

Chapter 4 “The Practice of Risk-Taking Mission and Service (Matthew 20:20-28) By Bishop Robert Schnase Weekly Readings

Monday: Lev. 19:18

The book of laws in the O.T. not only restrained violence, fraud, theft, and harm but called people to... _____

Tuesday: Ps. 99:4; 33:5; 10:18; 82:3

The Scriptures link love of God to love of neighbor. It calls God’s people to charity, justice, and mercy.

Wednesday: Micah 6:8

What does God require of us? What does that mean to you? How will that affect your plans for today, tomorrow, next week?

Thursday: Luke 4:18-19

Jesus echoes the prophets to describe his purpose. In the same way that Jesus knew his purpose, God’s church knows its purpose found in Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples of all nations.” How we “go” and “make” disciples can vary as long as it produces lives transformed in Christ’s name.

Friday: Matthew 20:20-28

The stories, teachings, and parables of Jesus consistently point to God’s love for the poor, the sick, the outcast, and those most vulnerable to the oppression of society. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to “be doers of the word - not merely hearers” (James 1:22).

Saturday: Mt. 25:31-46

Jesus tells us that in every act of compassion and kindness, people touch Christ. You are God’s hands and feet. Through your actions, people encounter Christ.

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5 Practices fruitful congregation

Risk-Taking Mission and Service

“When weighing up whether to take an action that could leave us vulnerable to failing or some other form or loss (of reputation, money, social standing, pride etc.), we have an innate tendency to misjudge four core elements in assessing risk”. Margie Warrell of Forbes magazine:

1. We over-estimate the probability of something going wrong.
2. We exaggerate the consequences of what might happen if it does go wrong.
3. We under-estimate our ability to handle the consequences of risk.
4. We discount or deny the cost of inaction and sticking with the status quo.”

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2013/06/18/take-a-risk-the-odds-are-better-than-you-think/>

What about taking “risks” in the church?

Do most churches take Risks or do they play it Safe? R or S
Should churches be known for taking risks? Y or N
Is God a risk taker? Y or N

**Romans 5:8 “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
God took a great RISK.**

Churches should be known for taking risks because God is a risk taker.

Risk-Taking Mission and Service includes the projects, the efforts, and work people do to make a positive difference in the lives of others for the purposes of Christ, whether or not they will ever be part of the community of faith.

Practices of a Fruitful Congregation

1. By offering the Radical Hospitality of Christ, church members bring others into contact with the church.
2. Through Passionate Worship, God transforms us/them.
3. People grow in faith and love through Intentional Faith Development.
4. God's process of forming disciples continues as people practice Christ's compassion with their neighbors through Risk-Taking Mission.

- ❖ The prize is helping others find a restored relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Peter 1:3-9

With the goal before us and knowing that those who do not yet know Jesus Christ as their Savior are going to spend eternity separated from God, it spurs us on to practice Risk Taking Mission and Service so that through our efforts people can hear and understand God's grace and pardon for themselves.

What is the opposite of Risk-taking?

- ❖ Playing it Safe. Being Predictable. Being Comfortable. Focusing on what is Convenient. Fear of failing. Being inwardly-focused. Doing things, the same way we have always done them.
- ❖ The problem with playing it safe is that without risk-taking mission and service, churches quickly become ineffective.

➤ **The number one reason God's church exists - is to be in mission!**

Jesus said, "For those who want to save their life, they will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, will save it." Luke 9:24

"For those who want to save their church, they will lose it, and for those churches who lose their church for my sake, will save it."

God uses congregations to change lives and transform the world which means it is not an accident that God places congregations in a world that is troubled and facing unbelievable challenges.

How do we become a church that practices Risk-Taking Mission and Service?

It begins with one heart, with each one of us asking ourselves are we willing to take a risk?

It begins with a heart open to listening to God's leading and then having the faith to step out and do whatever it is that God is asking us to do.

And if we miss the mark and don't get everything right, we don't give up, we KEEP TAKING RISKS!

What is God asking you to do? _____

What is God asking us to do? _____