

Circle Up 1 – Intimacy and Increase

Does anyone want a better life?

Welcome to Redemption Church in Plano Texas. My name is Chris Fluit and I am excited about our new sermon series.

Over the next weeks we are going to share a simple truth and see lives changed for the better.

The simple truth from God's Word is going to make your life better. You have been looking for better... Better is nearer than you know. The better you are looking for is not hidden in a cave on the other side of the word... better is on the other side of you. Just beyond you, you will find a better life.

Circle

Does anyone know what shape this is? You learned this shape in pre-school. The circle is a simple shape yet powerful & useful. You see the design of the circle everywhere.

Over the next few weeks we are going to ask you to circle up. The design of the circle is what you need in your life. Circle Up.

Circle up

We need to circle up, huddle up, gather up... it is here we find something better.

Let's look at this month's scripture memory passage together.

Hebrews 10:24 (NIV2011) And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,

Hebrews 10:25 (NIV2011) not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

V24 tells us to think of ways to help each other.. encourage each other... spur on another on toward our potential. Our potential in God – Love & Good Deeds!

We need to circle up and fulfill our God given potential.

V25 tells us to help each other to NOT GIVE UP. By connecting, by meeting together, encourage one another. And that we should do this ALL THE MORE as you see the day approaching?

What is this day the writer of Hebrews is talking about? The day that Jesus returns. The closer we get to that day... all the more we should meet up, gather up, circle up, spur one another on to reaching their potential, and encouraging people to not give up. ALL THE MORE! MORE THAN EVER BEFORE we should do this!

In verse 25 the Greek word for “meeting together” means to gather up, to circle up.

This verse is usually preached as a reminder that we need to gather together for Sunday worship at a church site location. As important as it is that we are gathered here today, using that verse this way really sells it short.

The Church in the book of Acts didn't just gather at one location, one time a week.

Acts 2:46 (NIV2011) Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

Acts 2:47 (NIV2011) praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Every day.. at the temple courts... Every day... in their homes...

I want you to get the feeling that the early church, the church that God birthed with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2... this church did things differently than we are doing today.

Circles > Rows

The early church did not meet in rows. They met in circles. They circled up in their homes, in public areas, in persecution, in prison, in good times, in celebration... Every day and everywhere they circled up.

Rows are really failing us.

- Social media – Your feed is a row you swipe past. More social media than ever, yet more isolated, depressed, and sad people than ever.
- Church rows – You can sit on a church row all your life and not even know the people on your row. You can be going through tragedy and no one on your Church row even knows, because rows offer very little connection.

Circles are better than rows. We need to Circle Up!

Circle up

How did God expect this to work from the beginning? Let's look in our Bible? What is the first book in the Bible? Genesis!

Genesis 1:11 (NIV2011) Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.

Genesis 1:12 (NIV2011)

The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

God creates a tree, and that tree is filled with seed, and that tree multiplies itself.

God does not just create a tree, he fills that tree with so much creative energy that it can fill the world. God creates forests inside a single tree.

If God put this much attention into vegetation, what would He do for mankind?

Genesis 1:27 (NIV2011) So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:28 (NIV2011) God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

God puts his seed within man. He creates man after His own image. And God blesses and tells them to "be fruitful & multiply."

From the beginning God reveals that He wants His creation to increase.

God wants you to increase.

God orders all of creation and designs it specifically for increase.

God wants you to increase and he wants everything in your circle to increase.

Job, relationship, skill, purpose, finances, dream, children, community...

How much does God want you to increase? Is there a limit? He only wants you to increase how much?

He told mankind in Genesis 1:28 to be fruitful and increase in number and FILL THE EARTH. God wants you to increase to where you fill the whole earth. HE HAS GIVEN YOU THE POWER TO DO IT!

Increase requires intimacy

God set this up from the beginning.

- A flower does not multiply without a bee pollinizing it with grains from another flower. It requires intimacy.
- Most animals require intimacy to multiply.
- Humans do not multiply without intimacy.

This is why circles work better than rows. Rows lack intimacy, circles breed intimacy.

God wants you to increase, but increase requires intimacy.

So the Devil shows up in the garden, and what does he do? The serpent attacked their intimacy. He attacked Adam & Eve's intimacy with each other, and their intimacy with God.

The devil understands that God has a plan. The devil understood that if he can stop intimacy, he can stop increase. If he can do this, he will stop the plan of God and you will never fulfill your purpose.

Anything that attacks intimacy has its roots in the devil.

Sin – breaks intimacy with God and other people.

Pornography – it is an experience without intimacy.

Sexual relationships outside of marriage – They share intimate experience, but do they have true intimacy? Do they bring the increase God designed them for?

Divorce – It destroys intimacy. It destroys future generations by multiplying heartache.

When talking about divorce God says this to the prophet Malachi.

Malachi 2:15 (NIV2011) Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

God wants Godly offspring. He wants us to multiply the seed image He placed within us. This can't happen without intimacy. God hates divorce because it destroys intimacy.

2 chapters later Malachi ends his book and the entire Old Testament with this verse.

Malachi 4:6 (NIV2011) He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

It is God’s desire to bring us back to intimacy. Without intimacy, there is no increase.

Increase requires intimacy

Are you willing to get out of your row and circle up?
Have you been lacking intimacy? Is it why you are lacking increase?
Before today is over I want us to allow God to turn our hearts back to intimacy.

4 aspects of my life

Public Me

This is the me I allow you to see. What you see is often better than what is really going on behind the eyes, in the mind and heart... But this is public me, the me I allow you to see.

Sometimes public me is fake. Public me decides how much of myself I want to share...

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NIV2011)

so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

We are to not only share the gospel... BUT OUR LIVES AS WELL.

Public me often lacks intimacy and increase.

The Mask – Secret

The mask we wear hides the truth. Behind the mask we hide our struggles, fear, failure, doubt, questions.

Proverbs 28:13 (NIV2011) Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Behind the mask no one prospers. No intimacy and no increase.

James 5:16 (NIV2011) Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Scripture tells us there is forgiveness when we take the mask off and confess to God (1 John 1:9), but here it tells us there is healing when we take the mask off and confess to each other.

Could it be that the healing you need is in this room right now? The healing you need may be in the face of a brother or sister.

Blind Spot – the me you see, that I don't see

Have you ever had some food stuck in your teeth? Ever have something wrong with your clothes or hair? Ever realize that many people saw you but no one told you?

There are some things we can't see about ourselves. It is only in intimacy that we learn these things about ourselves.

Proverbs 27:6 (NIV2011) Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

You need intimacy. You need people who see and care enough to tell you what you can't see.

Potential me

No one truly knows their potential. I don't know and you don't know. GOD KNOWS.

God created you to increase. Only He truly knows our potential.

We need to circle up with God. We need intimacy with the one who sees our true potential.

1 Corinthians 3:9 (KJV) For we are labourers together with God...

Ephesians 4:16 (NIV2011) From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

We is better than me

God's plan is for you to increase, but you can do it alone.

...But I have been hurt. ...You don't know my story.

I totally understand this. The worst thing about being around people is... people.

People can hurt you. People can say terrible things and really disappoint you.. It is true.

They did this to Jesus. They hurt him. They said the worst things. If anyone could have cut people out of His life it was Jesus... But from the cross he drew a big circle around everyone and prayed a prayer of forgiveness.

You really want to increase...? Increase today in trust and forgiveness.

Tear down your barriers and make a circle. We is better than me

Your Bible says...

1 can chase a 1000, but 2 can chase 10,000... because we is better than me

2 are better than 1 because if one falls down the other can lift them up... We is better than me.

Iron sharpens iron, so does one person sharpen another... because We is better than Me!

musician

Circle up

Redemption we need to circle up. We need to go beyond the row. We need intimacy and increase.

What is your circle? Who are you sharing your life with?

Is God in your circle?

Is there room in your circle for others?

Will you join a circle today?

Support group, Connect Group, Play Groups...