

Growing God's Family

October 21, 2018

Our Savior's Way
Worshipping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
Pastor Mann

I heard this joke recently. It's about brothers. It goes like this: I was riding in a car with this guy and he runs right through a stop sign. And I say to the guy, "Hey, what are you doing? That was a stop sign." And he says, "I drive like my brother." A little while later we come to another intersection and he blows right through a red light. I say, "Are you crazy? That was a red light." He says, "I drive like my brother." Finally, we come to a green light and he starts to slow down. I say, "Why are you slowing down? It's a green light." He says, "My brother might be coming."

Families are fun, aren't they? You never know what you're going to get when you have a family. And raising a family is even more interesting. We have three boys and they are as different from one another as they can be. Two are blonde. One has thick brown hair. Believe it or not, I used to have thick brown hair. I can remember swimming with all three boys in a hotel pool. This woman I didn't know came up to me and said, "You have a beautiful son (referring to the dark-haired one). And then she asked, "Who are these other children?" Every family is unique and every family is made up of unique individuals.

Galatians 6:10 *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."*

The church is described as a family. How do you grow a church family? This is the value we are looking at today—GROWING THE FAMILY OF GOD.

Our Savior's Way is beginning its 25th year. This church started in 1994 with 27 people in my living room. Today we have almost 1,000 members with three services every Sunday. But whether a church is large or small Jesus wants His family to grow. So, let's talk about what's important when it comes to growing God's family. I'm going to suggest that there are three things that are important: (1) The Method; (2) The Motivation; (3) The Means.

Matthew 9:35 *“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.”*

Billy Graham is by far the most famous preacher of my lifetime. At the end of his 60+ year preaching career, Billy Graham said, “I preach the truth of God's Word. The only place that we can find the clear and unmistakable message of the Gospel is in the Word of God.”

Teaching, preaching, healing. These were the methods that Jesus used. Billy Graham had a team of organizers who went ahead of him to organize huge rallies. But the days of preaching on the street corner are gone. Think about the preachers that stand outside the sports stadiums with their bullhorns. Are they growing the family of God? Here is our method for preaching outside the church today: 1 Peter 3:15 *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”* The idea is that in the relationships we build (Remember?—Forming Relationships) with the people around us we must be ready to share our faith when God gives us the opportunity.

If the method is preaching, then the motivation is compassion—love. There is a story about two psychiatrists who occupied offices in the same building. One was 40 years old and the other was 70

years old. They rode on the same elevator every day. At the end of one incredibly long and exhausting day, the younger man was exhausted after seeing one patient after another all day long. But the older man looked as fresh as a daisy. The younger psychiatrist said to the older, “I don’t understand how you can listen to hurting people all day long and still look so great at the end of the day.” The older psychiatrist turned to him and said, “WHO LISTENS?”

Apparently, the older psychiatrist just pretended to listen to his patients. He didn’t care about their pain. He didn’t have compassion.

Years ago the actor Peter Ustinov said, “Charity is more common than compassion. Charity is tax-deductible. Compassion is time-consuming.” Recently Money Magazine named Ashburn as the 2nd best place to live in the U.S. But what is the cost of living in Northern Virginia? The median cost of a house is more than \$500,000. If you want to rent you’re going to pay an average of \$2,100 per month. According to the National Economic Institute, the average family of four needs an additional \$90,000 to pay for things like food, child care, health care, and transportation. Most families need at least two wage-earners to make it all work. Who has time for compassion? And yet, if we are to touch another person’s life with the Gospel of Jesus we have to take time to listen to their story and care about their hurts and have compassion. In Matthew 9:36 it says, “*When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.*”

If the METHOD is PREACHING and the MOTIVE is COMPASSION, then what is the MEANS for GROWING GOD’S FAMILY? My friends, is YOU are the MEANS. You are Jesus’ disciples. In Matthew 9:37-38, Jesus says to his disciples, “*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*” I want you to look at some great advertising logos. They all have a hidden message. UPS (“UPS” always takes the high road, except when the package doesn’t get there, then it’s pronounced “OOPS”) Basking Robbins (31 Flavors); Amazon (From A-Z they will put a

smile on your face). These companies all became successful because they had a message they believed in. We in the church, the FAMILY OF GOD, we have a message. Is it a message you believe in? Do you believe the love of God in Jesus Christ can change people's lives? Do you believe in the promise of God—forgiveness, new life, resurrection—do you believe Jesus can make an eternal difference in a person's life? If you believe, then you are a part of GOD'S FAMILY. And God has a message he wants you to share. The METHOD IS PREACHING—"You are preaching a sermon each day by the things that you do and the words that you say." The MOTIVATION IS COMPASSION—"We love because God first loved us." And the MEANS IS YOU. God has given you the message of salvation. Now go and share it.