



DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Giving God Room to Work in Your Legacy

May 15, 2005

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1 Chronicles 29—I'm so proud of our leaders. They believe in God's vision and future for our church. They are adjusting their lifestyles. As your pastor it's deeply moved me. We can't take people where we're not willing to go ourselves. Well, on Tuesday night, and with a couple of cards turned in later in the week, X# of them pledged to give X amount as families and individuals. Leigh and I are doing it with you.

Matthew 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Please stand if you began here in the last 5 years...5-10 years...90-95...the 80s... 70s... 60s... 50s... 40s... 30s?... 20s? the legacy that someone left has impacted your life. We're simply wanting to do it some more. It's our turn to give God room to work in *our* legacy.

All authority: First, realize Jesus' kingdom exists today. Jesus reigns now. His kingdom exists alongside and within human cultures. Jesus' kingdom is focused in the men and women whose hearts have been given over to His Spirit. Jesus' quiet, unobtrusive rule is totally real. Jesus intervenes on our behalf as we choose to live by His will.

Make disciples: Jesus' command to us as servants, left in charge of our Lord's possessions while He is away, is very specific. When Christ returns, it will be different, but until then, the kingdom continues as a hidden thing, revealed only by faith, experienced only by those who follow in His footsteps.

Jesus' words here and in Matthew 16 give us direction. Then He said "*If anyone would come after me, he or she must deny himself and take up his or her cross and follow me*" (16:24). In following Jesus we don't find an earthly kingdom, but we find ourselves. We become new people, not better than anyone else, but better than we once were. Our lives are being transformed. Our personalities are being molded to reflect the love of Jesus. We're called to make disciples who will be like the Master *is* our calling in life, and as a church.

All nations: The Kingdom of God cuts across all languages and boundaries. We're all called to become like Jesus in our own lands. We're baptized into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; not into America or any other idea of the church. His kingdom is universal and it infuses every society with God's goodness and love. We go from living self-centered, in-search-of meaning lives to living others-centered, meaningful lives, that demonstrate His presence wherever we go.

Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: It's about obedience—surrender. The church is always, only one generation away from extinction. We teach them to every new generation: the sermon on the mount, the way of forgiveness, servanthood, and love are made new in every life. THAT'S why we're giving God more room to work.

I am with you always: We are not left alone to do the impossible. Christ, who has all authority, is the One who promises to be with us. His resurrection power is available to you to overcome the deadness in your life and mine.

When we think of legacy, we think of leaving a piece of ourselves behind. People 2 or 3 generations removed from you may not know your name, let alone great-great grandchildren. But when you show people Christ's love it makes a big impact. Because when someone witnesses that kind of love it changes them. Then, instead of relying on *your* faith and love to experience God, they become direct recipients of it themselves. They, in turn, give witness to the message of Christ in the lives *they* intersect. And on it goes!

This is not pie in the sky. This is doable. This is attainable. This ought to encourage us to step out. Can you see it people? This is doable. Our leaders are leading! And you too can rise and meet your potential. My prayer is to see our church reach our "maximum redemptive potential." God is raising up Dexter UMC to be regional impact church...even national??? What if we were to be able to become a "sending" church? Training up young adults to live in a way that their lives reflect Christ's mission? What if we could have an intern program? It's impossible to measure what God wants to do. You've seen the bumper sticker: if God's your co-pilot, switch seats! Our lives are his to do what he will, to influence in ways he wants.

Our goal is to be a regional equipping center for Christ-focused life transformation for the unconnected 1000s. It's a big vision. But every penny we nail into the debt is new ministry. When was the last time in your life you attempted something so great, that you knew it would fail apart from God bringing His divine resources to bear? I think God is challenging us. I think we're ready to step out for Him. I think we may be moving past our original goal of \$1.5 million. We're looking at \$2 million dollars plus. If everyone steps up, this could be a tool in our hands to be used for the Kingdom. We will build staff, ministries, parking, and a wonderful connecting building with a lower level youth center, all for the church's mission.

This is \$2 million plus. If we knock off our debt. That'd be so amazing to have people reaching out to teens. Imagine a youth ministry staff someday? How many of you have teens? How many of you have younger kids? We're standing before a wiiiide door or opportunity!!!

This is in addition to our regular giving to the church. It requires sacrifice. It's scary to talk about sacrifice, but when you think about it, sacrifice is as fundamental to our Christian values as anything!

The peace of mind—somewhere around Sunday, it hit me. I think I should be nervous, but I know in my spirit that what is revealed in my mind is right. It's simply the right thing to do. God's will is that none should perish. Jesus said "Go into all the world and make disciples." Everybody ought to know. Everybody needs the opportunity to hear what God has done for them and be nurtured in a loving community in order to experience and grow in Him. I'm asking you to join me today and lead our church in faith and commitment that is truly relying on God.

Leigh and I were talking about it. It's not sacrifice as much as it is faith: Do I, or don't I, trust God to meet my needs? Even in this, even when we give above and beyond our regular giving, you or I can't out-give God.