



October 10, 2011

Next Steps

Plant the Community

[Acts 2.42-47](#) :: [Listen to Sermon](#)

Mission starts with the fridge. OK. That sounds pretty weird, not to mention counter-intuitive. How can mission start with the fridge? Mission is all about getting people to respond to the gospel. Mission is about taking the life-changing message to people who have not heard that God has broken into the world and that He longs to transform life from what it is to what it was meant to be. OK. I agree, and I still say that mission starts with the fridge.

Mission starts with the fridge because mission starts with how we live, not with what we say. How we live actually forms the foundation for what we say. If we proclaim one thing and live another, that isn't going to lend itself to success on mission. If we proclaim that God has broken into the world and that He longs to transform life from what it is to what it was meant to be, then doesn't it make sense that this message ought to be demonstrated in the way we live our lives? Doesn't it make sense that mission should start with the fridge? Luke seemed to think so.

In Acts 2 we come across the first summary passage in Acts, the first time that Luke tells us what is really going on in the life of the early Church. What he tells us is that the gospel was doing some pretty amazing things in people's lives. It was amazing stuff that centered around the expression of mutual care and concern for fellow Christ-followers. The gospel was taking people and putting them in connection with one another so that they shared what they had, sacrificed for those in need, and sought to live and worship together in deep and meaningful ways. The gospel transformed these early people to such an extent that they established connections so deep with one another that Luke had to give a term to it and fill it with meaning: Fellowship.

Fellowship is perhaps the first outworking of the gospel and as such the foundation for mission. Fellowship is a word that gets tossed around a lot these days and we really don't have a good idea what it means. I prefer the term "refrigerator rights." This term strikes closer to the heart of the transforming work of the gospel. You see, the people who have access to my fridge are the people that I care about the most. Not everyone has access to my fridge. It is the most guarded

part of my house. Only intimates get in there. But if you are in the fridge, you are in my life. The people that can rummage freely in my fridge are the same people I would do anything for. That's fellowship. So, that's why I say mission starts with the fridge. It starts by allowing the gospel to do its transformative work in us so that we begin to form intimate bonds with fellow Christ-followers, bonds that would lead us to do anything for them. These bonds lead us to live outside ourselves in deep connection with one another. It is this life that forms a living and breathing testimony to the world that God really does change lives. It is this life, this fridge-centered life that shows the world what life was really meant to be like. It is this life, this connected life that demonstrates the truth of the gospel. It is a refrigerator rights life that is the beginning of mission.

A fellow traveler,
Blake
Spiritual Formation Pastor

My Next Step

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

- **Join community:** Mission starts with the fridge, with the formation of deep connection with others that results from the outworking of the gospel in our lives. If you and your family are not in deep community with others at Browncroft, then consider taking steps toward this community. Consider inviting others into your life by inviting them over for dinner on a regular basis or by joining a Community or Lifestage group. Clear time and space to spend time with others from Browncroft for the purpose of developing deep bonds with them. These deep bonds will form the foundation upon which the truth of our gospel proclamation is verified.

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

- **Wear a “PLANT” armband:** Mission starts with the fridge, with deep connection to other Christ-followers. This week consider wearing the “PLANT” armband you received on Sunday. As you wear it, first consider that it is a circle. Ask God to show you who is in your inner circle. How many people have refrigerator rights with you? If you can count on one hand the number of people that have these rights with you from Browncroft then ask God to expand your circle. As you consider the word “PLANT” on the band, ask God to lead you to first plant the gospel in your life. Ask Him to do a transformative work that leads you to open your life to fellow Christ-followers. Ask Him to reveal that which keeps you from opening fully to others in this body of believers, and ask that He remove it.