

CHAPTER 06 SUMMARY: “SEEK COMMUNITY”

Seek First: How the Kingdom of God Changes Everything, by Jeremy Treat

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” — African proverb

“If we are made for community, then we have to look to our Maker to learn how to truly experience community. The Bible gives a grand vision for community, but it’s not easy to live out.... Real community s messy. It’s difficult. It takes time. The Bible calls it the church, the community of the king” (p. 102).

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

- “In a world marred by sin, God’s reign is being advanced in and through the church. Remember God reigns *through* his people, and his people are the church. The scope of God’s reign is all of creation, but the focus of his reign today is *in and through* the church. The church is a preview, and outpost, and an instrument of the kingdom of God.”

THE CHURCH AS A PREVIEW OF THE KINGDOM

- “The church is meant to be a preview of coming attractions that is the eternal kingdom of God. When the world looks at the church, it should be a glimpse into God’s reign on earth as it is in heaven. They should say, ‘That’s what it looks like when love overcomes hate.’ ‘That’s how a community functions when people are treated with dignity regardless of their social status.’ ‘That’s how power is used not to coerce but to serve.’ But not only does the church offer a glimpse; it should make us long for the fulness of the kingdom” (p. 104).
- Michael Bird, “The Spirit-filled church is the global billboard declaring good things that God has prepared for the restoration of all things” (p. 104).

THE CHURCH AS AN OUTPOST OF THE KINGDOM

- “The church is meant to be an embassy of the kingdom of God. As citizens of heaven, we live in this world as ambassadors of our king, functioning under his rule and representing his kingdom. In other words, although we live in this land, our life together as God’s people is an outpost that operates under the authority of Jesus” (p. 105).
- “... our heavenly citizenship doesn’t make us worse citizens on earth. Quite the contrary, because we pray for heaven on earth, our citizenship above compels us to seek flourishing here below” (p. 105).

THE CHURCH AS AN INSTRUMENT OF THE KINGDOM

- “Acts begins with Jesus talking about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:1-3) and ends with Paul talking about the kingdom of God (acts 28:31). In between, the kingdom advances through the church’s witness to Christ the king.... The church does not build the kingdom of God but bears witness to it – to the gracious reign of the crucified Messiah. Christ is advancing his kingdom through his Spirit-empowered church” (p. 106).
- “Jesus said, ‘I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it’ (Matt. 16:10). Jesus advances his mission through his people, and that means our commitment to Christ is inseparable from our commitment to the church” (p. 107).

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE STORY OF THE KINGDOM

“Certainly the mission of the church is to make disciples as a community set apart from the world. But what kind of disciples? This is the key. The church is a distinct community that makes disciples and equips those disciples to be salt and light, participating in God’s work the renewal in the world” (p. 108).

1. Make Disciples

- “We make disciples by witnessing to Jesus in word and deed. We point people to Christ, showing and teaching how to follow Jesus in all of life. We shine a spotlight on Jesus through proclamation and demonstration. We must proclaim the gospel and live in a way that demonstrates the implications of the gospel in every aspect of life”(p. 109).

2. Disciples who Participate in God’s Work in the World

- “The mission of the church is not limited to making disciples who simply know how to pray and study the Bible. We need disciples who can represent the king in *all of life*, including the spheres in which we work, live, and play. The church is to make disciples who are salt and light in the world, who love their neighbors, who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God “ (p. 109).
- “As Miroslav Volf argues, the church is called not only to *seek* the common good, but also to help *define* the common good” (p. 111).

HOW COMMUNITY WORKS

“When you join a local church, you are stepping into a stream of the Lord’s constant work of brining his reign on earth as it is in heaven. The church is not a building you go to; it’s a people you go with. The church is not an event you attend; it’s a mission you join. The church is not a club you sign up for; it’s a family you’re a part of” (p. 111).

1. Commit to Something Bigger Than Yourself

- “We are called to commit to the church, and like all commitments this one requires sacrifice and focusing of our resources. We choose to covenant with *these* brothers and sisters. We choose to submit to *these* leaders. We choose to give financially to *this* community in mission.... The kingdom of God calls us out of our puny selfish ambitions in something bigger than we could imagine” (p. 113).

2. Be a Contributor, Not a Consumer

- “...the church is not a cruise ship; it’s a battleship. On a battleship, everyone on the ship is there to work, to contribute to the mission of the ship.... All are engaged in the work of moving the ship in the right direction, and all play their distinctive roles in the mission they’ve been given. ” (p. 114).

3. Be a Good Friend

- “We need friendships that are centered on Christ and share this common goal of life together under the rule of Christ, pursuing him together” (p. 116).

4. Displays of Grace

- “We aren’t a community of perfect people. We are a community of redeemed people. We are the community of the king” (p. 116).