

Opening Remarks:

1. My name is Charles Specht — — Pastor of Adult Ministries & Education
- Kathy, Camden, Brady, Amelia, Charlotte, and Luke
2. Series on “Pastoral Callings” - (ALL 8 PASTORS)
3. Kenton Rahn & Michael Hammond have already preached
4. After this series: Christmas messages, and then verse-by-verse (1 Peter).

TOPIC: **Plant, Water, Pray!**
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READ: 1 Corinthians 3:1 - 4:2

Theme Statement:

As a Christian, when it comes to why God has you alive right now, you’re either busy PLANTING (evangelism), WATERING (ministry/service), and PRAYING (for God’s growth)...or you’re wasting your life away!

1 Corinthians 3:5-8

5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. **7** So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. **8** Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

INTRODUCTION:

- Junior in high school; played Defensive End on the varsity football team.
- I was the backup to the state defensive player who had a full-ride to Michigan.
- Relished the “garbage time” and begged the coaches, “Put me in, coach!”
- POINT MADE: God doesn’t have any “benchwarmers.” Every believer is a starter!
- QUESTION: Do you want God to put you in the game, or is a “benchwarmer lifestyle” good enough for you?

I. The Servant's OPPORTUNITY

(verse 5) - *“What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.”*

A. Don't think too highly of yourself — It's not about you!

1. *“What then is Apollos? And what is Paul?”* - nobody special
2. *“Servants”* - διάκονος (*diakonos*) - we get the word “deacon”
 - a. *“one who renders service to another; an attendant, servant; one who executes a commission, a deputy; a servitor, a devoted follower”*
 - b. “Table Bus Boy” — —> not a “Waiter”

B. God may use you to bring others to a saving knowledge of Him.

1. *“through whom you believed”* - instruments in the hand of God

C. God uses people when the time (opportunity) is right — so be ready!

1. *“as the Lord gave opportunity to each”* - God is responsible for not only the result(s) of ministry but also for the OPPORTUNITY you have to serve other people.
 - a. *“opportunity”* —> a.k.a. “assigned” - δίδωμι (*didōmi*)

1. “to give, bestow, present, cast or throw, supply, suggest; to be the author or source of a thing; to grant, permit, allow, entrust, reveal, appoint, to offer in sacrifice”
2. **Step #1 is to Present Yourself as Available - (“Put me in, coach!”)**
 - a. **Romans 12:1 - “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*” (NKJV)**

II. The Servant’s LABOR

(verses 6-7) - “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.”

A. **PLANT** —> (Paul said, “I planted”)

1. Someone has to plant the first seed; evangelism.
2. Soil is the heart; seed is the gospel.

TAKE OUT POT OF SOIL AND PLANT THE SEED

- Testimony**
3. I was NOT raised in a “Christian” home. - (Joliet, Illinois)
 4. **When I was around 8 years old, a young woman showed up at my house and asked if anyone wanted to go to Awana.**

Awana Slide with Logo

9 MORE WORKERS NEEDED - a great ministry in need of laborers!

5. As I grew up...I lived a depraved lifestyle of sex, drugs, 80’s rap music.

6. Sports (baseball, football, and wrestling).
7. Local gang member asked me to consider transporting guns from Illinois up to Milwaukee, Wisconsin (first time I realized how deep I was getting!)
8. Moved to Wisconsin to “save the family” - 14 years old
9. I started doing drugs, drinking alcohol, and getting into fights.
10. **When I was 14 years old, my three friends and I got drunk and high on marijuana. We hung out on The Ave and two blond-haired teenagers carrying Bibles walked up to us and shared the gospel.**
11. Although I was unrepentant, those two seeds were planted in my heart.

B. **WATER** —> (Paul said, “Apollos watered”)

1. Once the seed is sown, it needs to be repeatedly watered with loving ministry and service.

TAKE OUT JUG AND WATER THE SEED

2. Graduated high school with a 1.97 GPA (how even possible?)
3. Junior college for 2 years; baseball scholarship to a 4-year school.
4. COLLEGE: I partied non-stop; **getting drunk typically 5-6 times weekly**, smoking and selling marijuana, and took acid (LSD) more times than I can count.
5. Donated plasma to get money for clubbing and booze.
6. SENIOR YEAR: Got a job in one of the dorms as an R.A. (Resident Assistant) on a fraternity floor (*The Skulls*).
7. Co-worker (R.A.) named Kiri was two floors below (all girls floor).
8. Kiri was a Christian, lived a godly lifestyle, and began witnessing to me.

9. Kept trying to find holes her in answers. Sometimes, I asked her to show me where in the Bible it said something, but she couldn't always find the answers.
11. She then stayed up all night finding the answers and then handwriting them on pieces of paper (BOTH SIDES; 6-7 pages) and then slipped them under my door in the middle of the night.
12. I was shocked by that gesture of love (Who does that for people???)
13. Decided to start reading the Bible for myself. Kiri helped me pick one out and told me to start in Matthew.
15. I decided to read 6 chapters each night when I came home from the bars, before I passed out.
16. **PLEASE NOTE: DRUNK 85% OF THE TIME I READ THE BIBLE.**
17. **Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”**
18. After a couple of months of doing this, I remember sitting at a local bar around 1:00am and thinking, ***“I wish this place would hurry up and close so I can go back to my dorm room and read the Bible.”***
19. *One morning — some weeks later — everything changed!*
20. I went out drinking, got drunk, stumbled back to my dorm room, read 6 chapters of the Bible, and then passed out. (Nothing knew there)
21. I woke up the next day at 10am — half drunk — just laid on my bed.
22. It was dark in my room still, as the thick curtains were closed, but there was a single ray of sunshine peaking through a crack.
23. Stared at the ray of light for about 30 minutes straight, and all I could think about was this Bible verse that I had read sometime before: **“The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:5).**

24. That verse rattled me. I knew that God was light, and I was darkness, and there was no light in me!
25. I was so overwhelmed with my sin that I began to sob.
26. I knew that if I died right then that I'd end up in Hell forever, and God would have been justified in sending me there!
27. I fell out of my bed and onto my knees and began crying out to the Lord for mercy.
28. I even repeatedly beat my chest over and over and over again, because I remembered reading somewhere in the Bible that a guy did that and Jesus said the man went away justified. (**"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'" Luke 18:13**)
29. Forty-five minutes later, I stood up — —> Saved; Forgiven; Washed!
30. FIRST ATTEMPT AT EVANGELISM: I then showered and went to meet my buddies for lunch whom I partied with the night before. I felt so clean and wonderful and forgiven that I wanted to tell my friends all about it! - (I had no idea how crazy it would sound to them!)
31. When I told my friends, that started laughing because they thought I was still drunk!
32. Eventually, one of them got really upset and he shouted in the cafeteria, *"My dad is a Lutheran pastor and that practically guarantees me a front row seat in heaven!"*
33. I didn't know how to respond, so just said, *"I don't how to answer that, but I know that if you're willing, God would save you, too."*

c. **PRAY** —> (Paul said, “God was causing the growth”)
(Pray for God to Cause the Growth)

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.”

1. PRAYER is what you do while “God was causing the growth.”
2. POWERLESS: We cannot make anything grow; only God can do that!
3. We PLANT through Evangelism and we WATER with Ministry...but God alone is solely responsible for growth.
4. **God wants us to Pray with “Wet Prayer”**
5. **PREACHING PROFESSOR IN SEMINARY TOLD HIS STUDENTS TO MEET HIM AT A CEMETERY AND BRING ONLY THEIR BIBLES. WHEN THEY ARRIVED, HE TOLD THEM THAT WHEN THEY PREACH THE GOSPEL TO UNBELIEVERS, THEY ARE PREACHING TO SPIRITUALLY DEAD PEOPLE WHO CANNOT UNDERSTAND AND CANNOT BE SAVED — — APART FROM GOD’S WORK. HE TOLD THEM TO EACH PICK A TOMBSTONE AND PREACH A SERMON, TRYING TO GET THE DEAD PERSON TO RISE FROM THE DEAD.**
6. VANITY: Preaching to a seed in dirt and commanding it to grow!
7. But over the course of time, God will do His work! Pray that God will cause the growth.....massive, abundant, miraculous growth!
 - a. **“And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.” (Matthew 13:8-9)**

BRING OUT LARGE PLANT WITH GROWTH

8. After I got saved, I visited Kiri's church with her one Sunday. It was a smaller church of about 30 people, and it felt like all the people were staring at me. On the drive home, I asked Kiri about it. She said, "**All of those people were praying specifically for you — for many months — once they knew I was sharing the gospel with you. I think they're just really excited to have seen their prayers answered.**"

9. ***"Prayer doesn't work, but God works through prayer!"***
(Dr. James Rosscup)
 - "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7)
 - "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." (Matthew 21:22)
 - "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*." (John 14:13-14)
 - "When He came into *the* house, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?" And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by **anything** but prayer." (Mark 9:28-29)
 - "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man **can accomplish much**." (James 5:16)
 - "Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore **beseech the Lord** of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38)

9. Age doesn't matter, because the flesh has no power for growth!
- **ATTENTION: Silver-Haired Saints — — You're not dead yet!**

"CALL TO MINISTRY"

GOD IS STILL CAUSING THE GROWTH!

10. Attended *The Master's Seminary* in Sun Valley, CA.
11. Volunteer Chaplain: the jails of Los Angeles County.
12. In 2000, we moved to Merced, CA; helped with a new church plant.
13. In 2006, we moved to Fresno, California and then began serving at *The North Jail* in downtown Fresno; preaching two sermons at two church services, every Sunday night.
14. In 2009, guest preaching at various churches around California.
15. In 2010, "Associate Pastor" at Madera Baptist Church in Madera, CA.
16. In 2011, "Senior Pastor" position at Faith Baptist Church in Strathmore, California where I served for nearly seven years.
17. My favorite Bible passage (**2 Timothy 4:1-5**):

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

III. The Servant's REWARD

(verse 8) - **"Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor."**

- A. Unity in service. (Believers serve a common goal — God's glory!)
- B. God rewards His workers. (He won't leave you empty-handed in eternity.)
- C. Divine payment is based upon EFFORT ("*labor*") — not results!

CONCLUSION:

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO SERVE AT CHURCH
(Put up slide) - ministry slots available

We Need 101 Ministry Workers!

Awana - 9
Campus Kids - 29
Ushers - 18
Greeters - 6
Info Center - 3
Upward Volunteers - 10
Sports Ministry - 3
Security / Parking Lot - 6
Medical Team - 5
Men's Ministry - 2
(Palm) Youth Ministry - 2
(Palm) Saturday Sports - 4
(Maple) Junior High - 2
(Maple) High School - 2

PERSONAL CHALLENGE:

QUESTION: Are you laboring in God's field, or are you content on being a *Christian benchwarmer*?

QUESTION: Are you currently serving in at least one ministry and are you devoted to prayer? (If yes, then excel even more! If not, why not?)

A. **Matthew 25:14-30** (The Parable of the Talents)

1. A person who is not Planting or Watering or Praying — looks more like an Unbeliever than they do a child of God.
2. When God “settles accounts” with you, the only thing that will matter on your tombstone is the “DASH” (not your name, the date of your birth, or your death). — —> (What are you doing with your dash?)
(“Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.” vs. 19)
3. If you're faithfully SERVING God, He will — quite likely — add more to your plate!
(“Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.” vs. 28)

B. **Matthew 25: 31-46** (The Final Judgment)

- C. **John 13:34-35** **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

- D. Continue....and don't stop! - (final song)

- E. **Plant, Water, Pray!**
Plant, Water, Pray!
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