

The Strategy of Jesus

John 5:16-27

Detailed Outline from the Sermon on March 30, 2008

Old Testament overview – 16 Sundays from Creation to the Prophets. Gospels – 14 on Jesus; will be 16 by the time we move on. We've looked at Jesus from almost every angle – his birth, childhood, identity, miracles, prayers, pet peeves, his take on religion, power, prayer, heaven, forgiveness, unity. His triumphal entry and death...his resurrection and its implications.

Today we will talk about the strategy of Jesus. To get at this, we'll look at a well used structure familiar to many of us from the organizations we're involved in. In order to find clarity and direction...values, vision, strategy, goals, tactics.

Before we start, a simple acknowledgement: Any organization suffers if it doesn't know what it exists for and how people intend to accomplish the mission. Churches so often have the same story - juxtaposed values, competing visions and muddy strategy. For us, it's always best to start with Jesus, using his own words.

The driving Values

Love (from/for God, neighbors, one another, even our enemies).

Grace and mercy (John 3:16-17) to extend forgiveness and teach it as a way of life. Other great values – peace (of a sort), compassion, wisdom...

Doing the Father's will (John 5:16-23, 14:6-24)

An eternal Kingdom (Matthew 4:17, John 14: 1-6)

A way to the Father (John 14:6) A clear and sure pathway to eternal life, a new order that primarily exists in heaven but through Jesus overlaps Earth like never before.

The Vision – a picture of what will be. A dream.

The Day (Matthew 24:27-31, Luke 17:24, 30-35)

The Kingdom (Matthew 13:44-52, Matthew 18:1-4, Luke 12-14, John 18:36)

Matthew 6:9-13: “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done...” Jesus dreams of the Kingdom and its ideals visiting earth in practical daily ways as well as ultimate ways.

The Strategy

Incarnate God’s love and other qualities (John 1:1 -18)

Start the chain of disciple making (John 1:35-51) teaching them his unique and generous way of life.

Give himself up and away.

The Goals while he’s here?

Conquer sin and death. (John 1:29, Mark 8:31)

Create, illuminate and populate a pathway to heaven. (John 14:1 -6, Matthew 1:13-14)

Seek and save the lost. (Luke 19:10)

And from Luke 4:18, to “preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoner, recovery of sight to the blind, release for the oppressed...” A prophet’s fulfillment, but also a huge part of Christ’s agenda.

The Tactics

Choose and train disciples to be disciple makers (do it for them; do it with them; let them do it.)

Preach and teach truth, grace, love and zealous and generous faith...

Heal and help, both out of compassion and to substantiate his words and authority.

Provoke and astonish both to awaken faith and to stir the pot enough that he would have to die.

Our Mission

Matthew 28:18-20 – Make disciples, baptize them, teach them.

Acts 1:8 – Be his witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

Of course, we borrow from the *strategy* of Jesus.

1. We incarnate God's love.
2. We continue the chain of disciple making, teaching them Jesus' unique way of generous living.
3. We give ourselves up and away.

Of course, we own his *goals*.

1. See sin and death lose its hold on people's lives.
2. Create, illuminate and populate (with God's help) a pathway to heaven.
3. Seek and save the lost.
4. Preach good news to the poor and bless the prisoner, the blind, and the oppressed.

And his *tactics* have been working for a long time.

1. Choose and train disciples.
2. Preach and teach truth, grace, love...
3. Heal and help.
4. Provoke and astonish.
5. Die to ourselves with every hope of resurrection.

Before all of this, we must ask ourselves, "Do we own his values (love, grace, mercy, doing the will of God, bringing in the Kingdom?)" Do we dream his dreams and share his vision?