



LIVE: Empowered Witnesses in the World

Message Notes, February 14, 2016

This week we look at the fifth point on the River, LIVE. Our core value for this point is: **“Because God loves lost people, we love lost people.”** We don’t develop a bunch of programs to flesh this value out. We teach the call to be witnesses; we strengthen our faith through all the first four elements of the River (Worship, Grow, Connect and Serve) and then simply release our people to live out their faith everywhere they go (at home, at work, at play, etc.).

This vision and strategy is rooted in three key passages:

1. Matthew 28:18-20 – Here is Jesus’ great commission to His disciples to go and make (other) disciples. The only verb here (in the Greek) is “make disciples.” All the other verb-likes are participles modifying this central call. The lead command “Go” is best translated “as you are going.” It is not so much a defined mission as it is a way of life.
2. Acts 1:8 – “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Holy Spirit put in us is not for us alone, but so we will be in the world revealing Jesus. Again, everywhere you go – home, region and the whole world.
3. Matthew 9:35-38

Pastor Keith celebrated how we are engaging on these three strategic fronts:

Global: We financially and prayerfully support more than a dozen world missionaries. Keith highlighted:

- **Set Free Movement**, which fights modern slavery
- **Bulgaria**, where our own Chance and Dee Dee Galloway are serving among the Roma people.
- **St John’s House**, a new residential ministry for Roma girls in Bulgaria.
- **Stephanie Peaschek**, another CCC member, is raising support to join this ministry full-time beginning this summer.
- **Chad and Hollie Wells**, former CCCers who will join the Galloways this summer.
- **Bobbi Starr** is leading our local Set Free work, exploring how CCC and our community might develop a similar home for formerly-trafficked girls/women.

Local: Keith celebrated **the many local ministries** we support with CCC funds and more importantly with people.

Personal: This is the main focus in this message. How are we each, personally, living out this call to be witnesses? We are not all gifted to be evangelists, but we are all called to be witnesses in our everyday lives!

Back to that third foundational passage, Matthew 9:35-38: Jesus gives us here a model for engaging as His witnesses in the world:



SEE: Jesus saw, not just the crowds of people, but the persons. He went beyond the good activity of ministry to see these individual sheep who needed shepherding, who needed the Father's love and grace.

CARE: Jesus saw them as Father sees them – uniquely made in His image, precious to Him. He was moved to gut-wrenching compassion. He was stirred to genuine care. People don't care what you know (*the gospel*), until they know that you care (*about them*).

PRAY: Jesus called His disciples to pray "to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers" into this rich harvest field of persons. We pray:

- "God, give me your heart." (We can't work up compassion)
- Remember that this is His harvest field. He saves people. It's not on us; we are simply His vessels.
- "I am available!" If we are praying for workers for the harvest, we are inherently volunteering to be among these. (Prayer is not a substitute for witness, but rather preparation for it.)

GO: The passage continues in Matthew 10:1 as Jesus calls his 12 disciples and then sends them out into the harvest field. And He gives them authority and power to be His witnesses. We are *empowered* witnesses in our world!

Reflection Questions

1. Is evangelism a gifting or strength in you? How do you engage in witness to others?
2. Is evangelism intimidating to you? What makes sharing your faith difficult for you?
3. What things keep you from seeing "sheep without a shepherd" around you?
4. Keith used the analogy of "tapping an apple" to see when it is ripe. What are ways to "tap on" the lives of those around you that open them up more to the love and gospel of Jesus?
5. Who is one specific person you can commit to praying for – to come to know the Good Shepherd? In your praying, can you surrender yourself to be among the "workers" God wants to "send"?