

The Heart of God for Others

2 Corinthians 5:10-21

Thesis: I believe that we need to get a vision of the heart of God for people. If we see what God sees and feel what he feels, then, we will go where he leads and do what he wants.

Text: Matthew 9:36; 2 Corinthians 5:10-21; Romans 9:1-3; Luke 16:19-31

Introduction:

For many months, our hearts have been stirred as a staff and as elders about helping Calvary get active in outreach. We have prayed about our Big Days, about our structures, and about our strategies for reaching others with the love of the Lord.

I got excited as we planned a Ministry Leaders Meeting for Sunday, January 19.

In several emails, I shared with the Ministry Leaders my vision for our time together. I believe in the spiritual practice of discerning the voice of the Lord through dialogue. My expectation was that we would hear the voice of the Lord as we shared together.

Back a couple of months ago, I had a clear purpose for our Ministry Leaders meeting. I wanted us to talk about strategies and plans to partner with the Lord in reaching others. I wanted us to look at mental models, purposes, strategies, and plans for outreach.

In the course of my conversations with the staff team and with Pastor Steve, I became aware of something. I was assuming that we knew *the why* for reaching others, that we knew *the why* in the heart of God concerning seeking and saving the lost, and that we knew *the why* that motivated the early followers of Jesus to lay down their lives for the Lord and for others.

The truth is, I was operating on assumptions, that we were all on the same page regarding *the why* for outreach.

Over the past month or two, it became clear to me that what we need is not more strategies and plans. Those will come at the right time.

- What we need is to feel what God feels.
- What we need is to see others the way God sees them.

- What we need is to have the Lord light a burning fire in our hearts.
- What is God's heart for our family members? For our neighbors? For our community? For our work associates? For our classmates?
- What does God feel? What moves the heart of God? What does God see when he looks at the people around us?

I believe that if we feel what God feels and sees what God sees, that we will respond to whatever the Lord leads us to do (Matthew 9:35-38).

On January 19, I told the Ministry Leaders that I made a mistake. I was ready to do problem solving, to move into fix-it mode, and to figure out strategies and action plans.

But, even if we came up with great strategies and plans, what would carry them forward?

- *Where there is no vision, the people perish... (Proverbs 29:18*
- *If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed (Proverbs 29:18 MSG).*
- **Without *the why*, strategies and plans are unsustainable.**

So, the focus of our meeting on January 19 changed. We no longer focused on what do or how to do it. We had a new focus.

I believe that we need to get a vision of the heart of God for people.

- What does God feel about the lost people around us?
- What does God see when he looks at the people around us?
- If we see what God sees and feel what he feels, then, we will go where he leads and do what he wants. Then, we will respond to what the Lord leads us to do.

How do we see what the Lord sees and feel what he feels?

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36).

We spent time in solitude, small group work, and large group sharing. We structured our time together to help us to see what the Lord sees and to feel what the Lord feels, based on his self-revelation to us through Scripture, dialogue, and prayer.

And, the Lord met us that day.

Here are some passages about the heart of the Lord for others:

1. **"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.** 35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? **I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.** 36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor" (John 4:34-38).
2. **When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them,** because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:36-38).
3. **"For God so loved the world** that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17 NIV).
4. Luke 15: The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son.
 - a. In the same way, I tell you, **there is rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10 NIV).
5. **"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost"** (Luke 19:10 NIV).
6. "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 **I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also.** They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:14-16 NIV).
7. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations,** baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV).
8. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12 NIV).

9. *I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race... (Romans 9:1-3 NIV).*
10. *[God our Savior] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4 ESV).*

Think about these 2 passages in particular:

1. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21.**

- a. *Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men (2 Corinthians 5:11a NIV).*
- b. *Since we are those who stand in holy awe of the Lord, we make it our passion to persuade others to turn to him... (2 Corinthians 5:11 Passion Translation).*
- c. *14 For Christ's love compels us... (2 Corinthians 5:14).*
- d. *15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view [living for ourselves]. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:15-21 NIV).*

2. **Read Luke 16:19-31. Let the reality sink in that hell is real.**

- a. *"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' 25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your*

lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' 27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' 30 "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' 31 "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead'" (Luke 16:19-31 NIV).

b. Let the reality sink in that hell is real.

- i. **First, hell is filled with people who repented, but they repented too late.**
 1. If you go to hell this morning, you will discover that everyone there has repented.
 2. They repented when the door of mercy had been permanently closed. But, the time for second chances has passed.
 3. "Now is the acceptable time."
 4. "Knowing the fear of the Lord, what faces the lost, we persuade others."
- ii. **Second, hell is filled with prayer warriors.**
 1. People pray in hell.
 2. They lift up their voices.
- iii. **Third, hell is filled with missionary minded people.**
 1. They are thinking of those who are alive.
 2. How can they get a message to their loved ones?

I pray that we will be motivated by what the Lord sees and by what the Lord feels. And, I pray that we will realize the urgency of outreach out of a healthy fear or respect for the Lord in light of eternity.

Back to what happened at our Ministry Leaders meeting on Jan. 19.

As we shared in our large group reporting at the Ministry Leaders meeting, the Holy Spirit came. Lorinda White got up and shared as the representative of her group. As she shared, the Holy Spirit met us. I know that Lorinda could share the same testimony with us in person. But, I didn't want to put any pressure on her to share the way that she shared at our Ministry Leaders meeting or to try and recreate something. Rather, I want

us to listen to the recording of what Lorinda shared last Sunday. My prayer is that each of our hearts will be impacted by the Holy Spirit as we listen.

As we listen to Lorinda, let's ask the Lord to share with us what he feels and what he sees when he looks at the people around us near and far.

Play the recording of Lorinda's testimony.

Let's pray: Come, Holy Spirit, and seal what God is doing in our midst this morning, in the name of Jesus. I pray that the seed you have planted will find good soil. I pray that the seed would go deeply into our hearts and then bear much fruit for the glory of God the Father.

Ministry Time:

1. Sing *First Love Fire* by Leeland.
 - a. This song is like our theme song for our year.
 - b. We want to pursue deep intimacy and full partnership with Jesus.
 - c. And, this song talks about that word for the year for us.
2. Respond to the Lord as the Lord leads you.
3. Speak to the Lord from your seat, come to the altar for to pray, or come to one of our ministry teams for prayer.