



Full...And Yet.

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?” - Luke 15:4

We had an amazing Easter service this year here at NCC!! The sanctuary was full! The singing was SO LOUD! There was worship. There was laughter. We all were challenged. I met so many new people. It’s even been one of the most viewed services online. But there was also something there that kept catching my eye.

Now, please understand, Jesus is the Head of His Church, but the Body is us; you and me. Sundays are always my favorite day because I have the blessing and joy to worship, pray and “hang out” with all of you. Nothing can replicate this time we share together. And I appreciate that this time may be only a “time”. It’s not promised to last (at least this side of heaven) forever. In the last several years, many have come in and out of this “time” and few have remained. So hear me, “Thank you for walking this time with us!” But that something is still there.

So what is it that catches my eye and thoughts? Empty chairs.

Since 2020, we continue to get back to our regular attendance and our “in-house” service continues growing. But I’m not sure I want things to be “like they were”. They were great times and Kingdom events that changed me on so many levels. But if the best days of the Church are always ahead of it, why would we want to preserve a nostalgic era from the past. The Church is marching forward to The Day and we should be also. That’s why those empty chairs silently scream for the souls that are missing from God’s Kingdom.

So what do we do? If our Mission Statement is “Love God. Love People. Make Disciples.”, what are the steps we need to make. I (Billy) can’t do this alone and the Church was never meant to be the Church that way. So what can we as members of NCC do?

1. **Develop an aching for the unbeliever.** It must be learned and fed. If it’s not, hurting for the lost doesn’t continue.
2. **Establish a relationship with the unbeliever before they believe.** They are not projects to earn us a “bigger crown”. They are people in need of relationships; you and Jesus.
3. **Pray for them.** This is the MOST neglected part of our relationship with Jesus and spreading the Gospel.
4. **Invite them.** The biggest reason people don’t go to church is that they aren’t invited. So invite them.
5. **Don’t stop inviting them.** If they come after the first invite, celebrate. That seldom happens. But if they don’t (and most won’t), keep deepening the relationship and keep inviting them. Remember the Holy Spirit is working as well.

And those empty chairs will disappear!! Praise God!!

From My Heart,

Billy