

EACH ONE REACH ONE

At the beginning of the year, I stood here, and I unpacked our 2023 vision which is centred on loving and reaching people – **LOVE TO REACH AND REACH TO LOVE.**

Today, I am still convinced that it is what is on the heart of God for this church in this season. When God is up to something, anyone who gets to link up with it, will see God at work in his or her life.

We started off with the Jesus at the door campaign and that programme will continue, it is a programme that takes us into the streets with the gospel of Jesus. This is how the early church was birthed, that is how the apostles of old did it. The Bible says they went door to door preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. However, this morning, I would like to introduce to you another leg of our vision as we get into the 2nd half of the year.

For the coming 2 months, we are going to embark on a programme called **EACH ONE REACH ONE** and that will be subject of my talk this morning.

We are saying, there is a role for each of us in this vision and it will require your individual participation. We are going to embark on a journey of reaching people within our spheres of influence for Jesus.

- The fact of the matter is that most people come to know Christ through the efforts of a friend or a family member. Friends listen to and trust friends. So, to effectively reach people we must build relationships with them.
- How do people start attending church?
 - A friend invited me – 86%
 - Organised visitation – 6%
 - Invited by the pastor – 6%
 - Advertising – 2%
- 70% of unchurched people have never been invited to church in their whole lives.
- There is an open invitation from heaven to all the peoples of the earth but for that invitation to work out, someone must invite someone to encounter the kingdom of God.

Matthew 22:1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables, and said, 2 The kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who made a marriage for his son. 3 And he sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they would not come... 8 Then he said to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the exits of the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite them to the

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marriage. 10 So the servants went out into the highways and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good. And the wedding was filled with reclining guests.

What is at the heart of each one reach one?

Matthew 22: 8 Then he said to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the exits of the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite them to the marriage.

1. The Command: "Go and Invite"

- The Biblical mandate to followers of Jesus is clear: "Go and invite." God has prepared a great feast for all people and followers of Jesus are called to invite others to the feast.
- We are **not** cooks, who stay in the kitchen. We are **not** called to stay in the banquet hall and serve tables. We are "extenders of the invitation."
- Our job is to leave the banquet hall and go to where the people are and invite them to attend the feast God has prepared for them.
- Our job is **not** to sit in judgment. Our job is **not** to validate reasons or excuses. Our job is **not** to sit around and wait for others to come to use. God commands us: "Go and invite!"
- The feast is what we call the good news of Jesus – the news that says, you are forgiven, you are not alone, you matter in this life. This is the type of news that the world is in dire need of in our current day.

Matthew 22:9 Therefore go into the exits of the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite them to the marriage.

2. The Context: "The Main Streets"

- In this parable, Jesus gives us specific directions for fulfilling our mission with our local context: "go into the main streets."
- We are **not** asked to go "off the unfamiliar paths." We have an invitation which we are to extend to as many people as possible.
- The best way to do that is to go to the busy places where people are.
 - Where are the "main streets" in your life? Where are the places where your life intersects with the lives of others?
 - Where are the "main streets" in your community? Where are the places where you have opportunity to reach out to others?

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- Once you have identified the "main streets" for you, take time to consider how the invitation to attend God's banquet be extended in those places?

Matthew 22: 9 Therefore go into the exits of the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite them to the marriage. 10... both good and bad.

3. The Guests: Everyone

- To whom is God's invitation to be extended? Once again, the Biblical text is clear: "Invite everyone you find. . .both good and bad."
- God's banquet is a banquet for **ALL** people. God is the host; we are God's servants. We are the ones sent to invite those on God's invitation list: namely, everyone we find.
- We are **not** called to be selective in issuing the invitations. We are **not** called to invite only "good" people or people we think will make "good" church members. God's feast has been prepared for **ALL** people and our mission as followers of Jesus is to invite those whom God wants invited.
- How does this look like? Consider the following:
 - Name three unchurched people you know personally and invite them to attend a church-sponsored activity with you (marriage enrichment meetings, ladies and men's meeting, the youth group etc.)
 - Who is absent from our congregation? What group(s)/kind(s) of people are present in our community, but missing from our congregation?

Matthew 22: 2 The kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who made a marriage for his son. 3 And he sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they would not come.

4. The Event: "The Wedding Banquet"

- The wedding banquet is a delicious feast which God has prepared and wants us and others to enjoy.
- The *Each one reach one* idea requires everyone's involvement to invite others to attend the banquet which God has prepared.
- In the coming weeks, we are going to embark on a new teaching series and by God's grace, we will be dishing out delicious meals full of nutrients.

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- It is a series that will bless you in a tremendous way but also will be of a great benefit to your friends, colleagues, and family members.
- The title of the series will be **MANAGING LIFE IN A CHAOTIC WORLD**.
- Just from the title, you can get a feel of what we will be dealing with. The world is chaotic, life is a mad rush, we are exposed to a contemporary environment that is complex by nature.
- The question is, how does one manage life in such a situation. In the series we will be dealing with topics like:
 - Rising up after a fall
 - Success with personal and family finances
 - Navigating transitions of life
 - Before tying the knot
 - Raising kids in a chaotic world
 - Dynamics of blended families
 - Life after divorcing.
 - How to choose a church
- I am sure, these are issues that the ordinary person on the street grapple with and is looking for input and wisdom around them.
- This is a feast not to be missed and one to invite someone to attend. Lets rally behind this call and start to prayerfully consider whom the Lord might want to attend.
- To facilitate the invitation process, we will have a 50sec video invites that will be sent out on the Wednesday before the Sunday teaching session.
- Yours will be to send it to people who might be interested, post it on your social media platform, comment on it and in so doing, it will reach as many people as possible.
- I would like to ask you to make use of your social media platforms to talk about the church more in this coming season.
- I think our church is great, we have awesome worship and the teaching of the word is sound. How about going all out and talk about what God is doing here?

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Matthew 22:10 So the servants went out into the highways and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good.

5. The Response of God's Children.

- The command to "go and invite" demands a response from those to whom the call is issued.
- The call issued to the followers of Jesus is one that calls for faithful obedience. The followers of Jesus must respond to the call to invite others to attend God's banquet.
- In this regard, in what ways can you personally respond faithfully to God's call to "go and invite?"

6. The Response of the Guests:

- The invitation to attend God's banquet also demands a response from those to whom the invitation is extended.
- It may well be that some will respond negatively to the invitation extended by you on God's behalf to attend the banquet.
- That does **not** mean that there will not be a banquet. God's banquet will take place! Those who respond favorably to the invitation to attend God's banquet will enjoy the blessing that God has prepared for them.

Matthew 22:10 So the servants went out into the highways and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good. And the wedding was filled with reclining guests.

- The first invite was rejected by the guests but the king extended the invite to others. The servants did not give up after the first rejection. Their persistence resulted in this situation - *"And the wedding was filled with reclining guests."*
- What would happen if you or everyone here invites at least one person per week to come to the banquet God has prepared through our church? Would the wedding hall become full?

Acknowledgements:

1. R. T. Dealey (2003); INVITATIONAL EVANGELISM MADE EASY