

Believers World Outreach Church

What We're Becoming

Sermon notes from November 27, 2022 | BWOC.Online

Intro - What Are We Becoming?

Our church community is sharing the journey of a lifetime – following Jesus together!

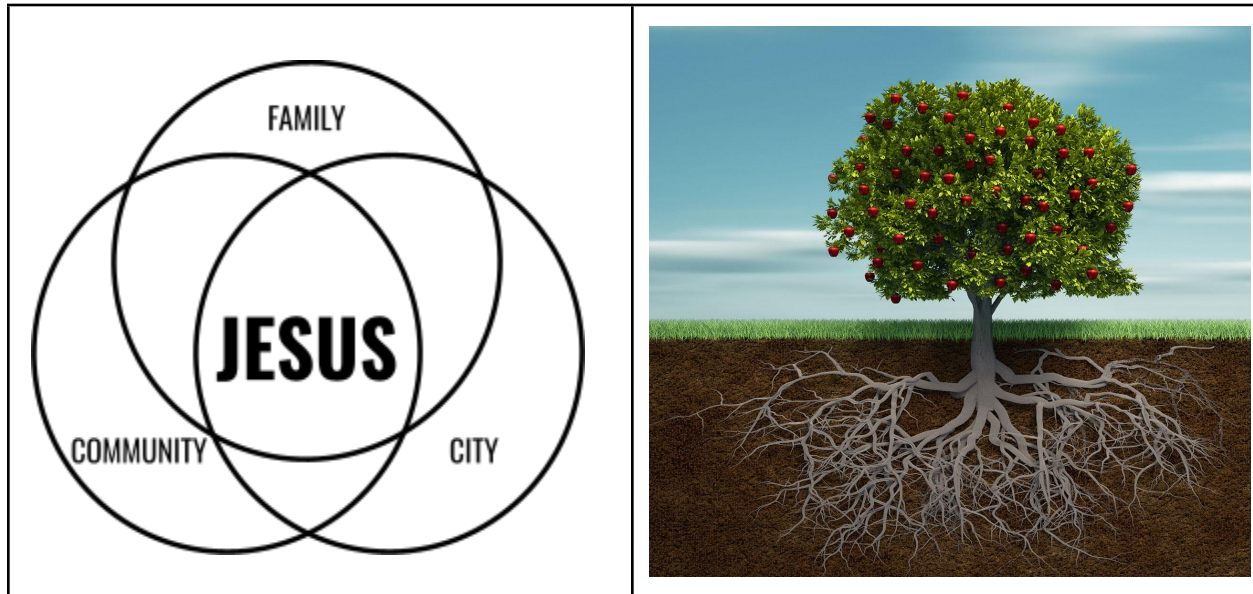
Vision | We live+give because of Jesus.

Mission | Because of Jesus, we can see everyone everywhere:

Belong in family,

Believe with community, and

Become ambassadors for our city.



This Bible study is going to explore and expand our identity as ambassadors of Christ where we live and work.

DID YOU KNOW: We have been **following Jesus together** a lot this year!

* This is just an example. The number of hours will vary from person to person.

Sunday Celebrations	Faith Families	House of Prayer	Serve Team	Devotion/ Discipleship	2022 Total
208 hours	36 hours	156 hours	328 hours		728+ hours

What's happening during all this time???

As we follow Jesus – both collectively and personally – we are all **becoming** like Him.

<u>What We're BECOMING By Following Jesus</u>			
<u>LIKE JESUS</u>	<u>AMBASSADORS</u>	<u>SERVANT LEADERS</u>	<u>LOVE</u>
<i>Our Model</i>	<i>Our Mindset</i>	<i>Our Method</i>	<i>Our Motive</i>
<i>Seek HIM! Psalms 105:4</i>	<i>Seek first the Kingdom... Matthew 6:33</i>	<i>Seek the welfare of the city... Jeremiah 29:7</i>	<i>Seek fruit for others' accounts... Phil 4:17</i>

Part 1 - We are becoming like JESUS.

Psalms 105:4 NLT – Search for the LORD and for his strength; continually **seek him**.

JESUS CAME SO WE CAN BECOME...

- a. Isaiah 9:6 NLT – For a child is born to us, a son is given to us... (emphasis added)
- b. John 1:12 NLT – But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to **become** children of God. (emphasis added)
- c. Romans 8:28 NLT – For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to **become** like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. (emphasis added)
- d. This process of “becoming” is not about becoming born again (John 3:7), but rather **becoming mature in Christ** (Ephesians 4:15-16). Many Christians still struggle with core doctrines (Hebrews 6:1-3), such as salvation and eternal judgment. For example, they wrongly think they have to personally earn their salvation... but not work for any of their eternal rewards (Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Revelation 22:12).
- e. Many believers know what they were saved **FROM**, but they do not yet know what they were saved **FOR**. You have a unique purpose and meaningful work to do in this life (Ephesians 2:10)!
- f. The LORD's design and desire for us is to **BECOME** more than we can imagine today.
 - Don't let limiting beliefs (unbelief — Hebrews 3:19) keep you from **BECOMING** more like Jesus.
- g. How many believers have been **UNWILLING TO BECOME...**
 - the dream in God's heart?
 - the answer to someone else's prayer?
 - the person/ leader Jesus paid for on the Cross?

Part 2 - We are becoming **AMBASSADORS** for the city.

Matthew 6:33 NLT – **Seek the Kingdom of God** above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (emphasis added)

Luke 12:31 NLT – **Seek the Kingdom of God** above all else, and he will give you everything you need. (emphasis added)

2 MARKS OF BEING AMBASSADORS FOR JESUS

1. **Kingdom Culture**

- a. Philippians 3:20 NLT – But **we are citizens of heaven**, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.
- b. 1 Peter 2:11 NLT – Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.
- c. Romans 12:2 NLT – Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
- d. Hebrews 11:10 NLT – Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.

2. **Mission Mindset**

- a. Remember: The Church is a *Great Commandment community* with a *Great Commission culture*. In other words, we share a mission mindset with the LORD.
- b. John 20:21 NLT – Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”
- c. John 15:16 NLT – You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.
- d. Matthew 28:18-19 NLT – Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..

- e. 2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT – So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!”
- f. Mark 8:14 NLT – As they were crossing the lake, Jesus warned them, “Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod.”
- g. Luke 10:2-3 NLT – These were his instructions to them: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. 3Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves.
- h. Are we okay with becoming a “missional minority?” What does it look like to operate as Christ’s ambassadors in our city and culture?

WORTHY TO BEAR HIS NAME

- a. Exodus 20:7 ESV – You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...
 - What does that really mean?!
 - This is a big deal, because of *ambassadorship* – the way we represent the LORD.
 - Embassy Students: Representing Jesus is more than a logo, it’s a lifestyle!

IDENTIFYING WITH CHRIST

- a. Jesus claims the right to our identity, so we can identify with Him.
- b. Genesis 1:26 NLT – Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”
- c. Mark 12:17 NLT – “Well, then,” Jesus said, “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.” His reply completely amazed them.
- d. Luke 9:26 NLT – If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.
- e. Matthew 11:6 NLT – And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.”
- f. Acts 5:41 NLT - The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus.
- g. 2 Thessalonians 1:11 NLT — So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

- a. The Gospel we live+give is the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 24:14). The Gospel of the Kingdom is given to announce that Jesus is King of everything (Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:29-33), which calls us to renounce all other misleading loyalties in this life (Matthew 4:17; 2 Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 16:24).
- b. [Jesus] Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:9-10 NLT).

WHICH IS BIGGER – OUR CITY OR GOD’S KINGDOM?!

- a. Many people wrongly assume that the Gospel (and the Church at large) does *not* have anything to offer the cities they live in. That could not be further from the Truth! In reality, God loves this city so much that He placed YOU (The Church) in it!
- b. Unfortunately, many churches do not have a compelling vision for the cities they live and work in. They opt-out of God’s plans for revival and reformation with boring traditions and cringe church trends.
- c. No church community will be fulfilled trying to build their own kingdoms. Our hearts will only be fulfilled by experiencing and expanding Jesus’ Kingdom. (The difference is whether we want the King or a distorted version of the Kingdom without the King.)
- d. Quite different, the Gospel shares a clear and compelling vision for “the city” in which we live. It is true, transformative, and transcendent – God’s Garden City (Revelation 22)!
- e. Abraham, the father of faith, left Babylon – “Sin City” – to look for and live in God’s eternal city (Hebrews 11:10). Likewise, our journey of faith will lead us away from sinful people’s vision of “the perfect city” (and society) towards Jesus’ perfect leadership displayed on a city-wide map and beyond.
- f. Jesus plants His Church into the seedbed of our cities (Matthew 13:38) to grow the unshakeable Kingdom (Hebrews 12:28). Paul understood the importance of engaging cities with the Gospel of the Kingdom as well (Matthew 23:11-12; Acts 17:6 NKJV).

Are we getting God-sized dreams and Gospel-shaped visions for our city?

- a. How do believers actually approach their cities and culture as ambassadors sent from Jesus’ heavenly Kingdom?
- b. It may seem too grandiose for “mere mortals,” but Jesus’ upside-down Kingdom has a brilliant strategy – a Spirit-empowered **servant leadership** movement!

Part 3 - We are becoming **SERVANT LEADERS**.

Jeremiah 29:7 ESV – But **seek the welfare of the city** where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

- a. Many Christians could not care less about how well their city is being led, let alone the well-being of their neighbors (Jonah 4:5; Genesis 18:16-33; Isaiah 59:16). This lack of compassion (and stewardship) exposes a big GAP in their worldview about the Gospel's role beyond their personal lives (Luke 19:11-24). These are the immature, self-absorbed “bless me, not them” believers (Luke 9:49; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4). Quite opposite, Jesus cares about our cities (Matthew 5:13-14)!
- b. Genesis 18:16-18 NLT – Then the men got up from their meal and looked out toward Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way. “Should I hide my plan from Abraham?” the Lord asked. “For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just. Then I will do for Abraham all that I have promised.”
- c. Jonah 4:10-11 NLT – Then the Lord said, “You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. It came quickly and died quickly. But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?”
- d. Matthew 14:14 NLT – Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.
- e. Proverbs 11:10-11 NLT – The whole city celebrates when the godly succeed; they shout for joy when the wicked die. Upright citizens are good for a city and make it prosper, but the talk of the wicked tears it apart.
- f. Proverbs 11:14 NLT — Without wise leadership, a nation falls; there is safety in having many advisers.

How do we “seek the welfare of the city” practically?

- Jeremiah 29:7 NLT – “And **WORK** for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.” (emphasis added)

THE WISDOM OF WORK IN GOD'S KINGDOM

- a. Many believers act *allergic* to work as though work is somehow “not spiritual” (Luke 10:30-34).

- b. Be careful: Being “too spiritual” will mislead many people to hell.

- Matthew 7:22-23 NLT – [Jesus] On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

- c. In reality, being Spirit-led can be very practical!

- Matthew 25:34-36 NLT – [Jesus] “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’”
(emphasis added)

- d. Jesus is looking for practical implementers!

- James 1:22 ESV – But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (emphasis added)

BUT WHAT ABOUT...

- a. What about **Mary & Martha** (Luke 10:38-42)? What about **Peter** on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8)? They got “in trouble” for working around God, right?

- b. There is a difference between working *in spite* of God and working *because* of God.

- i. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul said he “worked circles” (more!) around the others because God’s grace was empowering him to do so.
- ii. In Proverbs 31:10-31, the virtuous woman – which can be a prophetic picture of the Church – is a competent wife, mother, and businesswoman.
- iii. In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, the church leaders told the church community: “If you do not work, you will not eat!”

- c. Like anything else, our value of work must be redeemed for the glory of God. We must idolize it or minimize it. We must leverage it to do God's will. (Ephesians 5:15-17; Proverbs 6:6; John 4:35)

ABOVE EVERYTHING, BECOME WISE!

- a. Proverbs 4:7 NKJV – Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.
- b. Many believers have not developed the necessary skills to work out their purpose. Without the wisdom to know what they are called to do and how to accomplish it practically, they are frustrated and living in limbo.
- c. Believers must gain wisdom to practically level up in servant leadership to champion God's epic passion projects. Champions work on their character, competency, and chemistry (people skills) with others.
- d. Why is getting wisdom so important? It's necessary to ***serve and lead well!***

SERVANT LEADERSHIP 101

- a. Who will pray like Solomon: 1 Kings 3:9 ESV – Give your **servant** therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to **govern** [or lead] this your great people?"
- b. The people of God have exceptional examples of servant leadership – like the wisest king in history for starters!
- c. Imagine the greatest leaders of this generation coming out of the Church "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14)! The Church can raise up servant leaders, thought leaders, business leaders, governmental leaders, educational leaders, medical leaders, and more!

WISDOM PRODUCES MATURITY TO LEAD WELL

- a. A healthy church community will *a/ways* have spiritual babies in it, BUT it must *a/so* have a growing number of spiritually mature servant leaders as well. (2 Timothy 2:2)
- b. The LORD said: Woe to those who nurse babies in those days... (Matthew 24:19). Inside, there is a clear warning given: Do not keep people in spiritual immaturity during the time of the LORD's Return! Urge them to grow up and wise up! (Ephesians 5:15-17)
- c. Without spiritual maturity, the work of ministry can become stagnant and sterile. With spiritual maturity, the work of ministry can build the church up! (Ephesians 4:14-16; Hebrews 5:12-14)

IMMATURITY = FAILURE TO LAUNCH

- a. Many believers and church communities are at risk *right now* of “Failure To Launch” syndrome. They are staying in willful immaturity and codependent paradigms (Galatians 4:30-31) that lead to toxic cultures, stunted growth, dwarfed dreams, and hope deferred (Proverbs 13:12).
- b. Thankfully, the LORD is freeing His Church from this spiritual immaturity in order to launch mature believers into many “harvest fields” among the nations. They will be willing and wise enough to lead well in the next phase of their calling. Like Peter, who failed to identify with Jesus at one point, many believers will rise to occasion in the “next round.” (Luke 10:2; Acts 2:14) Failure is not permanent. Launching in faith is more important than missing God’s timing trying to “prove yourself.”
- c. This applies to church communities as well as spiritual families. God leverages strong families to launch empowered sons and daughters in the Future! (Psalms 127:4-5) The culture teaches: Parents, you need to *play more* with your children. The Bible teaches: Parents, make sure your children *work more* with you.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS TRANSFORMATIONAL

- a. Jesus modeled and mandated servant leadership.
 - i. Matthew 20:25-28 NLT – But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
 - ii. There’s nothing WEAK about Jesus’ leadership approach. The GREATEST among us – the LORD – served us the most. Throughout history, many monarchs would not even lift a finger to do anything. Here, the KING of KINGS is working with his hands and changing the world through his servant leadership and sacrificial love (John 15:13).
- b. Jesus always led by example.
 - i. John 13:15 NLT – I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.
 - ii. Philippians 2:3-5 NLT – Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

c. Servant Leadership is *literally* transformational!

- i. Servant leadership is the way Jesus transforms our lives and culture.
- ii. Servant leadership just makes sense! Many companies are now racing to “add value” to their customers.
- iii. Servant leadership is serving people and solving problems... with Heaven’s help!
- iv. Servant leadership is not entitled and it’s not risk-free. There are both responsibilities and rewards involved.
- v. Servant leadership empowers people to take personal responsibility, take initiative, and create life-changing opportunities for others.

NO BELIEVER IS CALLED TO A BARE MINIMUM MINISTRY!

- a. More than ever, the Church at large needs empowered believers to serve and lead well wherever they are. Without spiritual depth and on-going development, believers are doing less and less in the servant leadership category...
 - Stress-inducing isolation
 - Work-related or leadership burnout
 - Outdated mindsets and methods
 - Extended warfare against health, finances, clarity, and key relationships
 - Work-life friction and frustrations
- b. The knee-jerk reaction to increasing pressure is FIGHT-or-FLIGHT.
 - Some of us double down, trusting our own track records to win out.
 - Others drift away, rashly opting out on God-given relationships in weak moments.
- c. We normalize bare minimum ministry when we don’t wait on the LORD to renew our strength (Isaiah 40:31).
 - An offended heart refuses to grow, and chooses to get hardened by the cares of this pressurized world. (Proverbs 18:19; Mark 4:18-19)
 - A healthy heart can take on any challenge, because it will humbly call on the LORD for help, wisdom, and empowerment. (Proverbs 4:23; 1 Peter 5:5)
- d. After you let the LORD remake your heart and mind (which is connected) into a flexible wineskin, He can pour into you the new wine that His Spirit has prepared for your future! (Luke 5:38) That’s when you need to **MAKE SURE you *stretch yourself as a servant leader!*** (Isaiah 54:2; 1 Chronicles 4:10; Isaiah 9:7)

HOW TO GET REALLY GOOD AT WHAT YOU DO!

- a. It can be very discouraging and difficult to “start over” so often in life.
 - New career
 - Different team or city
 - Changing markets and technologies
- b. Growing is not always easy or fun, but it is natural. Yes, you know more than when you were a kid, but there’s always more obstacles and opportunities to adapt to.
- c. Jesus taught: So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 18:4)
- d. One positive characteristic of child-likeness is **the capacity to learn new things and grow rapidly!** This kind of “beginner’s mindset” is willing to be led and renewed by the LORD. Then you can “be fruitful in every season...” (Psalms 1:3) and “ready for every good work...” (Titus 3:1)
- e. Can you imagine yourself **investing** at least 1/4th of your weekly time budget on developing skills for the Future?
- f. Where can we begin? (John 15:1-2)
 - i. Start by identifying the things that drain and distract you. Remove those things!
 - ii. Then look for areas to grow even more! Improve those areas.

STAY ENCOURAGED, STAY ENGAGED!

- a. The LORD is reversing the Church’s “Body Clock!” (Ephesians 5:27; Titus 2:14;) We will not feel old and worn down by our history, but we will be strengthened and matured by the Spirit of prophecy! We will unlearn man-made traditions. We will innovate and create with the Holy Spirit. We will be youthful in our passion for Jesus, and embrace the best parts of every generation represented.
- b. Go through Romans 12:6-11 and 1 Peter 4:10-11. Ask yourself – Based on my phase of life and leadership, do I need to grow in my communication skills, my people skills, my management skills, my financial skills, my creative skills, and so on?
- c. You will feel FRESH ENTHUSIASM as you experience GOD’S PASSION for PEOPLE. His JOY in this season of your servant leadership will give you renewed and sustaining STRENGTH to work through the learning process.
- d. Why would we go through the difficulty of growing practically all over again?! Because we are also becoming LOVE.

Part 4 - We are becoming **LOVE**.

Philippians 4:17 NKJV – Not that I seek the gift, but I **seek the fruit that abounds to your account**. (emphasis added)

a. 3 Truths About LOVE

- 1 - Love compels (2 Corinthians 5:14)
- 2 - Love fulfills (Romans 13:8;10)
- 3 - Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8)

b. But dealing with difficult people can be unbearable, right?

- 1 John 5:3 NLT – Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

c. What is the Law of Christ? The Law of Love?

- Galatians 6:2 NKJV – Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

- Matthew 22:37-40 ESV – And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

- John 13:34 NLT – So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.

d. As we obey Jesus' Law of Love, we will mature – and become one – with Him.

- John 17:21 NLT – [Jesus] I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

Thanks for studying God's Word with us!

Live+Give
Peter Burchfield

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