

Series: Oikos – Changing Your World

Week 1 of 3

CDOBC – beginning on 5/29/11

Title: **“The Priority of Changing Your World”**

May 29, 2011

OBJECTIVE: To help believers understand the priorities for the church and for their life.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- OIKOS is coming! Attend one of our adult S.S. classes for the month of June
- VBS Registration for kids
- CDO Members & Friends e-mail list...being sent out this week...must subscribe by clicking on the link
- Youth Parents – summer camp mtg after 2nd service

Memorial Day...freedom...liberty...what precious gifts they are! We Americans are a fortunate people to have freedom and liberty a part of our normal life...to have these things so ingrained in our culture that we can't imagine life without them! However, due to our familiarity with freedom and liberty...due to the normal status of our life as Americans, many can easily take these blessings for granted and not realize the great sacrifice that makes them possible.

Our faith can suffer from the same tendency of taking for granted things that are amazing in the human experience. Churches are full of men and women, boys and girls – who don't realize the treasure they have in Christ...the amazing reality of their forgiveness in Christ. For many...and maybe this includes you...going to church and living for Christ daily has lost its luster and appeal, not because they don't believe, but because they have lost the wonder of God's truth. They have lost the understanding of how important Christ is to human life. Somewhere along the road they have walked...at

some point on their journey of faith, they have allowed the important things of this life to rise to an equal level – or maybe even to surpass – the wonder of their salvation. The *amazing grace* of God has been taken off the top shelf and placed among the many other things that comprise the week's activities.

I believe this is a problem for modern Christianity. What a great victory it is for Satan to lull us not to a state of disbelief...but to a state where we are passive about sharing our belief. What a Satanic coup to lull us into a pattern of thinking that doesn't deny the reality and truths of Christ, but simply robs them of the power, wonder, and the excitement they contain!

I would propose that there is nothing appealing about a Christian or a church that is passive and content to keep their faith to themselves!

- Is there anything appealing about someone who claims to be a patriot, yet has no joy or pride in their nation?
- Is there anything appealing about marriage when a husband or wife who says they love their spouse, but is never distracted by their presence when they walk into the room?
- Is there anything appealing about a church that worships the Creator of the universe, the Author of our Salvation – but lives in isolation of the community around them?
- Is there anything appealing about a Christian who professes Christ with their mouth and by attending church, yet in their heart they are bored with their faith and Christ is not a priority in their life?

No – these are not the qualities that draw someone to learn more about Christ. But Jesus was clear – we are to live our lives in such a way that we appeal to the non-believer! We are “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world”. These are two things...two qualities in our life and the life of our churches that should draw people to investigate the claims of Jesus! Instead, we see many Christians living a life devoid of eternal impact, and we see churches that seem to be devoid of clear direction and Biblically based mission for their existence. Regarding the confused state and lack of direction of many churches, John MacArthur says:

“There seems to be no end of the books being written today on the mission of the church. From many sources and from almost every possible viewpoint, the church and its task in the world are being studied, scrutinized, analyzed, praised, blamed, exalted, damned, criticized, and shored up. Every sort of program, principle, method, and scheme is being applied to its operation. With high visibility, the church is being discussed everywhere from the back room to the boardroom, from the kitchen to the seminary class, and by pastors, theologians, laymen, and even the people of the world. Yet, with all the study and concern, in few times of its history has more of the church been less certain about what it is, what it should be, and what it should do.” (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary,

Matthew, by John MacArthur, p. 342)

I believe he is correct...there is much confusion both inside and outside the church...as to what the mission of the church is.

This confusion is because we have a tendency to make things more complex than they really are – and to allow our sinfulness to enter the mix.

Illus. – diagram comparing man vs. woman

Shopping comparison

U.S. tax code

Some other illus of something that should be simple but we have added complexity?

We have done the same with the church...we have muddied the crystal clear water of life that Jesus offers. The crystal clear – pure mission of the church is found in Matthew 28:19-20 – what we call the Great Commission...

Matthew 28:19-20

“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.”

Notice the simplicity of the Great Commission!

Jesus commands the Church to have two priorities:

First – there is the command to “go” – to evangelize – not to wait for the unsaved to come to us – but that we are called to “go” to them! Jesus commands us to “make disciples”

(followers – those who have faith in Him and His sacrifice on the cross for their sins) “of all nations”. No room for

prejudice...segregation...no room for selective evangelism – but every culture, every ethnic group, every race... “all nations”. Our commitment to world-wide missions is based in this wide-sweeping command.

After someone comes to faith in Christ, we are called to baptize them – which we did last week with 12 of our people! So evangelism and baptizing those who believe in Christ makes up the first half of the Great Commission. The *second* half of our commission – our mission – is to *teach* the *truth* of Christ – Jesus says: “...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...”

Acts 20:27 (KJV) “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God”

This is why we have Sunday School classes for all ages – why our Youth Ministry and our Children’s Ministry faithfully teach the truth of Christ in the Bible. This is why we teach what the Bible says without hesitation or apology...because Jesus commanded us to do this! We teach it with gentleness and we teach it understanding that the message of Scripture is difficult to hear at times – but teach it we must – and obey it we must!

So the simple, crystal clear mission of the church is to evangelize all nations – and to teach the truth of Christ to believers.

Our mission statement for CDOBC is taken directly from this passage:

CDOBC is committed to helping people become mature followers of Christ.

I’ve been in ministry over 20 years...since November of 1989. I have always taught God’s Word – to the best of my ability and understanding. I have always tried to share Christ in the process of ministry...but have always been frustrated at the

feelings of intimidation, uncertainty, and of fear when it came to sharing the Gospel or discussing spiritual things with those outside of the church.

I have been blessed many times over the years as many have come to faith in Christ through my teaching or preaching...but in my personal life, it's been an ongoing challenge...and many times a missing element in my life.

My guess is that for most of you, your experience is not much different from mine.

Sharing Christ...evangelizing / witnessing – has always been a high priority in the church setting – but in my daily life, I've struggled with making this a priority in my life, something that I can practice each day.

Can you relate to this?

This is what Oikos is all about...this is what Oikos will help us do! More on that in a few minutes.

Is your salvation – is your life and forgiveness in Christ the highest priority in your life?

The only correct answer to this questions is **“YES!!!”**

If we hesitate...or if our answer is **“Sometimes”** or **“No”**, then we have a major problem.

The commands Jesus gave us – the church – are clear. Our mission – our job is to evangelize, baptize, and teach His truth. These things should be our highest priority – and doing ‘A’ work one of them well and ‘C’ or ‘D’ work on the other is not acceptable. As your pastor, I will not be satisfied with ‘C’ or ‘D’ work in the area of evangelism. Not in my own life – and not in the life of this church! Today I'm calling us all to

realize the priority that salvation – that evangelism must be in our life both corporately and individually – and for that to happen, we need to be reminded of how wonderful and glorious our salvation truly is!

Have you forgotten your first love? Have you allowed your love of Christ to be worn away by the years of life's demands?

Jesus helps us understand how excited we should be about salvation – how the kingdom of God rightly deserves to be the highest priority in our life!

Matthew 13:44-46

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

The “kingdom of heaven” is a phrase that means to be one of God's own – to be counted as one of His children – which can only occur through faith in Jesus Christ.

John 1:12-13

“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.”

So, “kingdom of heaven” = being a Christian – receiving forgiveness of sins is like...

Jesus mentions “treasure hidden in a field”. That's a bit foreign to us today – but in ancient Israel, there were no banks, safe

deposit boxes, or other safe places to deposit any valuables you might have owned. So, when you owned something of value, you would hide it somewhere on your property by burying it where nobody would find it. The ancient historian Josephus tells us that *“The gold and the silver and the rest of that most precious furniture which the Jews had and which the owners treasured underground was done to withstand the fortunes of war.”* (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew, by John MacArthur, p. 382)

Jesus equates the value of the kingdom of God – the value of our salvation – with extensive buried treasure!

The second parable Jesus used to illustrate the value of salvation is the pearl of great price. A merchant was a person who traveled vast distances to find items he could buy, then he would return home and sell them for a profit. This was a first century wholesaler! Pearls were one of the most valuable gems of the ancient world because they were very difficult to mine from the depths of the ocean. Salvation is like the most valuable pearl ever found!

That the men sold everything they had to obtain the treasure / pearl makes clear the high priority this was for them.

- Nothing else they had was more valuable or more important.
- Everything else they owned was worth less than the item they wanted.

At the beginning of each example, Jesus told us that “The kingdom of heaven is like...” So let’s make the application...

Application:

Value – treasure your salvation

Do you understand the high price paid for your salvation?

The high price helps us know that we could never pay the price ourselves, and that our salvation is of great value – not something to be taken for granted! If you realize how great a treasure your salvation is, you'll be more excited about sharing Christ with others!

Make sharing the Gospel – evangelizing – a top priority in our life.

Is sharing Christ the highest priority in your life?

The parable of the buried treasure and the Pearl of Great Price both tell us the huge priority obtaining salvation is – which should make us realize that helping others hear the message about Christ must be a priority in each of our lives!

The danger is being satisfied with our own salvation – but content to keep it for ourselves.

This is where *Oikos* comes into the picture.

God has given each of us our own little niche of humanity. Everyone has been given, on the average, anywhere from eight to fifteen people- individuals whom God has supernaturally and strategically placed in our relational world. The Greeks called that circle of influence your *oikos*- and throughout this series, we are

trying to help you discover who makes up *your* world. Those people are on God's radar screen. And I believe He wants to reach out to them through the one element they all seem to have in common- you!

Definition- A world changer is someone who actively encourages people in their relational world (their oikos) to become Christ-followers.

Beginning next week - June 5th – 26th - 4 Sundays

Oikos series will be taught in all 4 of our adult S.S. classes – Youth will begin on 6/12 when they return from summer camp.

Pick-up your Oikos book today if you plan to attend a Sunday School class.

Close in prayer