I Want the Church to Grow–But Do I Want Any More People? #4

Introduction:

1. How can I narrow the oughta gap?

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food (Hebrews 5:12).

1. WANT THE CHURCH TO GROW BECAUSE GROWTH IS NORMAL.
   1. Growth, reproduction, multiplication was imprinted into the earth when God created.

Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day (Genesis 1:9-13)

* 1. God renewed the promise with Noah.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

While the earth remains,

Seedtime and harvest,

And cold and heat,

And winter and summer,

And day and night

Shall not cease” (Genesis 8:20-22).

* 1. This law of sowing, reaping, growth is true spiritually.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6:7-9).

And He said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come” (Mark 4:26-29).

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

1. **BUT** – I MAY NOT WANT PEOPLE THAT MY FRIENDS DON’T WANT.
   1. Peter was a friend to the Gentiles as longs as his friends didn’t object.

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?” (Galatians 2:11-14).

* 1. I, personally, may not mind being associated with certain people.
  2. But if my closer friends don’t want them, I’ll ignore them around my closer friends.
     1. Religious leaders in Jesus’ day felt this tension.

Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42, 43).

* + 1. The parents of a man born blind were hesitant to affirm the one who healed their son for the same reason–peer pressure. John 9:18-23
  1. Jesus was criticized for the people He associated with; He showed how to deal with ridicule and criticism.
     1. Many tax collectors and sinners.

Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi’s house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, “How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?” When Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Mark 2:13-17).

* + 1. A woman who was a notorious sinner. Luke 7:36-50
  1. Unless we can figure out a better and easier way to carry out the will of God than Jesus and His followers, we will have to proceed in the face of ridicule and criticism of good people.

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20).

* 1. I need to ask an important question.

For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ (Galatians 1:10).

Conclusion:

1. I want to the church to grow, but do I want any more people?
   1. How many?
   2. What kind?
   3. Do I want more people in the church if God will check with me before He lets them in?
2. What does God want?
   1. All who are burdened with sin.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

* 1. All who want to be saved.

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

1. How will I cooperate with Him?
2. What is your response to God’s call?
   1. Are you weary?
   2. Do you have the desire?
   3. Will you come?