



The Gathering message notes

PLANTED - Week 2 - August 12, 2012 / Paul Jenkins

THE BIG IDEA: We can't be a _____ of the _____
if we live _____ from the _____.

1. "Have real estate agents always _____?"
 - Location, location, _____
 - It's true spiritually, too
 - 4 places the seed could _____
 - along the _____
 - in the _____
 - among the _____
 - on good _____
 - _____ something is planted is as important as _____ is planted

2. "Is that a _____ or a _____?"
 - The church is a:
 - Relational _____ require a relational _____
 - The best location for _____ growth is the _____ body

3. "Why doesn't that _____ me?"
 - We don't understand membership biblically
 - In the world, membership has _____
 - In the church, membership has _____
 - We don't really like everybody
 - The world makes membership about _____
 - God makes it about _____
 - Connection forms _____; selection forms _____
 - We really just want to be left alone
 - Irony: we hate being _____ but love being _____
 - When we aren't around people with _____ faith, we question if our faith is _____.

Membership means we _____, _____, _____ and _____ regularly
because we're doing _____ together.

The Take-Off

If this is your first time with us at The Gathering, you've come at just the right time!

Today we're in week 2 of a series called "Planted" and a series is basically where I talk about a subject until everyone thinks I've talked too much and then we move on to another subject.

Before we jump into the second week, though, let's try to catch up where we are after last week.

First off, we laid out the Big Idea for the entire series. Again, if you're kind of new to the way we do things here, let me explain what a Big idea is: basically, it's admitting that many of us won't remember everything that gets said in the next 30 minutes or so, and so the Big idea is our way of saying, "Hey! If you only remember one thing, this is the one thing to remember!!"

In other words, the Big Idea is our version of the Cliff Notes you read in high school even though you weren't supposed to. It's better to get the whole thing, but at least the Big Idea gives you a statement to kind of stick in your back pocket as you leave.

Now, all that to be able to say that the one thing we want you to remember from this series is the Big Idea for the series and it's simply this: we grow up when we put our roots down.

Just like a plant, we don't grow until we're planted, and so we answered 2 questions last week: the first was simply does God want us to be planted, and among many passages, Psalm 1 answered a resounding yes.

The second question was what happens when we are planted. Most of us don't like surprises, and so we want to know what to expect if we take a step in this direction, right?

The answers were simple and inspiring!

If we are planted, we can expect to be blessed, fruitful, prosperous, strong, watched over by God, prepared for good and bad seasons, courageous, peaceful, stable, loving and loved.

Quite a impressive list of benefits, wouldn't you say?

Think of it as "plants with benefits!"

Now, the one obvious question that we didn't answer last week is the one that we'll tackle today: if God wants me planted, and being planted can produce such amazing blessings in our lives, then where does God want me planted?

Now, in order to answer that I'm going to throw a bunch of Scripture your way, and if you feel a bit overwhelmed it's okay because we'll wrap the morning up by giving you the Big Idea for the day, so at least you'll have that thought to hang onto.

So, buckle up and let's go.

1. "Have real estate agents always been right?"

Before we even ask where the best location is, maybe we should ask if location even matters?

After all, real estate agents always say that the 3 most important things in buying or selling a house are location, location, location. Are they right?

Let's take a quick peek at Matthew 13 and see if we can find the answer (but I bet most of you already know it!)

Jesus is telling a story and in it he talks about a farmer throwing out seed into a field

If you've got a Bible that has captions for different sections, then you can see that this is called "The Parable of the Sower" but what you'll come to find out is that it would be better called "The Parable of the Soil" because Jesus describes 4 kinds of soils - or locations - where the seed could land.

- a. Along the path
 - i. This is ground that is hard because it gets walked on all the time and the seed can't grow roots into it
 - ii. The birds come and eat the seed
- b. In the rocks
 - i. Jesus says this location doesn't have much soil
 - ii. Roots grow, but not very deep, and so the plant doesn't last
- c. Among the thorns
 - i. This seed does actually grow, but it grows with the thorns
 - ii. The thorns are the cares of the world and riches (v. 22)
 - iii. These distractions choke the life out of the new plant
- d. On good soil
 - i. The only soil that was prepared to receive the seed
 - ii. Not only did it produce a plant, but it also produced a crop
 - iii. Sounds a lot like when we say that at The Gathering we want to make disciples, doesn't it?

So, out of 4 possible places for the seed to be planted, only one produced lasting results, right?
We still haven't determined where we need to be planted, but I think this story from Jesus is pretty spot on about the fact that real estate agents have always been right: location matters.
In fact, you could probably say it like this: **where something is planted is as important as what is planted.**

2. "Is that a **big body** or a **little body**?"

This is not the same as "do these jeans make me look fat?" We're not talking about that kind of body!
We mentioned last week that a body is just one of many ways that the Bible describes the church. Here are some other ways:

- a. The church is a household (1 Timothy 4:15; Eph. 2:19)
- b. The church is a flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3)
- c. The church is a field (1 Cor. 3:9)
- d. The church is a building (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Cor. 3:9)
- e. The church is a people (1 Peter 2:10)
- f. The church is a house (1 Peter 2:5)
- g. Finally, as we've already mentioned, the church is a body (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:18-24; Eph. 4:12)

Possibly the first question is which body or we talking about? The worldwide, "everyone who is a Christian" body of Christ or the local, "people I sit next to at The Gathering every week" body of Christ?

That may not seem like an important question, but it is, and here's why.

Many people want to assume that as long as they're believers - in the big body - then it doesn't really matter if they belong to the little body.

Let's see if that even passes the common sense test:

- ▶ The phrase "one another" is in the Bible A LOT (it's in 2369 verses in the NASB alone)
- ▶ Obviously, things we do to and for one another require relationships and connection
- ▶ To be connected in the context of relationships, it helps to be near each other
- ▶ Am I a part of the same body that Dave and Judy Eddy are a part of? Absolutely.
- ▶ Am I able to live out a lot of these "one another" commands with Dave and Judy Eddy? Not necessarily.
- ▶ Why? Because they are in PNG on the other side of the globe.
- ▶ Let's just take 1 of the "one anothers" and see how it plays out:
 - Romans 13:8 tells us to love one another because whoever loves his neighbor fulfills the law
 - 1 John 3:18 says that loving one another is to be done with actions and not just words only
 - If that isn't clear enough, James 2:14-17 says that just wishing brothers and sisters well but not doing anything to help them physically means your faith is dead.
 - It makes sense that these relational verses require a relational context
 - That context is the little body, the local, "people I sit next to at The Gathering every week" body

In short, the best location - the best soil - for lasting spiritual growth is the local body

3. "Why doesn't that **excite me**?"

I wish that I could stop here, ask everyone if they want to become members of The Gathering and you'd all say yes!
But here are a few reasons why you might hesitate:

- a. We don't understand membership biblically
 - The world makes membership about clubs, discounts, and perks
 - The Bible elevates membership to roles, belonging and parts
 - In the world, membership comes with rights. In the church, it comes with responsibilities.
 - Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:15
- b. We don't really like everybody
 - From the world's perspective, membership helps keep certain people out
 - The world makes membership about selection, but God makes membership about connection
 - Romans 12:5 - "each" one belongs to "all" - no selection there!
 - Connection forms community; selection forms cliques
- c. We really just want to be left alone
 - Strange American irony: we hate being lonely, we love being alone.
 - Living independently isn't biblical (Romans 14:7)

- Genesis 2:18 was said BEFORE sin entered the world. It's even more true in our fallen, broken world.
- Living alone makes us a much easier target for the enemy
 - ▶ Lonely adults consume more alcohol and get less exercise than those who are not lonely. Their diet is higher in fat, their sleep is less efficient, and they report more daytime fatigue. Loneliness also disrupts the regulation of cellular processes deep within the body, predisposing us to premature aging. (John Cacioppo, a neuroscientist at the University of Chicago)
 - ▶ People who go to church regularly actually tend to live longer. Churches can be very beneficial—one can feel connected to the group, the church, and to God. (same as above)
 - ▶ We become weaker simply because we're isolated
 - Proverbs 11:14; 15:22 - wisdom and strength in numbers (opposite is true, too)
 - When we aren't around people with real faith, we question if our faith is real
- Really, we don't want to be left alone, we just don't want people in our business
- We just want the benefit of belonging without the hassle, but when it comes to being planted, this is the **BIG IDEA: we can't be a part of the body if we live apart from the body.**

The Landing

So where does this leave us? It leaves us with a decision: to be planted or not planted, that is the question!

Even though committing to one local body can feel like it goes against everything we've experienced or are used to, the reality is that choosing to be planted in a local body of believers is the one decision we can all make that opens the door to the blessings we listed last week that are missing from so many of our lives

Is it uncomfortable at times to live together instead of alone? Sure.

Is it hard to try something different instead of what we're used to? Absolutely.

But is it worth it to be, as Jeremiah 17:8 says, "a tree planted by the water" - not afraid of heat or drought and always bearing fruit? Every. Single. Time.

In some ways, being planted could be the exact opposite of what we've always done - always expected from our "church" experience - but it could lead to the life we've always dreamed of

[Seinfeld clip - George does the opposite]

As you leave this week, consider taking the step toward membership in this local body.

It's simple, really. You're saying that in this season of your life, you want The Gathering to be the place where you grow your faith. It means you can expect us to help you with that in our teaching, our care for you, and our commitment to equip you to do more than just sit.

In short, it means we attend, serve, give and invite regularly because we're doing life together.

Next week, you and I will have the opportunity to stand together, lock arms together, and begin growing together.

I don't know about you, but I can't wait!