

Partners In Courage, May 2016

The Aggressive Church

Sermon by Wes Daughenbaugh

INTRODUCTION: THE DREAM.

Only a few times in my life has a dream seemed to have real spiritual significance. I'm not a person who believes every dream has an interpretation. But sometimes God does speak to me through a dream. These are characterized by being memorable, unforgettable.

A few years ago I had a dream that, in my opinion, characterizes the American church in general.

In the dream I was part of an army, a Christian army. We had a fort and the enemy had a fort not too far away, just down the street. Our fort was a comfortable place to live. Every evening we would march down the street and take up positions. We would then shoot a few rounds of ammunition at the enemy fort in a short and meaningless battle and then march back to our fort.

I went up to the commander of this Christian army and asked permission to lead a contingent of troops around the back of the fort to make a surprise attack, overcome it and seize it. This greatly offended the leader. He was very angry and denied me permission. He wanted the status quo and did not want to do anything to threaten the comfortable way of life he was used to.

As I returned back to our fort I was thinking, "What if the enemy wakes up and decides to make a surprise attack from behind on us? What if they decide to WIN?"

At that, I awoke and pondered the meaning of the dream. The army of the Lord, that is, his church, was not fighting to win. They were only making an appearance when it came to resisting evil. They didn't want victory, they wanted comfort, stability, low risk and maintenance. However, I felt the strong impression that the enemy was not always going to be tolerant of this opposing force. Sooner or later they were going to become aggressive and go for the win. I had the ominous realization that the status quo wasn't going to last. Sooner or later, an army that won't fight aggressively will be overcome by an army that will fight against them aggressively.

It is my belief and conviction that Jesus wants an aggressive church. I believe the Holy Spirit gave me this title. So let's see what the dictionary says about the word aggressive: 1. Going militantly forward. 2. Making an all-out effort to win. 3. Vigorously energetic, especially in the use of initiative and forcefulness.

**** Annie Schisler had a vision of two great wheels going in opposite directions. One was the wheel of the world and the other was the wheel of the church. By and by the wheel of the church slowed in momentum and stopped. Then it started turning in the same direction as the wheel of the world until they both turned together at the same speed and direction.

1. JESUS WANTS AN AGGRESSIVE CHURCH

Jesus said, "**From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force,**" ([Matthew 11:12 ESV](#)). What does this mean? Godly people suffered violence against them from godly Abel until Christ. What Jesus meant was

that people were thronging to him, coming from great distances, pressing in violently to get the forgiveness and eternal life promised in the Kingdom of God.

In other words, people get into the kingdom of heaven when they have a violent hunger for God. If that is our beginning, then it should also be the definition of the way we live in the Kingdom—all out, whole hearted, and yes—even aggressive.

When Jesus spoke to the seven churches in the book of Revelation he said things like this: To the church in Ephesus, **“Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place,”** (Rev. 2:4-5).

To the persecuted church in Smyrna he said, **“I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life,”** (Revelation 2:10).

Jesus rebuked the church in Pergamum for allowing teaching that promoted greed, idolatry and sexual immorality. He told them to repent or he would come to them and fight against them with the sword of his mouth. (Revelation 2:16).

Aggressive cancer treatment goes for the kill to save the patient. It’s obvious that Jesus wants aggressive intolerance of demonic doctrines. **“You tolerate that woman Jezebel.”** Not good. Don’t put up with false teaching.

To the Church in Sardis he said, **“I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God,”** (Revelation 3:1-2).

To the Church in Philadelphia he said, **“See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.”** Jesus wanted that church to go through that open door aggressively.

To the Church in Laodicea Jesus said, **“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth,”** (Revelation 3:5-6).

**** Think of lukewarm coffee. If you taste coffee that isn’t fairly hot what do you do? Be hot toward God, and cold toward the worldly system of sin, greed, pride and immorality. Be hot and cold at the same time. (Be like a Hot Fudge Sunday—both cold and hot!).

2. AGGRESSIVELY EAT GOD’S WORD

The Risen Christ said, **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age,”** (Matthew 28:19-20).

Notice, Jesus said, “Teach them “everything” I have commanded you.” First we aggressively eat and feed on God’s word. Then we practice, practice and practice some more. Those who practice God’s word are those who build on the rock of obedience to Christ and are secure through the storm. (See Matthew 7:24-27). Love to obey.

Jesus said, **“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples,”** (John 15:7-8). He wants MUCH FRUIT. Not just a little.

**** When I got born again my pastor tried to talk me out of salvation. I dropped out of church to stay saved. After five years I was oppressed. I was a baby Christian with no discipleship for five years. I was so oppressed I considered suicide or running away to go insane. Instead, I started reading the Bible three hours a day. I’d read until I had hope for the future, comfort, some peace and then I’d do my school studies. Even with less time, I got good grades because I had peace of mind.

Over my life I've had an aggressive hunger and love for God's word. Peter wrote, **"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,"** (1 Peter 2:2). **CRAVE** is a strong word. **ABIDE** is a strong word. **"TEACH THEM EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED."** These are words that describe an aggressive appetite for God's word.

**** During the 18 years I pastored I'd study my sermon and write out verses by hand on a legal pad. Then I'd make an outline, then I'd place the verses in the outline and flesh it out with illustrations. Then I'd type six to eight pages of notes. I'd give these notes to people as they left church. I also mailed cassette tapes with notes to absentees. I was **AGGRESSIVE**.

I've always worked very hard to make every sermon a masterpiece, worthy of being preached again, life changing and impacting. No fluff, no hype, nothing false. Every message had to be easy to understand, easy to apply, and easy to remember because of stories and illustrations.

Paul said, **"You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house,"** (Acts 20:20).

**** On my way to Bible College we traveled down the Columbia River Gorge. My father was driving, and I was reading the Bible. I read Proverbs 1:23 ESV, **"If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you."** Right then I made a covenant with God that if he would rebuke me I'd always turn at his rebuke. The sign of this covenant is the Columbia River.

That is the root of my teaching ministry—to be teachable and to hunger for God's correction in an aggressive way.

It is through the Word of God that we renew and transform our minds.

It is through the Word of God that we defeat the devil as Jesus did when tempted by Satan. He said, **"It is written."**

It is through the Word of God that we armor up for Battle. (See Ephesians 6). We put on the helmet of salvation when we meditate on the Word of God. We put on the belt of truth when we turn at the correction of the Word of God. We put on the boots of readiness when we memorize the Word of God. We pick up the shield of faith when we believe the Word of God. We put on the breastplate of righteousness when we DO the Word of God. We have the Sword of the Spirit when we SPEAK the Word of God.

ARMOR UP AGGRESSIVELY. Do you tank up on God's Word? Evaluate. Where is the aggressive love for God's Word? Has it faded? Are we feeding only on the chaff of social media, online news stories, meaningless TV shows, to the neglect of God's Word?

3. I WANT TO SHOW YOU THREE STATEMENTS OF SPIRITALLY AGGRESSIVE PEOPLE.

These three statements are: I must. I can. I will. Each has two parts.

**** When I was 18 years of age our eight A-squad cheerleaders died in a plane crash. I had never shared my faith with them. I said, **"I MUST START SHARING MY FAITH** because A. If I don't God will hold me accountable and something bad will happen—I'll displease God and people will go to hell that could have been saved. B. If I do share my faith I'll get a soul winners crown. I'll be rich in souls. I'll live a delightful life."

B. I said, **"I can."** I believed I could share my faith.

And I made a plan. I can always has a plan. I had a pastor make a scripture chain with me in my Bible. My plan was simple: show students 12 to 15 powerful scriptures about salvation and eternal life, then ask them if they'd like to receive Christ.

C. I said, **"I will."** I will start sharing my faith immediately.

I will keep doing that my entire life.

Every once in a while our plan needs to be revised. With no plan there is no action.

**** In the little Bible College I attended, the school had a candy contest each year where classes competed with each other to raise funds for some school project. Our big freshman class was beaten badly by the small senior class that first year. The next year, my junior year (a three year college), our whole class was defeated in attitude. Many had dropped out and our class was

about half the size of our freshman year. The senior class advisor was well known for leading that class to win. No one had any hope or idea as to how to beat the seniors.

I spoke up in a meeting, “I know how to beat the seniors.” I read to the class Proverbs 12:24, “**The hand of the diligent will rule.**” I said, “All we have to do to beat the seniors is to be more diligent than them.”

I MUST: Something good will happen—it will feel good to beat the seniors plus there is prize money for the individuals who sell the most. Something bad will happen if we slack off—we don’t want to feel that defeat feeling like last year.

I CAN: I believe we can win. The Bible says so.

My plan: Go out and aggressively sell candy every day! Go to every business. Show them the chocolate bars.

I WILL. I will start immediately.

I will keep going out every day for several hours until this contest is over.

I had no title as to being a class officer. Yet I led our class to victory. Our class won in every category—the most overall money raised, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes for individual sales. I won first prize and my two room-mates won second and third prizes.

**** BUS MINISTRY. After Bible College I worked in a veneer mill but was given a choir to direct at a church. However, God told me my main ministry would be to be a soulwinner. I asked, “How many can I believe you for?” He said, “As many as the stars of the heavens.” I said, “How can I do that?” He said, “Start with little kids. They are the good ground of Matthew 13.”

I MUST: I must put the good seed on the good ground before the weeds grow. If I do that something good will happen. They’ll all be saved—every human.

If I don’t something bad will happen. Weeds will grow. The ground of their hearts will get hard. (Adults and teens need the plow of repentance.)

I CAN. I believed I could find people who were willing to let me bring their children to church.

My plan: It kept evolving into a great system. Sign up forms on arch-boards, a brochure to explain our church to parents and a weekly flyer to give out. I would visit each enlisted child each week. My rule, “Never drive by a kid I didn’t know. “ Call them Sun morning to remind them I was coming.

I WILL. I will do my route when it’s hot, when it’s pouring rain and when I don’t feel like it. I will keep on doing it. When we had six bus routes four of my captains quit. Instead of letting bus ministry die I visited five of the routes myself and doubled the bus ministry. I WAS AGGRESSIVE. God sent good helpers to me when he saw I would not quit. The last three years on staff we visited 1,000 to 1200 kids each week and brought in over 500 per Sunday.

**** WIDOWS, ORPHANS AND NATIVE PASTORS.

A. I must help them. Something good will happen if I do. Jesus will say, “**I was hungry and you fed me.**”

Something bad will happen if I don’t. Really bad. I do not want him to say to me, “**I was hungry and you didn’t feed me.**” (See Matthew 25)

B. I believe I can make a difference to some hurting people. Not all, but some.

I have a plan. I will pray for their needs as if they were my own. I will present their needs to others, with whom I have favor, raise the money, and then faithfully give it without taking any of it for myself.

C. I started doing this in 2009 and I will keep going for as long as I live.

**** HELPING THE PERSECUTED. With the generous help of our partners our ministry has done some wonderful things for persecuted Christians. Since these sermon notes will be put online I cannot tell you details. I will say we’ve helped them AGGRESSIVELY so that their whole lives have been put back together. We didn’t just give a little help. We helped a LOT.

**** COPIES OF ME. In my early 20's I told God, "I wish I had more of me to serve you with. If I had three bodies I'd be a missionary, a pastor and an evangelist. I love you so much I wish I could put myself in that copy machine and make thousands of me to serve you all over the world." God spoke, "DO IT."

I've aggressively made sermons, songs, and books—thousands and thousands of copies. Instead of slowing down, I'm praying, "I want to make millions of me to serve you all over the world."

**** Now I'm learning about blogging, tweets, social media—things that could make more copies, influence more, new tricks for an old dog. I MUST, I CAN, I WILL! My newest book, '21 WAYS TO FORGIVE' will most likely be the largest selling book of anything I've ever written. I have more books inside me, waiting to be written! We must *STAY* aggressive.

4. GOD LOVES WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS.

God said through Jeremiah, "**You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart,**" ([Jeremiah 29:13 ESV](#)).

Paul wrote, "**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward,**" ([Colossians 3:23-24](#)).

God spoke through Moses, "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength,**" ([Deut. 6:5](#)).

The Psalmist wrote, "**I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart,**" ([Psalm 86:12](#)).
[Psalm 119:34](#) **Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart.**

[Psalm 119:58](#) **I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise.**

[Proverbs 3:5](#) **Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.**

[Proverbs 4:4](#) **Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live."**

[Revelation 2:23](#) **And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.**

Paul wrote, "**But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me,**" ([1 Corinthians 15:10](#)).

5. AGGRESSIVELY ASK FOR EMPOWERMENT BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

"**Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.**" After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly, ([Acts 4:29-30](#)).

**** When I pastored in Omaha I went through a period of great stress. I'd go to the gym we used as a sanctuary and shoot baskets late at night. One night at 11:00 PM the doors shook and a man was crying out, "Brother Wes, help me. I have a demon." Spooky.

I told him he was a Christian and could not have a demon. He went home without help. That week, at the command of a demon, he ate his own excrement and boiled his hands in water. His wife divorced him and he was put in a hospital for the insane.

My failure shook me. I prayed earnestly, “If you’ll anoint me for deliverance I’ll serve you faithfully with that anointing.” I prayed that over and over.

**** One day as I was doing the laundry a fiery anointing came into my right hand. It stayed, burning hot. The next day it went into my left hand, then my feet. Many deliverances resulted. I had a terribly rough learning curve, made some terrible mistakes, but came through it knowing how to get people free without becoming kooky in the process.

**** In New Deli, India I was told I’d have 40 minutes to preach and 20 minutes to pray for people. The pastor said that they all had to get up at 4:00 AM. I knew there would be unsaved Hindus in that service. But I was supposed to speak on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I’d have an interpreter taking up half the time. How could I explain salvation and the Holy Spirit in just 20 minutes?

For two hours I sat still, only communing with God in my heart, saying, “Take me over, God. Take me over.” He did. My interpreter was great and I preached as if taken over by God. Out of 70 adults present, all five Hindus got saved. Twelve people got baptized in the Holy Spirit, including an associate pastor. I cast a demon out of one lady. The place sounded like Pentecost. I gave the microphone back to the pastor with four minutes to spare! What a memory.

6. WHAT IF WE LOSE OUR AGGRESSIVENESS?

Jesus said, **“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot,”** (Mathew 5:13).

**** Once I was praying about the persecuted church in Sudan, Africa. Muslims were attacking them, killing, raping, and selling women and children as slaves. I said, “Why are you allowing these Christians to be trampled under foot by men?” God spoke instantly and strongly, “They are NOT being trampled under foot by men. They are on-fire believers who are being persecuted. It is the American church that is being trampled under foot by men. To be treated as irrelevant and not even noticed, that is what it means to be trampled under foot by men.”

I believe we are supposed to cause a stir, to be noticed. Soul winning and prayer need to be done aggressively. Jesus said, **“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven,”** (Matthew 5:16).

Our version of letting our light shine is to put news of our church Pot Luck on Facebook. I like to hear of churches where people adopt a block. They walk that block, meeting people, asking them what they need prayer for. If they need physical help, they work to get it. They love that block to Jesus. They are aggressive in their love.

If there is no aggressiveness in the Word, in prayer, and in evangelism then eventually the church’s candlestick gets removed. Individually, we fail to reach our potential. We fail to fulfill our individual mission in life. We fail to receive the great rewards promised to those who serve and love God with all their hearts.

Paul wrote, **“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames,”** (1 Corinthians 3:10-14).

7. THERE ARE THREE STAGES OF AGGRESSIVENESS.

When I directed a large bus ministry in the 1970's I was shocked when visiting my bus kids. Many said, "We're not coming with you next Sunday. We're going to go to this other church that has a bigger Easter Egg Hunt." They showed me a flyer from First Assembly of God that announced "10,000 EASTER EGGS!" Our church and their church ran church buses in the same area and they had given out flyers to *my* bus kids. I never tried to entice kids away from any other church. I only signed up and visited those who had no church. I went back to the office and made a flyer that said, 11,000 EASTER EGGS!

So my kids came with me as usual that Sunday. But I was very worried. First Assembly was a bigger church. They had more money and resources. They were even closer to that area. I was worried they'd get off with all my bus kids.

God spoke to me:

1. IF YOU ABIDE IN ME YOU WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT.
2. IF YOU AND FIRST ASSEMBLY BOTH ABIDE IN ME AND SIGN UP ALL THESE CHILDREN I WILL IMPORT THEM TO THIS AREA FROM AROUND THE UNITED STATES FOR YOU TO SIGN UP.
3. IF YOU STILL ABIDE IN ME AND WIN ALL OF THEM I WILL SEND YOU AROUND THE WORLD.

Some might say, "I'd like God to send me around the world." That's sounds fun and adventuresome. Well, don't skip any steps. Abide in God. Seek him with all your heart. Aggressively eat his word. Pray for strong anointings to do his will.

Secondly, love and evangelize your area. Is it a city block? Get the job done. Tell everyone until there is no one left to tell, until all have heard the good news.

Third, God will never waste your devotion. He will always make a way for you to love and serve more and more. His resources will become available even though the situations look impossible. He will always make a way for the fully devoted heart that serves him aggressively.

CLOSING:

Are you comfortable or aggressive? Do you like the Status Quo or are you fighting to win?

**** *One man had a vision. He saw multitudes streaming toward a cliff. The cliff plunged down into a lake of boiling acid. People were falling over the edge as more multitudes came behind them, all headed for destruction. At the top of the hill were people holding hands to form a line. Their backs were toward the precipice. They were turning people around, warning them. But wherever there was a gap in the line, people were plunging into a lost eternity.*

God spoke to that man, *"Take your place in the line and stand in the gap. You won't win them all, but you'll win some."*

Jesus taught that the weeds and the wheat would grow together until maturity. Then he said that God would send out the angels to pull up the weeds, bind them in bundles to be burned, and then gather the wheat into his barns. Sin and iniquity will grow and mature, no matter how aggressively we try to win the world.

**** One day I parked in front of a new video store. It was in the 1980s. I knew most of the movies rented there would be worldly, spiritually unhealthy stuff. I groaned, "Oh God we're losing America."

God spoke to me, "You aren't losing. They are losing." Then he reminded me of Noah. Noah warned everyone he could, but only saved seven others from the worldwide flood that destroyed the earth of that time. Noah served God aggressively, but the losers wanted to be losers. The Bible says, **"By faith, Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith,"** (Hebrews 11:7).

Noah's faith didn't get everyone of his generation saved. They didn't WANT to be saved. So his faith condemned them. He proved that people could live for God in spite of the sins of the culture. People could live pure in the midst of a defiled and perverse culture. Noah built that ark for 120 years. That's aggressive and whole-hearted devotion to God.

The Bible says, **“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves,”** (2 Corinthians 13:5).

**** AUDRIE MANNING is a former missionary to Chile, South America. She is in her 80's. She is still serving God aggressively. She's trying to get the seniors to PRAY since they have more time to pray than anyone. She's teaching four different Bible studies and is not paid for any of her work.

When she was young and had more strength she and her husband, Bruce, won multitudes to Christ in Chile. They experience miracles. Communists were in charge of the country during that time and brought the usual economic collapse and terrible shortages that system always brings.

Once they had gone without meat for a long time. None of the stores had any meat to buy, even if you had money. One day God told them an address to go to and said there would be a meat market there that would have meat. They went there, and bought a lot of meat that lasted for months. When they went back for more they were told, “There has never been a meat market on this street.” They had bought meat from an angelic meat market.

Bruce, her husband, prayed for nails. There were no nails in any hardware store, and he needed nails to build wood-frame churches. God spoke one day, “There are nails in the hardware store today.” He went in and announced, “I'm here to buy nails.” He was told, “We have no nails. Not a single one. The only thing we have close is an empty nail box in the attic, just a cardboard box that says NAILS on the side.” Bruce said, “Bring it down.” The man did so, but flipped it in the air. It landed on a glass counter top without breaking the glass. Bruce said, “Open it.” They did and it was full of shiny nails.

Now those spiritual exploits were done when they were much younger and had more natural strength. What will be their biggest achievements when they stand before Jesus? *Remember the little widow who put in two small coins into the treasury of the temple?* Jesus said that she put in more than all the rich because they gave out of their abundance but she had given, out of her poverty, all she had to live on (Luke 21:4).

In the same way, in our younger days we serve God with an abundance of physical strength. We give labor out of abundance. As we age, we have less strength to live on. But God may regard our greatest achievements as something we did in old age when we had little strength. As I looked at Audrie Manning I thought, “She is not an old horse, put out to pasture. She is probably, in the eyes of God, giving more now than ever before in her life.” I hope you'll be wholehearted at whatever age you are. I hope you'll ponder this question a lot, “AM I SERVING GOD AGGRESSIVELY?” “AM I SEEKING GOD AGGRESSIVELY?” What would my life look like if I did? What would I do differently?

Find the answers to these questions. Don't settle for being less than totally in love with the Lord. My prayer: “Lord, I want to serve you aggressively, whole heartedly. I never want to leave or lose my first love. I want to abide in you and have your word abide in me. I want to bear much fruit for your glory. Where am I comfortable and complacent? Set me on fire with your motivation, your love, and your anointing for boldness. Give me a heart like the little widow who put in all she had to live on. I want to put in my full life, my full service, my full love, my full energy. Prune me to make me even more fruitful. In Jesus name, Amen.”

I LOVE YOU. GOD BLESS YOU.