

Article 11 Evangelism and Missions

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I wasn't sure I was gonna get to speak. I thought Jesus was coming back right then and there.

Well, I'm no doctor, but I did stay at a Holiday Inn last night.

I have the privilege of talking about ***the only number that matters.***

As a church planter, there's many numbers that are worthy of counting, but only one number really matters. We count ***attendance*** over the last six years. I've had a lot of angst over that number that I count. Anybody else in the room?

I count the ***offering***. Had some angst on that one too, but there's only one number that matters.

You see, when we planted our church six and a half years ago in Vista, California, at the same high school that I attended as a 4'11" freshman. I told the Lord I would plant a church anywhere, just not home, for a prophet is without honor in his own home.

But the Lord called me to plant a church at Rancho Buena Vista High School, where on the first day of my freshman year, I plotted to be prom king. Twenty years later, I'm now declaring who is the King of Kings, because there's only one number that matters.

In my context, let me give you what that number is. There's 3.3 million people in San Diego County. If the latest data is correct, 87% of them live without a relationship with the God who made them, pursued them, and made a way for them to be saved.

That number, if it's exactly correct, is 2,869,811 people.

That number bothers me. That number I lose sleep over. That number angsts me in every way. And what's fascinating is we've spent so much time as the church competing with the church across the street, finding our differences, while in my city, 2.8 million people are currently on a pathway to hell.

My friends, I challenge you with the Article of 11 today. I encourage you with the Article of 11 from the Baptist Faith and Message, that this is the only number that matters in your city.

It's not even a good business plan to show up in a city and worry about sharing the 13% of the target market share that's already taken, for 87% of it is available.

And the church across the street is not the Quiznos or your subway.

We are all part of the kingdom of God. So to link arms with the city that you go into, with the missionaries that are already there, that have already set before you a ministry in place, to link arms and say, we are the church.

How old is your church? My logo started six and a half years ago, but the truth is we're a 2,000-year-old movement that surpassed empires and kingdoms.

So I implore you today with the words from **John 4:4**, where it said, *now Jesus had to go to Samaria, a place where most Jews would avoid.*

I don't know about you, but my destination is from point A to point B, the fastest way possible. But the Jews would avoid Samaria because simply they were spiritual mutts, but not Jesus because he had to go to Samaria.

My friends, I had to go to Rancho Buena Vista High School because the Lord God Almighty called me to the same school that I attended.

And it's there where he did a great work. First in me as a ninth grader who came to know the Lord, after seeking the approval of man, I found the approval of God. Not by what I have done, by what he had done for me. And it transformed me.

Never in my life had I been known and loved in a perfect combination like I did with Jesus. And that transformational work led me 20 years later to plant a church at the same place where he would do a work much like he did in **John chapter four** to the woman at the well.

I wanna read for you just the end of that story because the town gossip became the town evangelists, just to remind all of us that. If we've lost our way in terms of **evangelism**, we have a way back.

At the end of that story where the woman at the well will come to faith, it describes her sharing that faith in **John 4:39**. *Many of the Samaritans from that*

town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. He told me everything I did.

Now, normally that wouldn't be a good thing if you knew her track record. But she was known and she was loved.

Verse 40, *so when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them and he stayed two days. And because of his words, many more became believers.*

Did you get that? It was her testimony, but his word.

What transforms the heart of your city is your testimony about His word.

Then said to the woman, we no longer believe just because of what you said. Now we believe we have heard for ourselves and we know that this man really is the savior of the world.

My friends, we are first the objects of grace and then we are the means by which it moves forward.

There's something my wife says to me often. You see, I struggle to lose my wallet and my keys and my phone. I call it the trifecta. I must leave the house with all three.

And when I lose one of the three of those, you know what my wife always says to me? Maybe your spouse says the same thing to you. "Where was the last time you had it?"

I hate that question. With every fiber in my being, I hate that question. But the truth is, if you've lost a passion for evangelism, I'm gonna ask you the same question.

Have you lost sight of the only number that matters in your city?

For our mission is to penetrate lostness wherever we are called, to lower lostness in our city by partnering with the missionaries and pastors already there.

If you've lost that passion, I would invite you to go back to the last time you remember having it because you are first the object of grace and then you are the means by which it moves forward. It moves forward.

My friends, count whatever you want, but don't lose sight of the only number that really matters. God bless.