



2019 March Sermon Series: The Main Thing

Message #2 – The Main Thing... Tarrying for the Gift

Getting the Nod

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We can't afford to lose sight of the big rocks! And life has a way of blurring our focus. And to be honest... losing focus is an easy thing to do!! There's **Stress** connected to **family or jobs**. Stress connected to **drama**. **Frustration** with the **political arena** and **authority figures** at work. **Depressed by the critics and the haters**. Pressured by a schedule that's too busy and not enough down time. **All of these can break our concentration on the most important things. You know... the big rocks.**

And what are the big rocks?

- **Big Rock #1** - Loving the Lord God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength... and your neighbor as yourself!
- **Big Rock #2** – Committing our lives to growing toward spiritual maturity... and learning the role of the Holy Spirit in that growth.
- **Big Rock #3** – Becoming a proud citizen in the kingdom of God.
- **Big Rock #4** – Working intentionally to become a light in a dark world.

Transitional Statement: Today the Big Rock is growing toward spiritual maturity...

Connecting Us

George Barna has been surveying Americans and churches for three decades and has come to this conclusion... 4 out of every 10 adults in America has committed their lives to Jesus Christ... while 6 out of 10 have not. So, in reaction to that 6 out of 10 statistic... we do things like...

- **Fine-tune the worship** music so there's a wow factor...
- Start **new programs** that the big churches in Chicago or New York are doing...
- Throw countless thousands of dollars into our **church facilities to upgrade** and expand them so we can impress the lost and please the saints...
- **Increase the technology** footprint to better communicate on **Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat... and live stream** with those we could never reach otherwise...
- Strategically put together **sophisticated marketing plans** to draw the unchurched to church.
- **And we tell ourselves that we're on the right track... because we're trying to reach the 6 out of 10!!! But how's that working out for us? Are we truly making a dent in the 22,000???**

Now before you all throw your Bibles... electronic devices... or hymnals at me... let me explain. Almost all of the things I just mentioned were suggestions from myself and other leaders here at Heritage...and **they are still good ideas** and all of these things are a **justifiable investment** and are intended to positively impact the church's strategy to reach a lost world.

But are they the MAIN THING? Are they the BIG ROCKS? Are these things found in the Great Commission?

Did Matthew 28 say this... “Go into all the world and...

- Fine tune your worship?
- Try a boat load of new programs from Chicago or Los Angeles?
- Modernize the temples?
- Hire an IT Expert?
- Buy a 30 second commercial spot during the Superbowl?
- Once again... I’m not trying to slam on these methods... I just want to get the message right.

You see, Jesus told us the MAIN THING IN MATTHEW... Go and make DISCIPLES!

What would happen to the church and in the church if we put as much effort in the 4 out of 10... as we do with the 6 out of 10? **Barna says, “What would happen to the Church if we did not consider our job complete when people confess their sins, say a prayer to invite Jesus in? What would happen if the church believed that getting saved was considered the launching pad for a lifelong quest to become individuals who are completely sold out to the Son of God?” In other words... THE MAIN THING IS BECOMING DISCIPLES THROUGH SPIRITUAL MATURITY!**

NLT | Heb 6:1 **So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely, we don’t need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God.**

The Hebrew writer is saying to the Christians... so, you’re saved? DON’T STAY THERE... MOVE ON TO DEEPER AND GREATER THINGS!

But before we get to the source of our maturity... we have to address the...

Five Myths of Spiritual Maturity - (J. Oswald Sanders)

1. Spiritual maturity is not an aging process.

- Just because some have gray hair, it doesn’t mean they are spiritually mature.
- It not the length of years that promises maturity... it is the depth of years in Christ.
Spiritual maturity is an attitude about altitude!

2. Spiritual maturity is not instantaneous and final.

- There is nothing in scripture that suggests there is one decision that instantly matures you. It takes moral effort; personal discipline; and tough perseverance to reach higher places in spiritual maturity.
- **You need to build a fire to go higher.**

3. Spiritual maturity is not automatic with biblical teaching.

- The accumulation of biblical information is of immense value to a disciple, but it is only as the principles of Scripture are worked out in daily obedience that spiritual growth is advanced.
- **Surrender of the heart is what reveals the splendor of heaven.**

4. Spiritual maturity is not the mere possession of spiritual gifts.

- Possessing spiritual gifts are not the measure of spiritual maturity. Just look at First Corinthians where Paul tells them in chapter 1... You do not lack any spiritual gift... but I have to feed you milk instead of solid food.
- **It's not the possession of gifts that makes us mature... it's the production.**

5. Spiritual maturity is not merely copying Christ.

- Thomas A Kempis in his book *The Imitation of Christ* wrote that merely copying the characteristics of Christ without new birth and giving control to the Holy Spirit will result in failure eventually.
- **Trying to copy Christ without the help of the Holy Spirit is like trying to pull a battleship by backstroke. It's not copying Christ... it's clinging to Christ.**

Transitional Statement: On a recent vacation, Carmen and I were blessed to go to Alaska. The land of glaciers... brown bear... seals... and enormous forests. One of the bucket list items that I couldn't wait to cross off was eagles. I knew I would see many of them... **but I wasn't prepared for the lack of interest by the locals.** I found out that eagles have an unbelievable talent of reading thermals.

Thermals are the columns of air formed as heat rises from the ground. By staying in the warmth of the thermal winds, the eagles can continue to soar for long extended times. Eagles become experts in this. In this thermal action... gravity is deactivated. They become one with the wind. They have to flap at first... but soaring comes.

In Greek, the Holy Spirit is called *pnuema*, which means "current of air." Think about what this means for us! ON our own we flap and flap, but eventually we catch the current of air, and we soar. **This is how the Holy Spirit works with our spiritual maturity.** He's not only our coach; he's the power behind everything we do.

God's Take

Jesus told the 12NLT | Lk 24:49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

When Jesus left this world to be seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven... He made the MAIN THING VERY CLEAR... **Tarry until you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!! Why? There are many wonderful roles that He plays... but if we are to become disciples... we need Him to help us mature. Look how important He is in our growth as disciples...**

The Role of the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Maturity

1. **He is the Sin-Convictor.**
 - a. **Works in the hearts of all people.**
 - b. NLT | Jn 16:8-10 And when he comes, he will **convict the world of its sin**, and of **God's righteousness**, and of the **coming judgment**. 9 The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. 10 Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. **He is working in our hearts!!!**
2. **He is our Spiritual Counselor.**
 - a. **He dwells in us as a Comforter.** NIV84 | Jn 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— **Paraclete - alongside**

- b. **He guides us to deeper things.** NLT | Jn 16:13a *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard... hodegeo – to lead and to teach the way*
3. **He is our Sacred Communicator.**
- a. **He teaches us in all truth.** NLT | Jn 14:26 *But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. Didaxei – Teach individually and to hold discourse.* And that same verse tells us...
 - b. **He reminds us of all things Jesus said and did.** NLT | Jn 15:26 *“But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. The Holy Spirit is your prompter and reminder of Jesus.*
 - c. **He tells us of things to come.** NLT | Jn 16:13 *...He will tell you about the future.*
4. **He is Sanctifying Creator.**
- a. **He is the gift giver.** NLT | 1 Co 12:7-11 *A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. He is the advisor and distributor of your life as to what you can become to impact both the church and the world. But most importantly...*
 - b. **He is the fruit producer.** NLT | Ga 5:22-23 *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

Transitional Statement: But you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost comes upon you... **We need Him!!! He is the One who makes the impossible possible in our spiritual maturity. I close with this...**

Drawing the Net

Illustration of the Violinist Stomping on His Violin: It was advertised in one of our large cities that a great violinist would play on a violin worth \$250,000. The theater was packed. Many were curious and wanted to hear such an expensive instrument being played. The violinist went on stage and played very beautifully. Suddenly, he threw the violin on the floor and then began to stomp on it, crushing it to pieces, then walked off the stage. The people were shocked. But then the manager came on stage and said that the violinist did not really use the expensive violin but a pawn shop \$20 one. He would now play on the \$1,000 one. And so he did. **But few people could tell the difference. He simply wanted to show that it was the violinist rather than the violin that makes the music.** In the Master’s hands, even a \$20 fiddle would make good music. Every disciple knows this... do you?