

Past few months January-July our church has seen over 400 people give their lives to Jesus — the question must be asked — where are they? Did we do everything in our power to usher these people in / did we follow up, visit, pray for, contact each of these?

Critical dimension needed for our fellowship, our church, and this group of men this morning - God needs men that will be personally fruitful - be ready to stand in the gap.

**Ezekiel 22:30-31 – 30** *So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. 31 Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord God.*

## I. REALITY OF JUDGMENT

- A. Context of our scripture is a picture of the world we live today
  1. Background: COI living in sin - they have rejected God and bowed down to false Gods
    - a) Live in a world today broken by sin/ lost and hopeless
  2. The two outcomes for this situation was either Judgment or Salvation
    - a) People live today hang in the balance between salvation and judgment
- B. God is aware of the wickedness in the world we live

**Genesis 18:32** *Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."*

1. Sin must be accounted for
  - a) Understand God's view of sin has not changed - sin is still a violation of God's perfect standard
- C. God leans towards mercy over and over again
  1. Shows us the nature of God towards humanity

**2 Peter 3:9-10** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

- a) Sin will be judged but God also desires to save and forgive

## II. LOOKING FOR A MAN

**Ezekiel 22:30** *So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it*

- A. God always uses men to rescue people from their sin / our task - stand in the gap
  1. Standing in the gap gives the picture of man standing in places of brokenness and destruction
    - a) Seeing the needs of other people being willing to do something about it
  2. Essence of being a disciple is being a man that will love people
    - a) Have to have eyes that will see the needs of people around you- people that are broken and hurting
  3. Points us to potential of what a man can become
    - a) That God would use our lives to rescue people / help save people
- B. The man that can't be found : The missing dimension in disciples

**Ezekiel 22:30-31 – 30** *So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one*

1. Disciples that are not fruitful
  - a) It is the job of every disciple to be personally involved with people / actively following up and working with new converts
  - b) *Followup is the concert directors job, pastors job, seasoned saints job, altar call preachers job.*
2. Disciples that are focused on the wrong thing
  - a) What are you focused on when you come to church - are you aware of new people, visitors that walk through our door?
  - b) *On any given Sunday morning we can have between 30 - 50 visitors in church - do you know who they are? Last week - had about 45 visitors - do you know who they were*
  - c) *We make assumptions about people - old people "obviously religious" last Sunday morning I prayed with an older guy mid 70's looked clean cut like a typical religious couple going church shopping - actually this man was an alcoholic for the past 20 years completely broken by sin"*
  - d) *tattooed up guy I can't relate with them - they don't look like me"*

3. Disciples missing in action
  - a) If you are a disciple and you are not actively working with new converts - that is a serious problem
  - b) God looked for a man who would stand in the gap - and there was no man found
- C. God response of judgment is the result of men missing in action
  1. **People being judged was avoidable**

**Ezekiel 22:30-31** *So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. 31 Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord God.*

- a) Do the needs of other people bother you/ do you notice new people in church/ do you know who's missing?
  - (1) Notice our text God sought for a man **among them who would stand** in the gap - it was among the men that were already there - the problem was no one was willing to stand in the gap
2. Our church will not survive without disciples being fruitful and replicating themselves
  - a) In 1 or 2 years from today - How many disciples will be in church pursuing ministry because you personally won them to Jesus and followed up on them? In the past 5-10 years how many men are in church today because of you?
  - b) Personal fruitfulness must go from being a concept and theory to a personal reality at work in your life
3. Ministry Magnifies - you become a larger version of yourself where every you go
  - a) The Church grows by disciples being personally fruitful - Men who want to pastor someday and are not fruitful today is an absolute contradiction

### **III. BEING THAT MAN**

#### A. Practical steps to fruitfulness outside the church

1. Be involved in corporate evangelism
  - a) Not just an advertising campaign / handing out flyers is important - but that's not evangelism
  - b) Making Jesus known to people - sharing your testimony - confronting people with their sin - that's evangelism
2. Be involved in personal evangelism

**2 Timothy 4:2** *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*

- a) Be ready at any time in any arena of life - when my wife and I were pioneering - every outing was an outreach/ we saw people at the store/ at the gas station/ at the bank or in the park and would say there's our next couple, my next disciple, the first couple we will launch, first missionary from our church - do you see people the same way?

#### B. Practical steps to fruitfulness inside the church

1. Have to have eyes for the visitor / be ready to make a connection
  - a) This morning - every disciple needs to be engaged with new people - who are they, where are they from (not an interrogation - rather you are showing that you actually care about them)
    - (1) Invite them to sit with you during service / invite them to pray with you at the altar call / take them out to lunch after service - invite them to your house
    - (2) No visitor should feel alone or unconnected with a DISCIPLE in our church
  - b) We cannot get so absorbed with our own circle of friends or details of our own personal ministry that we miss the whole point of what we are doing
2. At an altar call - every single disciple here should be ready to:
  - a) Talk to people who may not be saved - give them the courage to pray
  - b) Be aware when people raise their hands / be ready to pray with them / if you don't know how to lead someone to Jesus and you claim to be a disciple then ask / don't assume someone else will do it

#### C. The supernatural dimension

**John 15:16** *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

1. Saving lost people is God's idea not ours
  - a) This is how our text begins - God looking for a man that would stand in the gap
  - b) God makes the miracle possible when we as men do our part and stand in the gap