
Released Revisited

Our vision for the year was to be a people released to make a difference in the world as kingdom bearers. Finding new rhythms of coming in and going out.

Coming In to Go Out

A coming in to:

- + Intimacy in worship
- + To care for one another
- + To be fed and fuelled
- + Surrender our agenda to Christ's agenda

Released to Go Out:

- + Released into the gifts God has given
- + Released into the authentic expression of God's powerful love to the city of Brisbane
- + Released in power to declare and demonstrate the Kingdom of God

Alternative Relationships – Colossians 3:18-24

Paul re-characterises the relationships that exist in societies norm. He emphasises here in Colossians as well as his letters to the Ephesians and Corinthians that there are to be no distinctions in the church; there is oneness found in Christ (Colossians 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 6:8).

Two main ideas:

1. Paul again reiterates the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. As believers, Christ becomes the central point for all interpersonal relationships – love God and love others.

2. Paul challenges the social norm and calls people to a higher way – Christ’s way. God is not bound by culture.

In Christ there is an alternative society, a new way of relating, that brings life. In the kingdom we are offered an alternative from playing the game society plays to win at all costs, to living a life surrendered to Christ, a life of service.

With alternative relationships comes an alternative community, and when these types of relationships and communities are released to the world – lives are changed!

An Alternative Community

Jesus’ plan was that He’s going to transform the world through the church.

The presence and way of Jesus in their midst created a community like the world had never seen.

People looked at the church, and they liked what they saw (Acts 2:42- 47).

Jesus' strategy - I’m going to change your heart and you’re going to be released into the world to make a difference in My name! And the secret weapon was that they had His help, the Holy Spirit empowering them to be supernaturally naturally in a radically alternative community.

When the Righteous Prosper – Proverbs 11:10

When righteous people rise to the top of their field, nobody around them is envious, these people have such character that people around them know this is good news for everybody.

In Hebrew, the righteous ones, are those who are willing to disadvantage themselves to advantage the community. They are willing to disadvantage themselves to bless the community (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Jesus spent a lot of time redefining what it means to be “righteous.” He used other pictures to illustrate it like: you are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill—a new community that is infused with this kind of light—cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:13-14).

The church is not a “Religious Services Provider”. On Sunday, the Body of Christ gathers, but on Monday, Jesus hits the road. You are released as a righteous community and that is Good News for everybody in the neighbourhood, whether they believe in it or not.

Jesus said our mission is to be Kingdom Bearers (Matthew 6: 9-10).

We are to be kingdom servants (Matthew 20:24-28)

- + Not seeking privilege
- + Nor lording it over anyone else as the world does
- + Not so with you (v26)
- + Serve others

Jesus is abolishing the pecking order. He is calling for the creation of an alternative way of relating that will provide the stimulus for an alternative community that expresses and incarnates the Kingdom of God.

You are called to bring an alternative society to your workplace as you live by a different set of values and relationships. Perhaps you are called to make a difference in your school, your university campus or your home. One thing is certain - *You* are God’s plan to change the world when you are released with His power.

Practical Steps to Alternative ways of Relating

1. ***Self Examine*** - Be aware of how the rules of relationships from the world’s way may have crept into your way of relating to others (self first, jealousy, promotion, power, greed, get ahead at all cost).
2. ***Seek and Submit*** – Surrender to God that part of you that you have taken control of. Repent and ask the Holy Spirit to make the necessary changes on the inside for you to change. Ask God to cleanse you from the problems and their root causes, and the sin and lies that are associated with them.
3. ***Accept God’s forgiveness and replace lies with truth*** (e.g. Lie – “If I show compassion for this person they will see it as weakness and exploit me” and replace with the truth – “clothing myself with compassion is a Christ like attribute and opens the door to healing”).

4. *Walk with God and allow Him to work through you.* We can more fully appropriate the amazing power of God in our lives when we have dealt with those things that have broken down our intimacy with Him; those lies and wounds that have held us back from being who we truly are.
5. *Take a step of faith and implement the change God shows you in your relationships.*

Discussion Questions

1. Share an example of when you have seen the world's rules of relationships being displayed?
2. Share some personal ways in which relating differently in relationships has helped change the culture of where those relationships took place (i.e. work, university, home).
3. Is your life in Christ 'good news' for those around you? If you could ask Jesus for one thing that resembled His life for you to live out now, what would that be? (healing, compassion, miracles, patience, greater capacity to love). All of those things are available in Christ – break into pairs and pray that the Holy Spirit would release that gift or character quality in and through your prayer partner's life.
4. Identify a situation where God is asking you to relate differently from our cultural norms. Ask God "What do you want me to do differently to allow your light to shine?" Share this with someone else.