

Christ Community Covenant Church
Healthy Things Grow: The Healthy Missional Church
Pastor Dave Scherrer - April 27, 2014

Video - Who likes poppies?

"Healthy things grow"

Makes sense doesn't it. It is a good slogan. Makes a great bumper sticker and generally I agree. But this doesn't say it all does it.

Cancer grows. Weeds grow. Beer bellies grow.

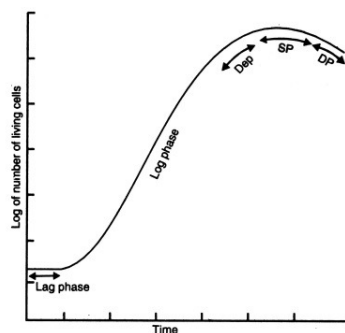
Those things are not so healthy. Our series for the next several weeks is about the church and trying to come to terms with how we can yield to the will of God so completely that we experience the 100 fold blessing of God. We want to be healthy and we want to grow, but that has a lot of subtle implications to it. Help me for a minute think this through.

Discussion: When you apply this axiom to the church we need to do a lot more work to think this all the way through. What about the idea that **healthy churches grow**? Is this a given? What kind of things do we need to think through on this idea?

What does health look like?
What is the pathway to health?
What is a good definition of growth?
What challenges to health should we anticipate?
What about times when it seems like growth but it is false or times of pruning by God when it feels like getting smaller? How are we to interpret these things?
Is suffering part of the equation?

Here is at least some of the problem. There are things of this world – which is ultimately finite and passing away – look like they are growing – but they eventually die. All things die.

All things in *this* kingdom die – The Sigma Curve



"Living things grow to a size predetermined by DNA and environment. . . But once any living thing reaches its prescribed size, it stops growing. It's not a matter of health. It's a matter of God's design."

Here is the deal though; the church is not of this world. The Church, our church – 4Cs – is the eternal expression of the mind and heart and will of Christ. The church is His Body – resurrected and alive. Organic and growing and definitely not governed by the principalities and powers of this world system and its values. The church grows deep and out in ways that perplex and confound the world. There is something I want you to know about the church:

The gates of Hades, the powers of death, will prevail against every institution but one; the Church!

I am going to say some things that may not ring true with your experience but that does not change these true truths:

The church of Jesus Christ is the most important institution in the world. The assembly of the redeemed, the company of the saints, and the children of God are more significant in world history than any other group, organization, or nation. The United States of America compares to the church of Jesus Christ like a speck of dust compares to the sun. The drama of international relations compares to the mission of the church like a kindergarten riddle compares to Hamlet. And all pomp of May Day in Red Square and the pageantry of New Year's in Pasadena fade into a formless grey against the splendor of the bride of Christ before the throne of God. Take heed how you judge. Things are not what they seem. "All flesh is like grass. And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord (and all his family) abide forever" (1 Peter 1:24, 25). The media and all the powers, and authorities, and rulers, and stars that they present are a mirage. "For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

The Church Eternal – The Great Cosmic Drama

Ephesians 1:15-23

For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Today 23 other churches in the Arvada area are all preaching about the nature of the church and how important it is that we get it right.

The church is not in competition to the world any more than a school is or a hospital is or a bank is. What we offer though is something that education and health care and commerce can never offer to the world. Truth and Love. These are the mediums of exchange of eternal institutions. First we are all about telling the truth.

Telling the truth

Someday I will write the book that I have outlines entitled ***Categorical Lies***. It will confront the four main categories of lies that we all fall prey to:

1. Lies I believe about God
2. Lies I believe about me
3. Lies I believe about you
4. Lies I believe about the world

Truth is the new HATE Speech – In a time of deceit telling the truth is a revolutionary act

Loving unconditionally

You see the world is up to here in false love, earned love, love based on the shape of your body, the size of your intellect, the extent of your influence or the fame of your name. Deep inside those who have in one form or another earned their love or respect know that they are just one person away from being in second place.

So like our passage this morning I thank God for you and I pray for you:

Ephesians 1:15-19

For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

And in the shadow of the brilliant light of the resurrection I long for us to experience together the remarkable power of Christ's empowering love in the context of 'Church' lived well:

Ephesians 1:20-23

These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Healthy Missional Church – Pursuing Christ and His priorities in the world

This series for the second half of spring is a time of advancement. It is a time of church self-reflection but this time is dedicated to not just collectively staring at a mirror but more being devoted to a prayerful wondering what all God has in store for us as we continue to be grateful for His blessings.

In general I know what we will find. We will find that God wants us to go deeper in Christ – into His Son.



The Holy Spirit is always drawing us into a deeper abiding relationship with Jesus and we must together come to terms with what that looks like for us as a church. Then there is the idea that we are to go further in mission.



Telling others everywhere in words and deeds that Jesus loves them and there is an answer to the confusions of life. Together these concepts form a strategy for enjoying the Lordship of Christ:



"Go to all nations . . . "
"And make disciples . . . "

Love God, Love Others and Advance the Kingdom Together

Our role as pastors isn't to act as "professional Christians" on behalf of believers. Our job is actually to equip others to BE the church. It's in this equipping for service that people learn to use their own gifts, so that as Paul says "we may reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature".

In other words, this thing that we call "church" exists to teach us to serve and to love one another. This isn't just a cognitive exercise, but a "work." As Paul says in vs. 16; "as each part does its work".

Church is a vehicle that helps us learn how to love and serve one another. This is how we grow in maturity... by leaning into difficult challenges with others.

Several centuries ago in a mountain village in Europe, a wealthy nobleman wondered what legacy he should leave to his townspeople. He made a good decision. He decided to build them a church. No one was permitted to see the plans or the inside of the church until it was finished. At its grand opening, the people gathered and marveled at the beauty of the new church. Everything had been thought of and included. It was a masterpiece. But then someone said, "Wait a minute! Where are the lamps? It is really quite dark in here. How will the church be lighted?" The nobleman pointed to some brackets in the walls, and then he gave each family a lamp, which they were to bring with them each time they came to worship. "Each time you are here" the nobleman said, "the place where you are seated will be lighted. Each time you are not here, that place will be dark. This is to remind you that whenever you fail to come to church, some part of God's house will be dark."