

The COMEBACK Series Pt. 5: Values (pt. 2)
 Metro City Church | Pastor J. Schossau 05.05.2018

Wow...how are we doing Metro. Super glad you are here. We want to give a special welcome to those joining us via video or online today. You excited to be here?

We are in this series called THE COMEBACK SERIES and we've been talking how every one of us needs a COMEBACK in at least one area of our lives. We've been talking about our PRIORITIES and areas like our FINANCES or HEALTH and we've got some more very important areas to talk about. But it's true...you can be rocking it in one area of life but in another it can be falling apart, and you need a COMEBACK.

But last week we changed it up a bit and we spent some time talking about OUR COMEBACK...not as individuals but as a church. We talked about how it as a church we needed to dial in to who we really want to be as a people. What do we want people to experience when they walk through our doors or intersect our people or ministries? We talked about how we our values.

And you get the idea about values. VALUES are the inner core of a man or a woman. Values are what you believe about right and wrong and good and evil and how people should be treated and how they shouldn't. VALUES are your ethics. They represent your inner character. And not only do people have values that drives them but so do businesses and organizations and yes, even churches have these things called VALUES.

Values are the DNA of who we are. And last week we began to spell out OUR VALUES. We talk a lot about being a next steps church where people who are brand new to the Christian faith or been doing the Christian thing for 30 years can take their next steps with God.

But it's our values that determine how that looks and feels. What we value leads the way. VALUES determine how we are going to build this kind of community. And last week we talked about the first THREE VALUES. Anybody remember?

TRUTH - LOVE - GROWTH

These are the first three pillars we want to build our community on. I HOPE YOU WERE HERE FOR THIS. We say that **TRUTH** MATTERS and that our ultimate TRUTH SOURCE is God's Word. We can't build this church around my opinion or your opinion. We can't build it around what HOLLYWOOD is telling us is right and good and noble. NO WAY... There is only one unchanging LIFE-GIVING source for truth and that is the Bible.

BUT THAT TRUTH must be wrapped up like a BURITO of LOVE! Truth must point to love and love must point to truth. They cannot be separated. If our friends, our neighbors, the community and the world around us don't see love when they look at us then we've gotten something totally wrong. **They won't care about our truth if we don't care about them. LOVE is our second core value.**

And the third was this idea of GROWTH. We want to grow. We want to feed our soul. We want to grow in our walk with our creator. When you meet the TRUTH and LOVE found in Jesus YOU WANT MORE OF IT. Like a good bowl of ice cream...you want more of it! And we want to be a church that does everything thing we can to help people GROW in their life with God!

You tracking with me so far? This is the kind of community we want to be. There are six more words that I think describe who we really want to become, and I only have about 25 minutes to do that, so I have less than four minutes on each of them.

HERE ARE THE NEXT THREE...THEY ARE: **Passion - Relevance - Excellence**

PASSION – we passionately pursue the presence and power of God. We want people to know that we really believe what we say we believe. When you walk into this place I want you to have a fire lit in your soul. I want you to experience something that is different then you experience anywhere else. We want you to run into GOD himself. We want to be purposeful and passionate about seeking God’s presence and power.

There was a very famous preacher about 150 years ago that had tens of thousands of people every single week coming to hear him preach in London England and somebody once asked him why so many people came to hear him preach and he said, **“I guess it’s because they want to watch me burn”**. That same great cathedral that used to have tens of thousands of worshippers is virtually empty today.

If people don't see that it’s real in our life and it’s this ALL-CONSUMING FIRE in our soul than then we deserve to die as a church. Our doors should be closed.

I think one of the reasons that people are leaving church life by the droves and that churches by the thousands are shutting their doors every single year is because their spirit has died long ago, and they are just now getting around to their funeral.

I think people walk into the church every week by the millions and they question why they are even there. There is no passion and there is no **RELEVANCE**.

RELEVANCE – we want to connect God to real life in ways people can understand. It not hard to see why folks aren’t interested in church. Think about it. God places this desire for HIM in their hearts. He stirs in them. Then the go and seek Him through HIS PLACE called THE CHURCH and when they get there it’s like walking back in time. It’s like entering a different world. And I don’t just mean that the look is completely 186 or 19633. I don’t mean that the music and dress is completely out of style.

Well, that’s part of it. I mean, where else in society do you hear people busting out songs written 2 or 3 or 400 years ago. Think about the idea of having PEWS or wood benches for

seating. Do you know what a PEW is? It's those long wooden benches with a back on them that you see in churches all the time. Let me ask you. Other than church...where is the ONLY other place you can think of that has PEWS for seating? THE COURT HOUSE and NOBODY WANTS TO END UP IN COURT!

But this idea of RELEVANCE is WAY WAY BIGGER than that. We want what we do here, what we sing here, what we teach here, what we discuss here on the weekend to matter during the week. I want people to KNOW why they were in church. I want it to add meaning to their lives. I want their soul to be lifted. Their minds to be challenged. Their hearts to be encouraged. I want us to know what to do with our faith. I want, we want what happens in here to be RELEVANT to what happens OUT THERE!

And that takes a measure of **EXCELLENCE** – We've been saying it like this. Excellence honors God and inspires people. We strive not to be perfect, not to be the best but to honor God and inspire people in all we do!

Can I be honest, just completely honest with you? Please don't think I'm being prideful or arrogant? Please don't because that's not my heart at all but I AM COMPLETELY DISAPPOINTED at the QUALITY of the EXPERIENCE in most churches I walk into. Honestly. I think it's a sin to do bore people. I think it's a sin to invite people to church to honor God with music that isn't even on key or in time. I'm not talking style...**I'm talking about doing what you chose to do but do it well!** I'm think it's embarrassing for me as a Christian to walk into church building where we invite unchurched people to come and meet with God and the bathrooms are dirty. Trash is everywhere. The maintenance is horrible.

Let me tell you something. We have a ton of people around here who work really really hard, volunteering to keep this place half way decent because they believe it HONORS GOD and that even a BUILDING can INSPIRE PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT GOD.

So, PASSION, RELEVANCE and EXCELLENCE...three values. Three key ingredients to our church's DNA. So, here's what I want to do. I want to take you on a bit of a journey today so that you can see why we do what we do but first I want us to look at one of the most difficult passages in the entire New Testament part of the Bible. It's found in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. If you have a bible or a smart phone would you try to find it. 1 Corinthians 14.

One of the key things to understand about the book of 1 Corinthians is that Paul's primary purpose in writing it is to correct some things that were wrong in the Corinthian church. He wanted to give them the RIGHT VALUES. He wanted them to get around the MOST important things for them to be about as a church. In 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul is specifically correcting their misunderstanding and misuse of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Have you heard about GIFTS of THE HOLY SPIRIT?

God wants to empower his followers through these GIFTS that he gives through The Holy Spirit working in your life. But if you've been around church life for any length of time things can get crazy and weird. Anybody ever seen CHURCH PEOPLE ACTING REALLY WEIRD? And if you think I'm a weird Christian you haven't seen nothing yet.

But sometimes when you get around certain groups of Christians things can get strange. People rolling on the ground or laughing all crazy like. Maybe you've seen people praying over other people and putting their hand out and making people fall right over. I've seen people get right up in church and run up and down the aisle and they say that God is making them do that. I want to trip them but that's just the dark side of me.

Well, one of the big things that you'll see in some church circles is this thing called SPEAKING IN TONGUES? How many of you have heard of this? It's this idea that God causes you to speak or say things that you normally couldn't or wouldn't say...like using another language, or a spiritual language that isn't really a language at all but it's this spiritual communication with God and through God.

Apparently in the church at the city of Corinth there was a lot of this stuff going on and Paul is writing to them to correct what was going on in their actual gatherings like we're having right now. And it's interesting...he is clear that this kind of thing, this speaking in tongues is real and God can use but he wants to give us clarity about what is to happen in church gatherings like this.

Paul's main point in these three chapters, which includes the famous love chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 that we talked about last week, is that the purpose of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is to LOVE people, BUILD people up, and DRAW people to Jesus.

If the gifts of the Spirit do not LOVE, BUILD up, and DRAW people to Jesus, they are pointless and even harmful. So, check this out...Paul is going to say...church can be weird...DON'T LET CHURCH BE WEIRD! So here is how he says it. 1 Corinthians 14:6

6 Dear brothers and sisters, if I should come to you speaking in an unknown language, how would that help you? But if I bring you a revelation or some special knowledge or prophecy or teaching, that will be helpful. 7 Even lifeless instruments like the flute or the harp must play the notes clearly, or no one will recognize the melody. 8 And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear call, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle?

9 It's the same for you. If you speak to people in words they don't understand, how will they know what you are saying? You might as well be talking into empty space.

10 There are many different languages in the world, and every language has meaning. 11 But if I don't understand a language, I will be a foreigner to someone who speaks it, and the one who speaks it will be a foreigner to me. 12 And the same is true for you. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit

gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.

IN OTHER WORDS...BE PASSIONATE, RELEVANT AND EXCELLENT in what you do so that PEOPLE WILL GET IT and SO PEOPLE WILL GROW. DON'T LET THE CHURCH BE WIERD!

23 ...if unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown language, they will think you are crazy. In other worlds...if none of what you're doing as a church makes sense to people outside the church then why are you doing it?

What is the principle at work here? He's saying DON'T LET CHURCH BE THE VERY THING THAT PUSHES PEOPLE AWAY FROM FAITH. It should be the drawing card. Church shouldn't be out of touch, out of date, out of style, OR OUT IN LEFT FIELD. Church shouldn't make people feel like OUTSIDERS before they even have a chance to become insiders.

Ever hear somebody say, I just feel so judged in church. Anybody? I don't think that's just because of what the preacher is saying. I think it's the whole experience. I think when people walk into an experience and they feel like such an outsider because they can't relate with how the place looks and feels and operates or what they hear or see...they feel judged. They feel like THEY DON'T BELONG and THUS GOD IS NOT FOR THEM!

Passion matters. Relevance matters. Excellence matters because we want people to see this so that they see HIM.

WALK INTO CROWD...

So, I want to take you on a journey of how this looks and feels here.

Imagine you aren't a church person. Not raised in the church. Haven't given much thought to GOD but something has been stirring in you. You know you're missing something big in your life. You know that there is just more out there and one of your friends at the office or in the plant says to you, Hey, been wanting to invite you to my church. It catches you off guard a little because you've been thinking about this whole God thing. And your friend says, well, it's made an enormous difference in my family and it's not like any other church around here.

And they invite you to Metro. And in a moment of desperation you've agreed to come and visit. Now imagine you're this person. It takes a ton of courage to try anything new in life but trying a church when you're not a church person is

downright terrifying. You're nervous. You don't know what to wear. Your friends told you jeans were fine, but you weren't too sure of that. He tells you where we are located. He says, we're the HOOTER CHURCH...next door to HOOTERS and HOME DEPOT. What can you say, we like orange?

And imagine you're this person. You're like yeah, I've wondered about that church when I was in Home Depot. OR YOUR CHURCH IS THE CHURCH WITH THE GYM AND THAT GIAN PLAYSCAPE? That's your church? And so, you come, and YOU THINK...something BIG must be going on for all these folks to come.

And as you walk through those lobby doors you're greeted with a warm welcome and the smell of BAXTER'S coffee hits you and the place doesn't look like ANY CHURCH YOU'VE ever seen. And that's good to you.

And you're met by your friend. They buy you a coffee. And you make your way to this seat. It's obviously very different then a church but it feels comfortable to you. Like a theater or a concert hall or something. And it's cool because it reminds you of some places you've been.

The music and lights start, and you realize that this isn't church as usual. Hopefully you can tell that this experience was worked on. And imagine, maybe, that you're slowly being brought into the experience. Now, if you've been around Metro for a while you'll know what we're talking about but imagine being new and you're sitting here, and the lights go down and a video rolls...AND HAVE YOU SEEN THE QUALITY OF OUR VIDEOS...WOW.

PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED. This is how we do it. We use creativity. We bring PASSION, RELEVANCE and EXCELLENCE to the best of our ability every single week because we want to connect with people in ways that they aren't used to.

AND THINK ABOUT MUSIC. Worship is ESSENTIAL to the church. It glorifies God and it reposition the heart of people who are seeking God. It creates an avenue to experience God almost like no other thing> IT IS THE LANGUAGE OF CULTURE, but the church has become so out of touch with music. The church used to lead the way in excellence and relevance and passion in music but not so much anymore...but we are on our way back. AT THIS CHURCH we want it to be great...WE'RE NOT ALWAYS GREAT...BUT WE WANT IT TO BE GREAT.

BECAUSE GREAT ENGAGES. EXCELLENCE HONORS GOD AND INSPIRES PEOPLE.

Imagine being new to church life and seeing some of that stuff, do you think you might be willing to hear more? WE DON'T DO THIS TO ENTERTAIN...WE DO THIS TO ENGAGE. And when the teaching starts...our hope is that your hearts are so wide open to hear, really hear, what God might speak to you. And when the preacher man gets up hopefully it is with

so much passion and energy that whether you believe it or not...you know he believes it! And it's relevant to you and your life...as if he's speaking to you. And it's delivered in a way that is excellent so that YOU WILL HONOR GOD'S WORD and be INSPIRED TO LIVE IT OUT!

Therefore, we invest so much effort into video and creativity....it is because it the language of the day. It speaks in ways that people understand.

AND NONE OF THIS WILL HAPPEN IF WE DON'T GET AROUND OUR FINAL THREE CORE VALUES. And here they are, you may want to write these down. **RISK, REACH and TOGETHER.** We want to RISK MUCH, so we can REACH MORE, and we want to do this TOGETHER.

We want to RISK MUCH. We can't be afraid to RISK MUCH. "Let's go across to the outpost of those pagans," Jonathan said to his armor bearer. "Perhaps the LORD will help us, for nothing can hinder the LORD. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!" 1 Samuel 14:6 NLT

You got to love that. In this story of Jonathan, who by the way was best friends with KING DAVID, Jonathan was like, HEY, ALL I KNOW IS THAT WE ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO SIT AROUND AND DO NOTHING. We were not created for doing nothing. GOD WANTS TO USE US. GOD WANTS TO USE YOU! And if we step out...if we try...if we RISK MUCH WHO KNOW???? GOD MIGHT HELP. The outcome is not a certainty. And that's the point! WE ARE CALLED TO BE FAITHFUL NO MATTER THE OUTCOME.

That's the kind of church that I want us to become. That's the kind of man that I want to be. I want us to be a church where we are not afraid to hear the voice of God and then GO FOR IT.

But so many of us sit back and we play it safe or maybe we think it's somebody else's job to bring the Kingdom of God to Earth or maybe we think we're not somehow qualified to reach others or to be part of what God is doing through this little church.

I was thinking about this. If that's you. If you think you're somehow not the one God would use or could use you need to be reminded that...

MOSES stuttered and was afraid to talk in front of a crowd.

DAVID's armor didn't fit...he was no **CAPTAIN AMERICA.**

The Prophet HOSEA married a prostitute.

NOAH had a **DRINKING PROBLEM**

AMOS who became a great preacher and prophet for God was a **PRUNE TREE FARMER!**

JACOB was a liar.

DAVID had an **AFFAIR.**

SOLOMON became consumed with wealth.

ABRAHAM was **OLD.**

NAOMI was a **WIDOW.**

JONAH was DISOBEDIENT.

MIRIAM was a GOSSIP.

GIDEON and THOMAS were both DOUBTERS.

JEREMIAH, the great prophet of God was SUICIDAL.

ELIJAH suffered from DEPRESSION.

TIMOTHY had stomach ULCERS.

PAUL was a MURDERER. SO WAS MOSES. NOT TO MENTION KING DAVID.

PETER was a COWARD and DENIED JESUS.

LAZARUS was DEAD and it's hard to do anything when you're dead!

JOHN THE DISCIPLE was SELF RIGHTEOUS.

And JOHN THE BAPTIST was FASHIONED CHALLENGED with poor eating habits.

And Jesus, he was homeless at times, he was poor, he was a carpenter, his family rejected him, his own community rejected him and by the end the world hated him, and his own government crucified him.

It's fortunate that God doesn't require a JOB INTERVIEW to be used by HIM. He doesn't require you to be qualified to be called. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE QUALIFIES THE CALLED. He qualifies those who RISK MUCH to obey his leadership. HE MEETS with those who RISK

WHEN WE RISK MUCH, HE MEETS US. When we walk into the uncertain, when we JUMP - that is when he does great things. I hope that you'll join me in this...but I don't want to be a part of a church that simply wants to survive. I don't want to be a church that simply hopes to pay the bills and keep the doors open. I don't want to be a church that we just HOPE that our kids and grandkids want to come to when they get old like us.

Friends, I REFUSE to be a church that is waiting to die. I REFUSE to be a church that plays it safe and does not RISK much.

AND HERE IS WHY WE RISK MUCH. WE RISK MUCH - WE GIVE, WE SERVE, WE PRAY, WE INVITE, WE RISK MUCH to **REACH** MORE.

Therefore, we do crazy stuff like throw huge parties to reach a thousand teens at one time. Therefore, we send people to Haiti and Africa and Nicaragua and Columbia...we **RISK MUCH TO REACH MORE**. Therefore, hundreds of you work with our kids and you serve, you give over and over and over because we want to **REACH MORE**.

And that's our next value. REACH. We will be a church that REACHES beyond our walls. We REACH locally and globally with the LOVE and GRACE of God. Some people have criticized Metro over the years as being a SEEKER FRIENDLY CHURCH. You know, trying to be a church that does things to reach unchurched folks, you know, people who might not be too into the whole God thing. And I don't think that is a fair assessment. We are not a SEEKER FRIENDLY CHURCH...we are a SEEKER OBSESSED CHURCH!

We do just about anything short of SIN to REACH PEOPLE with the love and grace of God. We don't always get it right, but we will TRY to reach people and the moment we don't do that...I QUIT!

Therefore, the church exists! We glorify God by pointing people to Him...heck, we glorify God by going out and dragging people kicking and screaming to him!

Here is what Jesus says to HIS CHURCH...TO US! **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ACTS 1:8**

We are not supposed to sit around in nice buildings with nice lights and nice sound and nice heat and nice cooling and nice people with nice coffee. WE ARE TO TELL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, locally, globally...in our schools, in our work, in our neighborhoods, in our community, where we shop, everywhere! When we LOVE him, he will come out of us and into every area of our life.

We want to be a church that REACHES PEOPLE, that doesn't mean that we don't help grow people and take care of people already in the church. NOT AT ALL. We help all people take NEXT STEPS TOWARD GOD and WITH GOD. But we will be a church that REACHES, or we will be a church that dies like the nearly 100,000 other churches that closed their doors forever in the last ten years! If we aren't growing, we are dying. If we aren't reaching, we are dying. AND I DON'T WANT US TO DIE! Jesus said, I am the LIGHT OF THE WORLD. I want to be part of a church that blast that light to others. ANYBODY WITH ME?

We will RISK MUCH to REACH MORE...and LISTEN FRIENDS... we will do this together! We want to build a church that DOES LIFE WITH GOD...**TOGETHER.**

It is very difficult to live the Christian life alone. People say, I don't have to go to church to be a Christian and that might be true but let me tell you something...if you are truly a Christian, if you are truly one of his and HIS KINGDOM matters to you then nothing will keep you out of church. There is a power that is released into our lives when we do life with GOD together.

When we stand alone we are easily over powered. When we are outside of the church God loves we are easy prey. We refuse to get into the game and pull our weight and serve and build the kinds of friendships that will help shape eternity inside of us WE MISS THE POWER OF GOD in our lives.

Our final value is called **TOGETHER.** BECAUSE WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER. We want to RISK MUCH to REACH MORE and we will do this BEST TOGETHER. Jesus said it like this. **I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one--as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. John**

17:21 NLT

That's who we want to be.

PRAY.