

## Two Jars

Time moves on as we enter into the days of the woodchuck and six more weeks of winter or not.

What's ahead for us, for the economy, the world and the church? Do we just keep on keepin' on with our shoulder to the plow and hope it isn't with our head under the sand? Are the financial situation and the temporary bubble of seeming relief going to burst? Where are we as it concerns the end times at least for those who consider it a possibility rather than an aberration? Do we settle the uncertainty of our lives and our faith by hoping for what was in a new configuration that gives the appearance of what we want rather than what God is calling us to?

Do we have the right, even the responsibility, to believe—even expect—God to speak to us about what is and is to come and what we are to prepare for? How do we get into position for such an exchange and how do we prepare ourselves for the plans and purposes of God that will cause us to be “successful” at least in God's eyes as we enter into the tumult that may be ahead?

The first four months of sermons I have presented have one essential relational message: Is your heart open to God—have you said “Yes” to God and what does this mean for you and this church? Starting the week after Epiphany I have entered into a second essential that comes from Matthew 18:20, “*Wherever two or three gather together in My Name (the name of Jesus) there I AM in the midst of you.*” This essential is relational too and deals with our entering into the Presence of God that will be life changing not only for us but for this church as well.

Put the two together and you have what I believe are the keys to participating successfully in the extending of God's Kingdom come through His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Is that a goal we should have as The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a denomination? I don't know but I do know it is a goal we must have if we take seriously the Lord's Prayer.

If relational faith is at the center of our Christianity—which means having a vital relationship with God individually and corporately whenever we gather together in Christ's Name—then opening our hearts to God and our Church to His Presence are the two essentials that will bring us into the “success” God intends for us.

Want to maximize your relational faith potential? Then open your heart to God, even right now with the confession of your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, inviting Him into your heart right now; asking Him to forgive you of your sins and seeking His Kingdom first knowing that He will add all things you need. Then enter into to the gathering of His church together in one accord, knowing that God's promise to show up with His Presence will be the empowerment to anything done in His Name.

When we start to operate in the two essentials of relational faith what must we overcome to be “successful” in God's scheme of things? Essentially one thing that can be explained with a science experience that took place:

## The Two Jars

Two Mason jars had equal amounts of water and rice place in them. The tops were screwed on and they were left for 80 days. In front of each one was a **written** message that said the following; Jar one—“I love you. Live.” Jar two—“I hate you. Die.” The messages were not spoken or voiced. They were simply written and place before the appropriate jar. In 80 days the rice and water in jar one was still white and not significantly decomposed. Jar two was black and moldy.

What is being revealed here through science is that our intentions are communicated whether we want them to be or not. Even water and rice get the non verbal communication. For Christians right motive and intention must come from God and His intention (will) for us, individually and corporately, not from ourselves. If we are not in and pursuing a daily abiding relationship with God, one in which our hearts are open to His will; and, if we are not gathering together to experience God's Presence wherein His will (intention) for us will be made manifest, too often, we will find ourselves feeling, intending, saying, doing the vary things that turn people away rather than enable them to experience God and the touch of His Presence.

I firmly believe that whatever you do motivated by self that does not line up with the two essentials of relational faith in God will ultimately contribute to moldy rice. Formula for “success” in God's Kingdom—Open heart + God's Presence = a Church and People (Jar) full of Clarity and Life. This is the way to go that leads to “success” in the Kingdom of God and His good will (intentions) for us.

Peace,  
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