



September 26, 2011

Next Steps Pruning for More

[John 15.1-8 :: Listen to Sermon](#)

More is better, or so the saying goes. Most of the time I would agree. More hair. More time. More love. More cherry pie. You didn't think I would leave that out did you? More sunshine. More fun. More. . . who wouldn't want more? No one. We all want more and most of the time more isn't hard to get. The next time you head through the drive-thru just say "Super-size me" and see what happens. My guess is that you'll get more. More is always out there to be had. So what do you want more of, really?

When I think about what I really want more of I realize that I want more of life. I am not talking about fun or time. I am talking about life as it was meant to be lived. I want more of the real stuff, life that is different from life that we live every day. I want the good, top-shelf stuff that only God can provide. Here's the deal about that more. It eludes me. I know it is out there and I reach for it but it always seems to be just beyond my grasp. The question is why. Why would something God truly intends me to have more of always be just beyond my grasp? Why does it seem that the harder I work for it the further I am from obtaining it?

I was already thinking this week about the more God wants me to have when I read John 15. Basically my prayer was, "God, why are you not super-sizing me?!?" As I read this text I found the answer. The problem lies not with God or in the availability of His life but in my approach. I have been trying, trying, trying. When Jesus talks about life he doesn't say anything about trying. What he does say has to do with remaining. According to Jesus there are two roles in finding the more God offers: God's role and ours. God's role is the working and providing part. Life comes from Him and only from Him. Our role. . .well, our role is to remain. We are to turn our lives over to him in an ever-increasing way. Sounds pretty simple. If we want more of the life God offers then we have to give more of ourselves to God. Simple, yet deceptively difficult.

I struggle to give myself to God in an ever-increasing way because it means I am less in control. I don't get to call the shots. I don't get to have my way. I don't get to be God anymore. Honestly, playing God is what got all of us into the mess we're in so why should I hold onto it so tightly? It isn't natural for me, but I am learning to let go slowly, to let go of my life so I can have His. I am learning to say, "God super-size me, and here is more of me so that I can have more of what you intend of me."

A fellow traveler,

Blake
Spiritual Formation Pastor

My Next Steps

We encourage you to consider doing the following as a way of handing off faith to your family. . .

- **Practice surrendering to one another:** Surrender to God doesn't come naturally or easily. It takes practice. This week consider practicing surrender by seeking ways to surrender to one another. This can be as simple as doing what another person in the family wishes rather than what you wish to do. It can be giving up money you would have spent on yourself to purchase a gift that another family member might enjoy. Look for small and large ways that you can surrender. As you practice surrender pay close attention to how it feels. Is it hard or easy? When you encounter difficult moments talk to God about them. These are areas that probably need His attention for they probably are also roadblocks in surrendering to Him. Ask for His grace to move through these areas so that you might surrender more fully to Him.

We encourage you to consider taking the following next step on your faith journey. . .

- **Prayer of surrender:** God offers and provides life in an increasing measure as we offer ourselves to Him in an ever-increasing way. So how do we offer ourselves to God? One simple way it to offer a prayer of surrender. Each day this week, consider offering the following prayer to God. "God, I am weak and unable to provide for myself true life. I am unable even to manage myself and set my feet on the path I should travel. Therefore, I place myself in your hands. I give you myself. Take who I am and do with me as you wish. I am yours. Fill me with your life through Jesus who is my Savior. Amen." You might consider offering this prayer as you rise, before you sleep, and at key points through the day.