

1- THE PASTOR CANNOT DO IT ALONE
GFC – 9-4-22

I'm so excited about what the Lord is going to do in our church during the month of September. The Holy Spirit is releasing something new and fresh over our church. It is not a new revelation but it's a new revolution as we create a culture of care. THE MESSAGE I am about to bring to you today has the potential of changing your personal life as well as the life of our church forever.

In this message we are going to discover the keys that will open the door to revitalizing our church and releasing the hidden potential we have had for so long. This message is centered on the biblical truth that: Every Believer is a Minister.

We have spent this entire year preaching on discipleship in a series called Forward in Faith. In this series we used the word FORWARD as an acrostic. We've learned that to be a disciple we must:

Follow Christ – Obey Christ – Reach others for Christ– Worship Christ – Abide in Christ – Resist the devil who resists you growing in faith – Disciple others for Christ.

These are the actions we must take to move forward in discipleship.

As we have learned, being a disciple maker is the goal of your life and the purpose of your life. We get this from Jesus Himself. Right before He ascended into Heaven, He told His disciples in Matthew 28:19-20

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.

This command is for all believers for all time and that means it's for you! You have a ministry - Jesus wants you to be a disciple maker!

Growing churches have discovered that the *Pastor Cannot do it Alone*. Not only is it impossible - but it is also blatantly unbiblical. So that's what I'm preaching on today.

One of the greatest tragedies that ever came to the Church was when the ministry was moved from the *people* to the *professionals* — and from the *pew* to the *pulpit*. That was never God's plan for the Church. His plan is for everyone who is part of the Body of Christ to be involved in the ministry of Christ.

Here's some reasons why people are not involved in ministry:

Fear of failure.

Nobody wants to get involved in something knowing they may fail.

If people don't know how to do ministry, they will never become involved.

They have never been trained.

The traditional concept is that members are supposed to attend church and watch pastors do ministry. They have never been taught that "Every believer is a minister."

Just like many members, pastors have bought into the error of thinking that they are the only ones to do the work of the ministry. That's the reason why:

So many pastors burn out and quit the ministry.

So many church members are bored and feel they are not needed, and why so many people fall through the cracks.

I grew up in churches that expected the pastor to do all the ministry. However, it was never God's intention for one person to meet all of a congregation's needs, i.e., visiting all the sick, preaching to all the lost, or discipling all of the new converts. The truth is the Pastor cannot and should not do ministry alone!

I invite you to go on one of the most exciting journeys we have ever taken together. This church is about to become a powerhouse because of the Holy Spirit working in and through YOU!

We believe that the love of God has to flow down the aisles of the church before it will flow down the streets of the city. That's going to increase in our church this month as we relaunch our small groups and begin our journey of creating a culture of care.

This takes a lot of work and preparation. Our elders and staff and ministry leaders have been working hard for months to relaunch small groups and begin creating a culture of care.

A culture of care is when every member of the church is cared for on an ongoing basis. Not just crisis care – but continual care! In this culture everyone is cared for, prayed for, and someone is there for you in times of need and in times of joy. We will be preaching on this throughout September and at the end of the month we will have a weekend of training led by Dr. John Bosman – author of the Care Revolution. He will be here Friday night, Saturday and Sunday to equip us in how to care for one another. Get the weekend of Sept. 23-25 on your calendar!

We've been preaching and teaching to prepare you for this moment! Now, you are going to be able to take steps to grow in discipleship and disciple making. You see, just because you know your calling from God does not mean you are ready to fulfill that call. You must go through a process of preparation called equipping.

The root Greek word for equip in the New Testament is *katartizo*. It means to repair, to mend, to adjust, to join together, to prepare, to restore, to put in order, to complete thoroughly.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon says that it means to make you what you ought to be!

What is it that you ought to be? We know from Romans 8:29 that:

Those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son.

Your destiny is to become like Christ – but that doesn't just happen. You must be equipped to become like Christ. Luke 6:40 says:

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

The word *katartizo* is translated "fully trained" in this passage. The more equipped you are – the more like Christ you will be. Since none of us are totally like Christ yet, all of us have some equipping to do!

And God oversees this process of equipping. Hebrews 13:20-21 says:

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ.

I want you to see that God uses the same power that raised Jesus from the dead to equip you! That same resurrection power will give you new life – will heal your wounds and will equip you with everything you need to do God's will!

God is not setting you up to fail! He's setting you up to succeed and He provides everything you need to do so!

God oversees this process of equipping, but He uses different tools to equip us. The word *katartizo* appears thirteen times in the Greek text, but it is translated into different words in the English Bible. Those different words show us the various ways God equips us. 1 Peter 5:10 says:

After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, Who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you.

In this passage, *katartizo* is translated to show that equipping is overseen by God and He will complete you and make you what you ought to be: established, grounded, strengthened and settled. How does God equip us? Hebrews 11:3 says:

By faith we understand that the universe was formed by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

In this verse, *katartizo* is translated formed, which means to arrange and put in order. How did God do that in creation? By His Word! And how does He equip us? By His Word! 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says:

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work.

God's word equips you to know the truth. You will never be equipped apart from the word of God.

God also uses other people to equip us. We get this from Ephesians 4:11-13

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

The five gifted ministers listed here are what is called the 5-fold Ministry. Their job is to prepare God's people for ministry – not to do all the ministry themselves. It takes all 5 of these ministries to fully represent Jesus Christ. If any are missing in the church, an important ministry of Christ will be missing.

These ministry gifts are given to equip the Body of the Church. Here's how it happens. Evangelists are gifted to share the gospel and birth babies into the Kingdom. That baby would be left to itself if it were not for pastors who provide nurture, care, comfort and protection.

The problem in many churches is that a pastor is all you have. So, Christians who have been saved for 30 years are still looking to the pastor for care, comfort and protection. Christians need more than to be birthed into the kingdom and to be cared for in the church.

That's why we need prophets who say, "It's good that you're in the kingdom and you're comfortable and well fed, but God has a call on your life. You have a destiny and it's time for you to do the work of ministry."

Prophets impart vision and motivation to fulfill our destinies. But if prophets are all we have, Christians will fail because they don't know how to do what they are called to do. That's why we have teachers. Teachers open the Bible and show us how to do what we're called to do.

This is how the evangelist, pastor, prophet and teacher work together to equip the saints to grow to maturity. This is how God designed the church to operate. The job of 5-fold ministers is not to do all the ministry themselves.

It is to equip you to minister. Ephesians 4 shows us what it looks like when someone is fully equipped.

First is Christlikeness.

A maturing Christian becomes more and more like Christ. Ephesians 4:13 says that when we are equipped *we will all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God—a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ’s full stature.*

The second result of equipping is stability.

Ephesians 4:14 says:

So we are no longer to be children, tossed back and forth by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching by the trickery of people who craftily carry out their deceitful schemes.

A third result of equipping is that truth and love are both evident.

If you’re all about truth and confronting all the wrongs and yet have no love, then you’re not being equipped properly. On the other hand, if you’re all about love and mercy, and never hold anyone accountable to the truth, that’s not proper equipping either. Equipped people will love you enough to hold you accountable. Ephesians 4:15 says:

But speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head.

To attain maturity in the Christian life takes someone willing to speak the truth in love into our lives. This involves direction and correction. Galatians 6:1 says:

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

The word *katartizo* is translated “restore” in this verse.

A fourth result of equipping is strong relationships.

Ephesians 4:16 says: *From Him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament.*

Joining together speaks of relationship. Unfortunately, many people do not know how to have deep loving relationship these days. That’s why we need to be equipped.

The fifth result of equipping is everyone doing their part of the ministry.

Ephesians 4:16 says:

As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy, growing and full of love.

When everyone does their part, the church grows in numbers and maturity. One of the reasons the church in America is not growing is that there are too many spectators and not enough participants. One of the reasons there are so many immature Christians is that they are not growing because they are not doing their part.

We will grow as a church when everyone does their part in giving and serving. And you will grow individually when you do your part. What's your part? What's your ministry? Part of that ministry will be within the church; part will be outside. We see this in Matthew 4:21

Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. And He called them...

In this verse, the *katartizo* is translated "to mend." Mending nets involved cleaning the nets of seaweed and sticks, retying parts of the nets that had been torn or damaged, and then untangling and folding the nets so that they could be quickly used at a moment's notice. They were not being prepared for storage, but for service. All of this was so that their nets would be ready to catch more fish.

The same is true of us – equipping includes cleaning up dirty areas of people's lives – mending broken areas of people's lives and preparing them for service. God doesn't equip you just for yourself – He equips you for others!

Mending the nets makes sure that there are no holes in the nets, so fish will not get away and the catch is lost. Equipping people for ministry is therefore the process of preparing the congregation to function in ministry as they are supposed to, and in doing so, make sure that no one falls through the cracks or slips through the proverbial "back door."

In classical Greek, the word *katartizo* is used for setting a bone during surgery. The Great Physician makes all the necessary adjustments so the church will not be "out of joint." Setting a broken bone is describing the procedure of getting our people back into their rightful place of ministry to function as God called them to operate.

The truth is that if we are not taking care of those He has already sent us, why should He send us any more? We are determined to *keep* what we *reap* and take care of the people God has entrusted to us.

In ancient Greek *katartizo* also meant to supply an army with provisions!

Paul told the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 3:10 *Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.* That word supply is katartizo.

And God wants to equip you by healing you and supplying you with everything you need to succeed in life and ministry.

When you were lost – He saved you.

When you are held captive by something – God sets you free.

When you are broken and wounded – He heals you.

When you are incomplete – God completes you.

When your life is out of order – God sets things back in order!

When you feel like something's missing in life – God supplies what is missing!

When you are weak and worn out – God strengthens you and gives you rest.

When sin has damaged your relationships – God forgives you and restores you.

And when God restores you - He restores you completely. He equips you fully.

You will not go through life as damaged goods. You will be strong and steadfast.

And you will be equipped to equip others!

So I prophesy over you today that there will come a day when there is nothing lacking in your faith - you are fully equipped – mended – healed – restored – prepared – trained and fully qualified for service. You are becoming you who ought to be - more and more like Christ! And you will help others become who they ought to be - like Christ!

Today I want to make it clear: I cannot do all the work of the ministry alone. I want you to be involved, and I want to invite you to become a part of creating a culture of care. We will train you and we will equip you.

The strength of this church is not the people coming to hear me preach every Sunday. The strength of this church is what you do with what you hear after you leave, to go out in Jesus' name to minister to others.

If we want to see more people saved, and our church becoming a healing place where the love of God is felt . . .

If we want to stop seeing people falling through the cracks or slipping through the back door . . .

If we want to see our church healthy and whole . . .

Then we are going to have to expand our base of ministers and effectively equip the believers to create a culture of care!

If the sheep multiply, then the shepherds must multiply also.

I want us to become a congregation where every person uses his or her gifts for the glory of God!

This is the time, and this is the season!

This community needs you. This church needs you. I need you.

Will you answer the call? Can you say like Isaiah, "Here am I Lord, send me!"