

2014-10-12 Life-lessons 7: God's dream-team

Text: Ephesians 4:1-16

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 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. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

In verse 1 Paul tells us that we need "to live a life worthy of the calling you have received". Verse 12 says preachers and teachers should "prepare God's people for works of service..." And verse 16 says a healthy church "...grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

God didn't design His church for His people to wait around for the pastor to do all the work for them. He wants to create a dream-team together with Him.

A healthy church - a strong congregation - is a place where the people realize the importance of ALL believers working together.

There's always room for improvement and this sermon is intended to challenge us and encourage us to be even more involved in ministry and develop God's dream-team.

I. But, someone might ask... Is the Dream-team for me?

Why should I be involved and do ministry? Isn't that what we pay preachers for?

According to vs.11-12, preachers, teachers, elders, evangelists and missionaries have one goal: "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up"

Leaders have been chosen by Jesus to train the rest of the church for ministry, so that we CAN try this at home in our churches. You CAN serve God and be a part of His dream-team even though you may not feel that you a "professional."

II. TRAINING for the dream-team!

If we're doing the job right... then we get trained in at least two ways:

The purpose of the church is to be a place where we "...spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)

By being trained for ministry by focusing our vision on WHY we do good works.

Jesus said: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and GLORIFY YOUR FATHER which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16

In other words, our good works should be motivated by our faith in God and our desire to please Him and be on His dream-team.

Ephesians 4:14 tells us that when preachers and elders do their job "Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming."

In other words: Good teaching about WHY we do good works, will protect us from the bad stuff.

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus said our first priority - our primary focus - MUST BE to "...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..."

Good leaders in a healthy church will make sure that good doctrine is the foundation of good works so that physical and spiritual needs are met and Jesus is glorified and men and women will be saved.

III. God's dream-team is for you!

Jesus wants to empower us so that we CAN bring Him glory and so that people can be saved.

Ephesians 4:7 "But to each one of us GRACE has been given as Christ apportioned it."

Jesus is actively seeking to empower us through His grace.

That's how Paul said he became a useful servant of God. In Ephesians 3:7 he said:

"I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power."

In fact, Paul says that God is more than willing to do the same thing in our lives. He wrote that God "... is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" Ephesians 3:20

That's what Jesus wants to do in your life, and in mine. He wants to turn our ordinary lives into that which is extraordinary. He wants to make us into a dream-team.

IV. Grab hold of that power.

Ephesians 4:16

“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

What happens too often, is we try to get by on our own energy. We draw on our own personal reserves to do ministry for Him. And because we do it that way, we end up getting worn out and discouraged.

God’s energy, His resources, are inexhaustible,
And they are always available at the moment of our need.
We NEED to be connected to Him to lay hold of His overwhelming grace and power.

CLOSE:

2 Timothy 1:6-7 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

1. God plants gifts in your life
2. You are to fan the flame, blow life into your gifting. God doesn’t do it for you!
3. Look around and encourage one another to be a part of God’s dream team!