

**Christ Community Covenant Church  
In His Steps by Faith  
Pastor Dave Scherrer - August 19, 2012**

Now we have spent a summer setting again our mission and values in stone so to speak. That is good news and bad news in a way.

Once you have established your values there is a terrible conflict that exists that did not exist before you established your values. Now you have to do something about them. Value statements demand that you respond! Before you identified the non-negotiables in your life you were free to do anything you want at any time you want. As soon as you say something is very important to you, your lifestyle changes . . . or should change . . . or you will be accused of being disingenuous. Or worse . . . a liar.

Let's talk about values for a moment. Now usually we all hold several important values in our lives at any one time. Life circumstances can change them. If you said I want to earn a Ph. D and then you earned one, that value no longer holds much sway in your life. Then at times your values may seem to be in conflict with each other. For instance let's say you value eating well. You have said to yourself I am committed to a healthy diet of low fat and no white sugars. And then someone shows up from the western slope with a fresh peach pie filled with sugar. Psychologists call that "a values conflict." I call it, "Can I have ice cream with that pie?"

In order to resolve these ongoing values conflicts with some hope of success these same psychologists encourage putting your values into a list by order of the most important; A values hierarchy. Us regular folks call that **putting first things first**.

**First Things First**

This is a very Christian idea. Here is one example I have seen where someone has said if you are a Christian these should be your values in order of importance.

**God  
Family  
Work**

Some have looked at this list and found that they want to give it a little bit more definition:

**God  
Spouse  
Family  
Church  
Work**

**DISC:**What is the problem with this list being a hard and fast list?

What exactly are first things and what exactly does "first" mean? Are first things established by the amount of time they demand, because then work and sleep are my most important values. But if they are determined by how much it costs, then like me probably your spouse and family probably take first place. And you all just said that "first things first" doesn't mean that this list can never be shuffled around into a different order for the moment. I'm driving to a church prayer meeting and my wife calls and says she is stopped on the highway with a flat tire. According to this hard and fast list, my spouse comes second. I'm not so sure though. I might pray on my way to fix my wife's car.

Here at 4Cs we have established 5 Stones or Values. In no special order they are:

Multiplying Church, Teaching Church, Celebrating Church, Family Church and Community Minded Church. While we have said that in 2012 and 2013 we feel that we want to work on the community minded part of our DNA, in fact these values all dovetail into each other in many ways. There is one trump value that transcends all of these, and Jesus gave us that value:

**Matthew 6:33**

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

The word 'seek' in the Greek (*zēteite*) means to "*actively pursue*" or "*to go after*." It's in the ongoing present tense. It implies that one continuously strives and endeavors for something. Every day of your life you ought to seek first and hard after the kingdom of God.

Now in order to seek the kingdom, you must first seek the King. Because you cannot have a kingdom without a king. The first priority of your life ought to be to seek the King of the kingdom. To know Him and follow Him and hear Him and obey Him.

We have said it here before. Jesus' gospel of the Kingdom tells us Christian life is more than just accepting the Lord, it is seeking the Lord. The Lord is not just someone you passively accept. He is someone you actively seek. I can tell you something about your relationship to God at this very moment without even knowing you. I can tell you how much of God you have - you have all of God that you want.

This Kingdom of God is the trump value, the last best hope. The Kingdom of God is our starting point and the finish line. Things seen are temporary but things unseen are eternal. There is no other prize worth straining for . . .

**Philippians 4**

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Nothing matters more than the rule and reign of Christ.

**Arlys and Marty**

What makes you so value driven?

Is there one value that God has put on your heart in particular?

Is there something about this decision to move forward with our hopes of building on 100<sup>th</sup> and Wadsworth that feels like it is satisfying our core values?

So back to our idea of a crisis; we here at 4Cs have established our values and now we must seize them or be guilty of being disingenuous and false. We have to seize the day.

**Seize the Day**

**Carpe Diem – Dead Poets Society**

Only today matters. Scripture sometimes encourages us by telling us that our lives are but dust and vapor, over before we know it. Yesterday is a memory, tomorrow has no guarantee. We only have today. So, we take the evidence of God's faithfulness from our past and pair it with the promises of hope for our future for those who are in Christ Jesus. This gives us courage and power to be Kingdom citizens today. How do we know that? "The Bible tells us so."

**Matthew 6:34**

“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

***You don't have because you don't ask***

**Matthew 7:7-11**

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Does this mean that everything a child of God (or a church) asks for he/she gets?

1. First of all, ***you don't need everything you want***. I wish I had all the money back that I had spent in my life on things that I wanted that I didn't really need.
2. The second lesson is, ***you don't want everything you need***. I never wanted the discipline that I got as a child, but I needed every one of them.
3. The third lesson is, ***God doesn't give us everything we want***. I, for one, am so glad that He doesn't. You know, one of the greatest blessings of God is found in those things that He doesn't give us.

When you pause to consider that God is infinitely ***strong*** and can do all that he pleases, and that he is infinitely ***righteous*** so that he only does what is right, and that he is infinitely ***good*** so that everything he does is perfectly good, and that he is infinitely ***wise*** so that he always knows perfectly what is right and good, and that he is infinitely ***loving*** so that in all his strength and righteousness and goodness and wisdom he raises the eternal joy of his loved ones as high as it can be raised—when you pause to consider this, then the lavish invitations of this God to ask him for good things, with the promise that he will give them, is unimaginably wonderful.

But He does give us good things. Only good things. He does not give serpents to children. Therefore, the text itself points away from the conclusion that ***Ask and you will receive*** means ***Ask and you will receive the very thing you ask for when you ask for it in the way you ask for it***. It doesn't say that. And it doesn't mean that.

Listen to this confession of an unknown confederate soldier:

I asked God for strength that I might achieve.  
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.  
I asked God for health that I might do greater things.  
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.  
I asked for riches that I might be happy.  
I was given poverty that I might be wise.  
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men.  
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.  
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life.  
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.  
I got nothing that I asked for - But everything I had hoped for...  
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.  
I am among all men most richly blessed.

If we take this passage as a whole, it says that when we ask and seek and knock—when we pray as needy children looking away from our own resources to our trustworthy heavenly Father—he will hear and he will give us good things. Sometimes just *what* we asked. Sometimes just *when* we ask it. Sometimes just *the way* we desire. And other times he gives us something better, or at a time he knows is better, or in a way he knows is better.

And of course, this tests our faith. Because if we thought that something different were better, we would have asked for it in the first place. But we are not God. We are not infinitely strong, or infinitely righteous, or infinitely good, or infinitely wise, or infinitely loving. And therefore, it is a great mercy to us and to the world that we do not get all we ask.

**Matthew 7:20**

For truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

***In His Steps, Charles Monroe Sheldon, 1897***

***Take Jesus at his word***

I heard about a missionary who was getting ready to embark and go away to a foreign country. As he was getting on the ship, just going up the gangway, a friend of his, who was a very wealthy person, came to him and slipped an envelope into his hand that was sealed.

His friend said, "You take this envelope, and if at any time while you are overseas you come to the place where you have exhausted every other possibility, and you don't know where else to turn, and you have a need that you cannot meet anywhere else, open the envelope."

Well, the missionary took the envelope, thanked him, put it in his pocket, went up the gangplank and he stayed on that mission field for twenty years. At the end of twenty years he came back home, walked down that same gangplank, met by that same wealthy friend, and he returned the envelope back to the man, still sealed, still unopened, and he said, "Never did I come to a place where I did not know where to turn, nor what to do. God met my every need in every moment. Thank you though."

***Ask Seek Find with me. Find the faith to move mountains;  
Faith to put first thing first,  
Faith to seize the day,  
Faith to pray, "Thy will be done."***