

THE CORE VALUE: We value _____ and expect and
prepare for the Lord to _____ His _____
exponentially through us.

Uncontainable Growth causes us to rethink...

1. Our p_____

2. Our p_____

3. Our p_____

4. Our p_____

5. Our p_____

The Take-Off

We're on a bit of a journey right now through our core values and today we land on our eighth core value which happens to be the first value in the third value our the four values we have dubbed the "core four." If you're lost, it doesn't mean this is your first time here, just that it's your first time hearing that sentence, which means all of us are lost.

Probably a good time to back the truck up a bit, take a look at where we've been, and then move forward with today's value.

Our "core four" are all about Jesus, because we want to be all about Jesus: the UNDENIABLE message of Jesus, the UNBREAKABLE body of Jesus, the UNCONTAINABLE kingdom of Jesus and the UNEXPLAINABLE worship of Jesus.

To this point, we've looked at the Undeniable and the Unbreakable which have included core values like Biblical truth, engaging communication, your story, unbreakable unity, authentic relationships, spiritual legacies and genuine hospitality.

Lots to remember, and if you've missed any of them you can find them at the current series page on the website - thegatheringnow.com

Phew!

So, today we start the third of our "core four" which is the UNCONTAINABLE kingdom of Jesus, and we might need to do a bit of background stuff before we get to the teaching.

One, God's into things growing.

He likes us to grow spiritually (Ephesians 4:15), and He likes His kingdom to grow, too.

Isaiah 9:7 says that not only is His kingdom always growing, but He's pretty pumped about it growing.

In Matthew 13:32, Jesus describes His kingdom like a seed that grows into a large tree that provides shade and rest.

Twice in Acts we read of thousands added to the number of the church at one time (Acts 2:41; 4:4)

Clearly, God is not opposed to growth, and so we value it, too. And not just any growth, but UNCONTAINABLE GROWTH.

Acts 2:47 says that the Lord added to the church daily

Two, God is into counting people even more than we are. The Bible has a book called "Numbers" and a parable about a shepherd who counted his sheep enough to know that 1 was missing.

Practically, at The Gathering you will be counted, because it seems weird to not want to know where your family is.

We don't want to have a Home Alone experience as a church, which always seems like a really stupid movie because the mom didn't know where all her children were - 3 times.

Recapping: we understand that God's kingdom is a kingdom of growth, and not just any kind of growth, but uncontainable growth. He likes to know where His children are and so it makes sense that we would, too.

Now, one last point before we dive in to the passage in Luke 5.

Uncontainable growth is not necessarily explosive growth, though obviously we see in Acts that it can be.

Our 8th core value is: We value uncontainable growth and expect and prepare for the Lord to multiply His kingdom exponentially through us.

We believe that the most uncontainable growth happens over time through multiplication as opposed to rapidly through addition.

A quick math illustration and then we'll learn 5 things from our passage: If you add daily, you grow quickly. If you multiply regularly, you grow slowly to a point, and then quickly beyond belief.

Jesus took 3 years to disciple 12 men. If He had simply added 12 men every day over that same 3 years, He would have had 13,140. Over the next 3 years, if His 12 simply discipled 12 more, there would be 144, while the addition would have netted 26,280.

If the goal is to be explosive, simply add people from wherever you can get them. It'll look good, even if it doesn't last. But if your goal is to uncontainable, the slower process of multiplying will eventually overtake addition, and not be a small margin. 15 years down the road, you could have added 65,700 people to your church, or impacted through simple, slow, solid discipleship 248,852 people who carry the gospel of Jesus to their neighbors, coworkers, friends. Give it just 3 more years, and that number will have multiplied to just under THREE MILLION!

We don't necessarily expect to be a church of 3 million in Stanly County, but we are solidly committed to the process of seeing uncontainable growth through the multiplication of God's kingdom.

That commitment will challenge us to rethink 5 things:

1. Our plans

Peter had already spent the night fishing, and no doubt had a nice relaxing breakfast planned

Only trouble was that Jesus had a different plan: one that involved something uncontainable

Not only did Peter have to wait for the service to finish before he could get his boat back, but Jesus had another suggestion following that: "Go fish again!" (v. 4)

Maybe we can make a few observations:

- a. God's plans rarely involve our convenience
 - i. If it was that easy, everyone would do it
 - ii. The ultimate plan - the one involving God's only Son on the cross - was inconvenient enough that even Jesus wished there was another way (Matt. 26:39)
- b. Open your eyes when you most want to close them.
 - i. Simply put, make a practice of putting your kingdom antenna up when you're most ready to lay down
 - ii. His power is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9), so our weakest moments - the times we are most likely to plan down time - may be our most successful kingdom moments

It doesn't mean it's bad to rest: even Jesus took time to get away. But His time away was to pray in order to be even more in tune with His Father. (Luke 5:16)

But often Jesus' times away were interrupted by people (Matt. 14:13-14), and there has to come a time when our plans can be changed by His plans. For Jesus, it was to act with compassion even though He was grieving the death of John the Baptist.

The question is willingness, and if we are willing to change plans, we can see uncontainable results

2. Our priorities

This one is very similar to the first one, but with a bit of a deeper twist.

It's one thing to change your plans, it's another to change your priorities.

Peter knew how to fish. He knew what worked and what didn't. In a sense, his knowledge was his greatest asset.

But it ended up taking a backseat to a new priority: obedience to the command of Jesus.

This became the only reason for fishing again. "At Your word."

This was more than just obedience. It was obedience in spite of what Peter knew. In short, it made no sense to do what Jesus was asking.

- a. They had already tried (v. 5)
- b. They had likely used trammel nets which were made of linen and visible to fish in the daytime but not at night

There is nothing you or I can do that means more in the kingdom of God than obedience

1 Samuel 15:22 - when we obey, even if we do it completely wrong, God can - and will - honor it
[Show the EASTER INVITE VIDEO CLIP by The Skit Guys]

Bottom line: make obedience to the Word your highest priority and prepare for the uncontainable

3. Our partnerships

Partnerships are tricky things.

They usually involve legal teams and contracts and other things that safeguard us in case things don't go as planned.

But here, the partnership was established quickly and simply: there were just way too many fish for one boat to handle.

The uncontrollable causes us to reach out for help, and that's why growing churches are giving churches. You can't give away fast enough what you can't contain.

Most of us are used to the opposite: when things aren't growing, we feel the urge to close in and protect what we've still got.

We don't partner because we think the pie is only so big, but when there's a never-ending supply of pie, it's easy to pass out forks to everybody!

It's easy for us to narrow who we partner with based on preferences, doctrines, and practices. But when it comes to something uncontrollable, sometimes the requirements for partnership become a lot less stringent and much more about things like: "Hey! You got a boat?"

4. Our pride

There is something about the uncontrollable that snaps us right into a John 3:30 moment Peter had that moment.

He knew that nothing about his fishing expertise had anything to do with that catch

The uncontrollable drove Peter to the feet of Jesus completely aware of Who was responsible

- Not the net (nighttime nets used in daytime)

- Not the fishermen (their best efforts had resulted in nothing)

Here is a man on his knees confessing sin after a catch of fish

He caught fish all the time, but this catch was different: it was UNCONTAINABLE, and he was astonished!

5. Our purpose

Can I tell you a secret? Many of the great men and women in the history of the kingdom of God were really good at other things BESIDES preaching.

They were like Peter. He was successful as a fisherman (the previous night excluded!), but something about this catch opened his eyes to a new purpose.

Sometimes, it's the overwhelming sight of the uncontrollable that burdens our hearts to the point that we leave everything we know (and are good at) in order to follow Jesus to a new purpose

Once he was a fisherman. Now he's a fisher of men. Scales weighed his success before this day, and souls would be the measure after.

The Landing

- This week I happened to see Priscilla Shirer teaching on this very passage, and she was wondering why Peter signaled to other partners instead of calling them.
- Her point was a simple, and powerful one: perhaps he was...speechless.
- When was the last time we saw God do something so big, so impacting, so uncontrollable that we could not even speak?
- I believe if we give ourselves over to the uncontrollable growth of Jesus' kingdom, we will see increasing moments that will leave us just like Peter.