

DISCIPLESHIP

Evangelism: Is The Church Forceful Enough?

Discussion

Recently Pastor William provided copies of Mark Batterson's book "In A Pit With A Lion On A Snowy Day" to all of the Elders to read. As I read it I was reminded of an early lesson I received from a pastor, mentor, and dear friend who greatly influenced my early Christian growth, Brother Bob Orr.



It was a teaching on Matthew 16:18, "And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." I had always read that verse to mean that the church was safe from Satan's attacks and that Hell could not defeat the Church.

Brother Bob showed me, however, that gates are a defensive measure and never attack anything, and that the verse is actually Christ telling us we are to be on the offensive and crash even the gates of hell to find and save the lost for Him.

Christ also taught in Matthew 11:12b that "the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it." Suddenly a picture begins to develop about Christ followers that is the opposite of what many hold as the current view of Christianity - that is that we are to avoid conflict, don't make waves, maintain a certain level of "righteous" and stick to doing things inside the Church on Sundays. But I'm beginning to realize that Christ is calling us to get going, and to get going into places and after people "church people" wouldn't think of going after.

Christ's last command before his ascension into heaven was Matthew 28:19 "Go" he told his disciples, "and make disciples of all nations" not just the nice people across the street. Even Paul teaches us that we are to put on the "full armour of God" and that we are to run the race hard enough and fast enough to win the prize. Clearly being a Christ follower is something that requires aggression, attitude, initiative, determination and discipline if we are indeed to win the race that's set before us. This is the time Christ has called us to at Southview, the time to reach out, go out, and aggressively seek the lost and dying, and to do it forcefully. I'm excited about what God is doing and preparing to do at Southview and I can already see that it's going to be a great deal more dynamic and far reaching than any of us have ever imagined. Advancing the Kingdom of God in a mighty way - now how cool is that!

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