that Rome required, as well as an added amount over the top of that, at his discretion, which he was able to keep for himself. He was considered the lowest of the lows... in Jewish society, the religious people wouldn't even associate with such a sinner... but yet Jesus invites himself over to Matthew's house...

Jesus never tries to reach religious people... and when they question Him about why He is eating with Matthew, he says: (9:12)

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”

He made disciples out of the ones that society considered to be the worst kind of people. Not by appealing to the religious who already thought they had it all together.

If we grow a great church by way of being better than the church up the street... so that the people from that church make their way to this one...

we aren't fulfilling the great commission. That is why we aren't overly concerned about lights, smoke machines and all the hip stuff. Those things aren't bad... but they aren't the point... people coming to church IS GOOD... but butts in seats IS NOT THE POINT.

Jesus says that the world will know that we are his disciples, BY OUR LOVE... and that is our heart... I know others are cooler... but I hope that people, when they talk to me, feel the love of Jesus... I hope that people know how much I love them...

and one by one, we will meet people where they are... and one by one, we will introduce them to the one who is strong enough to carry their burdens...

and if we start with THE ONE... and we disciple THE ONE... and then that ONE goes and discipled ONE, while we continue on and begin discipling another... the gospel is going to spread much further, much faster than it will if we rent an arena downtown, bring in the most famous speaker and bands, fill the place with lights and smoke machines and draw 100,000 people, 99% of which ARE ALREADY RELIGIOUS... to an event.

And don't get me wrong... if a thousand people showed up here next Sunday, I would be thrilled... we would celebrate the Spirit moving in people's hearts and bringing them to this place... we would tell them all about Jesus... but telling someone about Jesus, and walking alongside of someone and showing them what the gospel actually means and looks like in their lives are two very different things...

the model most people have for growing a church is dependent on drawing the crowd. It is a "come and see" mentality... and yes, you get that to a degree in the Bible... but the great commission is "go into all the world" - go to where the people are... go where the individuals are.

and I would argue that as great as it is to have those high impact moments...

it is actually MORE effective to start small with a multiplying mindset that says “everybody is a minister... everyone has the same commission... and everyone needs to reach at least ONE PERSON.”

Let me show you this...

Take a penny... there has been talk for years about just eliminating the penny entirely,. Canada stopped making their pennies in 2012... I doubt that the US ever will, at least for a while... because then how will our kids ride the Pony at Meijer? but it costs approximately 1.4 cents to produce a penny, worth of course, 1 cent... and because of inflation nothing costs so little, so people for a while have been saying we should just stop printing them.

in an article in the New York times last year, it said this:

Average American workers earned nearly a penny *a second* in 2015. It's literally not worth their time to bend down and pluck one from the sidewalk.

(written by Binyamin Applebaum)

that is HOW LITTLE a penny is worth.

and I think that sometimes we look at our lives... ourselves... and in a sea of people we wish we could reach we don't even try because we feel like a penny...

But God in Zechariah 4:10 says “Don't despise small beginnings...”

because things that seem so insignificant are often the ones that make the biggest impact.

most of you probably learned this in school, so sorry if I am boring you, but understanding this principle is crucial...

Say someone says to you... I will give you \$100,000 a day every single day for 5 weeks...

Or I will give you one penny. And every day that penny will be multiplied by 2... for 5 weeks. So after day 1 you have 2 cents, day 2 you have 4 cents, day 3 you have 8 cents.

What is the choice?

Day 1 - $$.01 \times 2 = .02$

Day 2 - $$.02 \times 2 = .04$

Day 3 - $$.04 \times 2 = .08$

Day 4 - $$.06 \times 2 = .16$

Day 5 - $$.16 \times 2 = .32$

Day 6 - $$.32 \times 2 = .64$

Day 7 - $$.64 \times 2 = \1.28

Day 1 - \$100,000 +

Day 2 - \$100,000 +

Day 3 - \$100,000 +

Day 4 - \$100,000 +

Day 5 - \$100,000 +

Day 6 - \$100,000 +

Day 7 - \$100,000 =

After one week, you would have \$700,000

after one week, you would have \$1.28.

and it is easy to think, when you have a dollar, a quarter and 3 pennies in your pocket, when your buddy WHO CHOSE the 100 grand a day option has \$700,000 - that maybe you made the wrong choice.... that maybe you are taking the wrong approach.

and truthfully, this is how I feel, A LOT. I felt it in New York... I feel it in Detroit...

like... THIS IS GOING SO SLOW... and when I look around, it looks like it is moving SO MUCH FASTER FOR EVERYONE ELSE.

then you get into week 2.

Day 8 - $\$1.28 \times 2 = \2.56

Day 9 - $\$2.56 \times 2 = \5.12

Day 10 - $\$5.12 \times 2 = \10.24

Day 11 - $\$10.24 \times 2 = \20.48

Day 12 - $\$20.48 \times 2 = \40.96

Day 8 - \$100,000 +

Day 9 - \$100,000 +

Day 10 - \$100,000 +

Day 11 - \$100,000 +

Day 12 - \$100,000 +

Day 13 - \$100,000 +

Day 14 - \$100,000 =

After two weeks, you would have \$1,400,000

Day 13 - $\$40.96 \times 2 = \81.92
Day 14 - $\$81.92 \times 2 = \163.84

after two weeks, you would have:
\$163.84

and at the end of the week... you felt some momentum... we baptized a couple of people this year, we have a couple students in the discipleship program... a few of us meet at Equip and talk... a few people are starting to meet in homes...

and your \$163 feels good... like progress even... until, again... you get into the comparison game... and you look at your buddy who chose 100 grand a day who now is a millionaire, with 1.4 million dollars.

Day 15 - $\$163.84 \times 2 = \327.68
Day 16 - $\$327.68 \times 2 = \655.36
Day 17 - $\$655.36 \times 2 = \$1,310.72$
Day 18 - $\$1,310.72 \times 2 = \$2,621.44$
Day 19 - $\$2,621.44 \times 2 = \$5,242.88$
Day 20 - $\$5,242.88 \times 2 = \$10,485.76$
Day 21 - $\$10,485.76 \times 2 = \$20,971.52$

Day 15 - \$100,000 +
Day 16 - \$100,000 +
Day 17 - \$100,000 +
Day 18 - \$100,000 +
Day 19 - \$100,000 +
Day 20 - \$100,000 +
Day 21 - \$100,000 =

After three weeks, you would have \$2,100,000

but then, after 3 weeks, you would have:
\$20,971.52

You have probably heard the quote that says: "Most people **overestimate** what they **can do** in one year but they **underestimate** what they **can do** in ten years."

and you can obviously see where this is going... watch week four:

Day 22 - $\$20,971.52 \times 2 = \$41,943.04$
Day 23 - $\$41,943.04 \times 2 = \$83,886.08$
Day 24 - $\$83,886.08 \times 2 = \$167,772.16$ ***
Day 25 - $\$167,772.16 \times 2 = \$335,544.32$
Day 26 - $\$335,544.32 \times 2 = \$671,088.64$
Day 27 - $\$671,088.64 \times 2 = \$1,342,177.28$

Day 22 - \$100,000 +
Day 23 - \$100,000 +
Day 24 - \$100,000 +
Day 25 - \$100,000 +
Day 26 - \$100,000 +
Day 27 - \$100,000 +
Day 28 - \$100,000 =

After four weeks, you would have \$2,800,000

Day 28 - $\$1,342,177.28 \times 2 = \$2,684,354.56$

I highlighted day 24, because that is the first day that your day rate is actually more than 100K... but you still have significantly less... its still going significantly slower...

and EVEN at the end of week 4, you still have LESS than the guy who chose the second option...

but only for one more day... Because on day 29 your penny has turned into over 5.3 million dollars...

Day 29 -

$\$2,684,354.56 \times 2 = \$5,368,709.12$

Day 30 -

$\$5,368,709.12 \times 2 = \$10,737,418.24$

Day 31 -

$\$10,737,418.24 \times 2 = \$21,474,836.48$

Day 32 -

$\$21,474,836.48 \times 2 = \$42,949,672.96$

Day 33 -

$\$42,949,672.96 \times 2 = \$85,899,345.92$

Day 34 - $\$85,899,345.92 \times 2 = \$171,798,691.84$

Day 35 - $\$171,798,691.84 \times 2 = \$343,597,383.68$

Day 29 - \$100,000 +

Day 30 - \$100,000 +

Day 31 - \$100,000 +

Day 32 - \$100,000 +

Day 33 - \$100,000 +

Day 34 - \$100,000 +

Day 35 - \$100,000 =

After five weeks, you would have \$3,500,000

on day 29, your multiplying by two penny is now worth MORE than \$100,000 a day, every day would be.

and at the end of the 5th full week, on day 35 you would have: \$343,597,383.68. ALMOST 100 TIMES AS MUCH as the person who chose \$100,000 a day.

if this could keep going just two more days, on day 37 you are a billionaire.

after only 37 days of multiplication starting from the SMALLEST monetary value that exists today...

a penny did that?

anyone who can see a picture beyond that of instant gratification... would NEVER, ever choose *any* number to keep adding, against the even SMALLEST NUMBER to keep multiplying. In the end, there is no way for addition to win.

and that is our prayer for this church... though we certainly want to see growth internally... but we pray that more than anything we would be an equipping church, and a sending church...

why?

because the commission is ALL THE WORLD

and if you send one out with that reproducing principle, and once a year he sends one out under him, and so on and so forth... before long the whole world will hear about Jesus.

and please, don't hear that as "I don't want the church to grow" - I believe that we can be an incubator for sending and at the same time grow the local church for the people who are called to this city... Because I believe a good majority of us ARE CALLED HERE TO THIS CITY AND TO THIS CHURCH... but this church should grow the same way using the SAME PRINCIPLES...

not by us doing tons and tons of advertising, offering huge gimmicks that get people here and RELY solely on the worship teams set and whatever message I or whoever is teaching gives that day to impress our guests and make them want to come back.

But by you going out and making disciples out of the people that God puts in your life.

if the church is built on a production, it cannot last...

if the church is built on reproduction, it cannot fail.

if it is built on relationships, and on discipleship, it cannot fail.

Don't you see? if YOU and ME and WE together ARE THE CHURCH that means that we all play a part in how this church fulfills the great commission in this city and all over the world.

Maybe I am naive or just crazy... but I truly believe that our little church here in our corner of this broken city has the power to reach to the ends of the earth...

and this year... we have given away some of our best...

we have sent them...

and as we did that, others have risen.

Because I believe there is an anointing that follows when Jesus' church lives our lives with our hands FULL with what God blessed us with... ready to give it away for the sake of the greater good.

So that is what we mean when we say we want to be a SENDING CHURCH.

Now, all that being said, there are many obstacles that come with change... beyond the obvious, that when someone who has big shoes to fill is sent somewhere else... there is a pair of empty shoes... because that always works itself out... I have found that people always rise up to the needs... God has blown my mind this year on how he has compelled people to do just that...

but I am talking about obstacles that we face ourselves...

especially when you experience a deep connection with others... when you give your life for so long to something... when you are a huge part of a mission, like the Jump's have always been here...

like Dawn and I were for all of those years in New York City...

to the people moving forward somewhere else, and those of us who are staying, continuing on... it often leaves questions about paving a path forward and the best way to do that.

Because it worked so well for so long... but the times are obviously changing... and if we aren't careful, time will move on without us.

The mission of God will continue but we will stay stuck dead in our tracks, stuck on how great it was last year or five years ago.

Over Thanksgiving, Dawn and I watched Despicable Me 3 with the kids.

And the villain in this movie is a perfect depiction of someone who can't let go of how things used to be... the villain was a child TV star who always reeked havoc on the town in this show he was on...

until he became a teenager, and he got acne... and then they canceled the show and his career ended... so years later, this was his life... he would watch old episodes of the show, think about the old days, and then recreate them in his acts of villainy.

Its just a goofy fun movie, but it hits on something that so many of us deal with on a level that truthfully is deeply profound... and that is the balance between honoring the life and legacy that Jesus has allowed us to be a part of, while not letting it hold us back from what God has planned for us next.

I want to show you something that Jesus says, its just after He calls Matthew... in fact this conversation may be happening at Jesus' party at Matthews house... and this really took on a new meaning for me recently as I was studying it and meditating on it... Jesus is talking to some of the disciples of John the Baptist... John is already in prison... and they ask him, "why is it that we fast, but you and your disciples don't fast?"

and his answer is so fascinating... this is what He says in Matthew 9:15-17

"Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old

garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”

Now, the answer to the question, I believe is in the very first thing that he said...

but what he says after that seems very odd and that is where I want to spend the most time, but first, let me explain to you why I believe they DIDN'T FAST.

Jesus says “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

We talked about this last week... How what fasting ultimately does is, it CREATES SPACE so that Jesus can speak to you... we believe that Heaven is CONSTANTLY moving... so fasting isn't causing God to move in a different way... He is moving in our city... but when we fast, we clear our minds from the junk that pollutes it... the toxic foods that weigh us down, the social media that sucks our time away... it creates space so that we can actually see “God, how are you moving? And it is when we can actually put our finger on that, that breakthrough can actually come... So in light of that, think about the question that John's disciples were asking Jesus.

The disciples didn't fast because God was right there. Jesus was in front of them. It was very apparent HOW He was moving. It is happening in the flesh... it was visible.

every moment of every day they were reminded of truth, because it was right in front of them. If they had a question, Jesus had an answer.

But when Jesus was not with them in the flesh anymore... Fasting became a regular practice... IT HAD TOO... because they needed clarity. And they knew that they had total access to that clarity through the Holy Spirit and that is why they did it.

So Jesus uses the analogy of a wedding. He says during a time of celebration... you don't mourn.

but for John the Baptist' followers, it had flipped. John was in prison... the good ole days seemed to be over... and they were looking for answers.

But look at this... verse 16 says:

No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.

Think about this... think about the ways we resist change...

Now think about the level of change that is going to constantly take place in a church that is adamant about raising up disciples and in living the great commission, by being willing to send...

every time you send... you leave a gap.

and what we try and do from the beginning with people, is we try and encourage them to reproduce themselves right away... work to replace yourself, that way if we start another campus, or for whatever reason you go on to something else, it is seamless.

But every single person has at least a slightly different bend to them.. they do things a bit differently than the last.

but the problem is, we LOVE to cling to the old ways... so when someone of high capacity leaves, especially if someone is not already raised up in their place... we right away try and raise someone up to do just what that person did... to patch that hole that they left... not realizing that it may just be "a new season..."

and someone with new gifting is rising up and maybe its not supposed to be the exact same as it was with the last person... maybe some things need to be tailored toward the skill sets of the people who step up rather than try and place them into the box of doing whatever the last person did.

The executive team will tell you... if they expected Dawn and I to be like Pastor Chilly... they would have been gravely disappointed... the hole in the garment would have gotten way bigger... its not because his way was bad... it was actually EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE...

but when he left, the options were... we could try and patch the hole he left with a couple of people who truthfully just don't fit it... or we could do something new... that does fit.

And when I look at, especially so many of these mega churches that rose to prominence in the late 80s and early 90s... a lot of them are just like Balthazar Bratt watching himself on TV and trying to relive the whole thing.

some of them have adapted to the way that culture has shifted... but others have dwindled to nothing trying to do all the same things that worked back then in the revival days... and they haven't seen the way that revival is happening now, because of how different it looks.

Jesus is saying in verse 16, that you need to stop clinging to whatever happened in the past... Honor it... learn from it... but don't try and patch the holes in it... because it will only make it worse... get a new garment.

But it is verse 17 that really got me.

and I posted this thought on Facebook a few weeks ago, and wanted to flesh it out a bit more for you guys now...

Because, I think about my life... the music I used to play...

I think about the church we were part of planting in New York, and the rush of the many moments that come when you abandon everything to follow your dreams...

when you leave home in pursuit of something...

when something you worked for begins to take shape... and dreams begin to actually come to life...

but nothing lasts forever... and it is not supposed to.

the high moment for the disciples, where Jesus was with them and they didn't have to fast... Jesus told them... "don't hold onto this so tightly that you can't move forward WHEN the seasons change... because the seasons ARE GOING TO CHANGE."

and this hits home, massively, in a world where everything is documented.... everything is looked back on... and EVERYTHING IS CHANGING at such a rapid rate.

—

a lot of us still dream about the way things used to be, because it was good... and God was in it... but some times, I think we miss what God is doing NOW,

BECAUSE IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WHAT HE WAS DOING, THEN.

Jesus says (Matthew 9:17): "you can't put NEW wine into OLD wineskins." He says that when you do that, the skins burst, and the wine spills...

and as I thought about this verse... I realized something so simple about it... but it messed me a up a little, because I have a lot of great stories... I have had a LOT of fun over the years... a lot of great memories... and a lot of times, if I am honest... I look back wondering how do I create something "like that" again?

but Jesus says that if you put NEW wine into OLD wine skins, the skins burst, AND the wine spills.

which would mean that BOTH ARE WASTED.
BOTH ARE RUINED... BOTH ARE USELESS.

You see, if you live in the past, you are destroying it... you are actually damaging those memories and you are destroying its power... because it wasn't meant to be relived over and over.

The Bible says that “God is doing a new thing” (Isaiah 43:19) - and if you spend your whole life trying to relive what was, missing out on what is...

I would argue that in many instances it would have been better had you NEVER HAD THAT ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE in the first place... it is debilitating to always look backwards. It robs you of your future when you long for the past...

and when you do that, you aren't honoring the past, you are letting it distort your hope for a future.

IF THE PAST DOESN'T SPRING YOU INTO WHAT IS NEXT, THEN I DARE SAY THAT THOSE MOMENTS CAN BE COUNTED AS LOST.

So... for me, when I think about those moments, as great as so many of them are... and when we all find ourselves gathering together, reminiscing, toasting to the good ole days... I think that someone needs to raise a glass, and say:

“Here's is to a future that is shining its own light, no matter how bright the light of our past used to be.”

may we learn from what was...
may it lead us to whats next...

You honor the past when you work for the future.

When you run with what has already been done and you commit to continue the work, in the way that the world needs it, NOW.

it is just like what we talked about when we talked about collaboration...

its like we are all running on a beach... leaving footprints as we go...

but we would be completely naive to think that those prints will last forever... no... we know that the moment the tide rises and the water washes over them, they will disappear...

but when we are willing to collaborate... when we are willing to learn from each other... and even more importantly, WHEN WE ARE WILLING TO PASS THINGS ON TO EACH OTHER... then where your footprints stop, someone else's keep on going... BECAUSE WE PASSED A MANTLE...

and that is the type of church we want to have... one that passes mantles... saying "PLEASE... TAKE WHAT WE HAVE DONE... AND KEEP RUNNING...

and we want to be a church that SENDS PEOPLE... that blesses them... and says "HERE... WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR WHAT YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTED... YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME HERE... YOU WILL ALWAYS BE FAMILY... BUT TAKE WHAT YOU LEARNED... AND KEEP RUNNING... Because there are NEW people who you will meet that WE will never get the chance to meet...

SHOW THEM JESUS.

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I want you to really think about this... the disciples were with Jesus... they had all the answers right in front of them... they had it all... but it wasn't going to last forever...and the fact that Jesus would one day be gone did NOT nullify the amazing things that He did on earth... but the disciples had to be able to move forward in the power that THEY were given by Jesus... it was a new day... and one that very easily COULD HAVE BEEN HELD BACK BY THE MEMORY OF THE OLD... by the frustration that Jesus was not there in the flesh anymore... by the sadness of the reminiscing on how things once were... we know from the story of the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) that for a period, they DID THAT... and if they had done that for very long, the world would have suffered greatly and the gospel would have been suffocated...

again, we talked about this last week... but thats more significance for why Jesus sent them the Holy Spirit... Jesus HAD TO GO, so that THE SPIRIT COULD COME...

it is so significant that Jesus gave them something new after He resurrected and ascended into Heaven.

He gave them the Holy Spirit, and He gave them a co-mission.

A mandate... a mission... a plan... and a Spirit to show them how that plan needed to work in the various circumstances that they would find themselves in.

and He gave it to broken, battered, DISAPPOINTED, hurting, sinful people... who were BAD FRIENDS to Jesus... people who abandoned Him, and denied Him, and yet he still called greatness out of them.

One thing that I really never noticed before about Matthew 28... the Great Commission, is just this one little line that Matthew throws at us right before Jesus actually gives us the mandate to go into all the world... and this is what it says:

And when they saw him they worshiped him, **but some doubted.**

They saw Jesus... and yet they doubted. When the plan came together in a different way than they saw it happening, they had trouble seeing it happening at all.

the way Mark's gospel records it, Jesus does rebuke them for not believing those who saw him after he had risen... but Matthew says that even when they see him... some doubted. But Jesus doesn't seem to be too phased by that.

instead, he responds to the moment by giving them this commandment... he tells them: all authority is mine to give to you... and this is what I am doing with that authority... I am telling you to GO.

He tells the ones who worshipped Him in that moment.... GO.

He tells the ones who doubted Him in that moment... GO.

In life, when circumstances don't line up with the way that we at one point foresaw them... we often doubt... and for most of us... the doubt immediately comes with this feeling that IF we can't trust the call, we must have lost it.

Like... our doubt is enough to disqualify us from what Jesus wants to do...

But to the doubters... the unsure ones... Jesus says... Go. Represent me to the world. Tell the world about the hope that is only found in Me.

isn't that what Jesus always does? He stands in the gap for the woman caught in adultery, and when everyone else wants to throw stones, He picks her back and, and HE DOES NOT RULE HER OUT...

He speaks truth to the woman at the well who has been through five husbands... BUT HE DOES NOT RULE HER OUT...

He called Matthew, that scumbag tax collector who bought the rights to tax his own people... and He picked him back up and showed him:

your past doesn't have to dictate your future.

and then here, in this final moment... He looks at the very people who followed Him, who He poured into, but are now doubting that any of this is even real... and HE SAYS TO THEM THE EXACT SAME THING THAT HE SAYS TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE WORSHIPPING HIM.

There is a CALL ON YOUR LIFE... I HAVE PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE...

There are people who need you...

and some of them are here... and some of them are THERE... but the world is dying... the whole thing needs Jesus so desperately. There are broken people everywhere, and that means that we need EVERYONE... and we can't all stay in one place... and we can't be in the addition game... we need to multiply.

Even those of you who still doubt... who doubt your calling... who doubt what you believe...

God is bigger than any of that.

You know, for all of the people who were here *before* Dawn and I were... I am sure that you have had your doubts about what would happen to the church... during that season of change... heck, WE HAD OUR DOUBTS.

Andy and Kathryn, I am sure you had your doubts about us...

and quite frankly, when you are part of the founding team... and you give 13 years of your life to something... you kind of earn the right to speak into the lives of whoever is taking over the thing that you worked so hard on...

but one thing that I have always appreciated about this couple is this, they always take ownership, because they understand that we all have roles in however God is moving...

and I don't know if I have ever said this to them before or not... but WHEN we talk about the future of Courage Church... they ALWAYS uses words like "we" and "us" -

I will talk to Andy, and we will talk about something we are working on... business plans... grant writing... new websites... whatever it is...

and he will always say "does this mean WE... that is HUGE for US..."

even knowing that life was carrying he and his family somewhere else...

He has always given me this sense that even when they are not here every day... that they will have our backs... that we can call on them, and they will answer...

that they believe in us... and that they CARE about what happens to us...

and we believe in them.

and my prayer is that **WHENEVER** we send people, that is how it **ALWAYS** is... They are family... always... our wins are their wins... their wins are our wins.

we find ways to stay connected... knowing that even hundreds or even thousands of miles apart... we are better **TOGETHER**, on this mission that will **NEVER** be over this side of Heaven... always honoring the legacy of what was... yet paving a new path forward... toward what God is doing next.

So at Courage Church:

Commission means that we are a sending church. We honor the past, while we work for the future. And we always believe that *everyone's* brightest days are ahead of them.