Teaching Notes

*The Circle Maker* by Mark Batterson

Chapter 3

For January 20, 2013 Zadok Orchestra Lifegroup

1. Intro
   1. Pray.
   2. Discuss handouts:
      1. 1 blank 3x5 card for homework assignment
      2. Jericho archeology handout
      3. Sonship vs. orphan spirit handout
         1. Discuss how we can’t pray boldly without having a deep understanding that we are God’s beloved sons and daughters, not orphans.
         2. Share my testimony about having dealt with having the heart of an orphan
         3. Share how I went through the 7 steps to freedom, and that was one of the most helpful things I’ve done, but I have still had to work through orphan vs. daughter issues.
   3. Today we are going to cover chapter 3 and then we’re going to continue our discussion about everybody’s prayer needs that we will be drawing circles around.
2. Teaching

A. Review:

* + 1. God is with us.
    2. He loves us.
    3. He’s for us.
    4. So we can and must pray boldly, and we can expect answers.
    5. Our prayers endure generations. Promises endure generations. “Our prayers never die” (Circle Maker, 20).

B. The story of Jericho was the fulfillment of a 400-year-old promise.

* + 1. Describe Jericho.
    2. God told the Israelites to silently circle the city once a day for 6 days, then 7 times on the 7th. Total of 13 circles. (1 = God, 7 = Perfection/Completion).
    3. And the walls came tumbling down.
    4. Batterson: “After seven days of circling Jericho, God delivered on a four-hundred-year-old promise. He proved, once again, that His promises don’t have expiration dates. And Jericho stands, and falls, as a testament to this simple truth: If you keep circling the promise, God will ultimately deliver on it” (Circle Maker, 21).

C. Jericho “was the miracle [the Israelites] had been hoping for and waiting for their entire lives” (Circle Maker, 21). **What is your Jericho?**

* + 1. “Drawing prayer circles starts with identifying your Jericho. You’ve got to define the promises God wants you to stake claim to, the miracles God wants you to believe for, and the dreams God wants you to pursue” (Circle Maker, 22).
    2. “Now here’s the problem: Most of us don’t get what we want simply because we don’t know what we want. We’ve never circled any of God’s promises. We’ve never written down a list of life goals. We’ve never defined success for ourselves. And our dreams are as nebulous as cumulus clouds. Instead of drawing circles, we draw blanks” (Circle Maker, 22).

3. We’ve got to know what we’re asking God for. Even Jesus forced people to define what they wanted.

4. **Mark 10:46-52:** *“Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.****47****And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”* ***48****Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”* ***49****So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.”* ***50****And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.* ***51****So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.”* ***52****Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.”*

**5. Bartimaeus was forced to define his request. When he did, Jesus granted it instantly.**

**6. One of the most powerful thoughts about this passage:** Discuss how “bar” in Hebrew means “son,” and “Timaeus” was this man’s father’s name. Bartimaeus had no name of his own. He had no vision and no identity. Some of us may feel like we have no identity, because we have no vision for our lives. But Jesus came to restore that vision and identity. *Isaiah 29:18-19: “In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”*

**7.** *Proverbs 29:18 KJV: “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”* “Perish” in this context means “cast off restraint.” With no vision for your life, you cast off restraint because you have nothing to guide you; nothing to order your steps.

8. Mark 11:24 reiterates this principle: *“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”*

9. **On August 12, 1860, in a sermon entitled “True Prayer-True Power,” Charles Spurgeon preached on this text** and said: “According to our Saviour’s description of prayer, there should always be some *definite objects* for which we should plead. He speaks of *things*—“what things soever ye desire.” It seems then that he did not put it that God’s children would go to him to pray when they have nothing to pray for. Another essential qualification of pray[er] is *earnest desire*; for the Master supposes here that when we pray we have desires. Indeed it is not prayer, it may be something like prayer, the outward form or the bare skeleton, but it is not the living thing, the all-prevailing, almighty thing, called prayer, unless there be a fullness and overflowing of desires.” (<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0328.htm>)

10. **God is asking you the same question: “What do you want me to do for you?”** What is your answer to that question? What are the “promises, miracles, and dreams God has put into your heart?” (Circle Maker, 22)

11. Batterson: “If faith is being sure of what we hope for, then being unsure of what we hope for is the antithesis of faith, isn’t it? Well-developed faith results in well-defined prayers, and well-defined prayers result in a well-lived life” (Circle Maker, 23).

12. Even though life is a moving target, start where you are right now. Define your requests. Define your dream. Keep a prayer journal. Specific prayers get specific answers (Circle Maker, 23).

13. Example: Timothy and Jessica from pgs 24-25 of Circle Maker.

D. Defining success.

1. **Until you know what your definition of success is, you will try to fulfill everybody else’s definition of success, and fail to reach your own.** Batterson says: “I’ve never met anyone who doesn’t want to be successful, but very few people have actually spelled out success for themselves. We inherit a family definition or adopt a cultural definition. But if you don’t spell it out for yourself, you have no way of knowing if you’ve achieved it. You might achieve your goals only to realize that they should not have been your goals in the first place. You circle the wrong city. You climb the wrong ladder” (Circle Maker, 27).

2. **What is my definition of success?** (Give example of my own definition of success: “To make continual progress toward my destiny in this age and my destiny in the age to come.”)

3. **What is our definition of success for this orchestra?** (We’ll talk about this more at the very end.) Make this point here: It’s not just up to Michael. Every one of us have the power to lead. Every one of us can bring about a shift in the atmosphere when we play. We each can either be like a thermostat or like a thermometer. A thermometer tells you what temperature it is. A thermostat reads the temperature, then kicks in to change it. What will we be? Will we define success as a worship-leading orchestra, then go after it?

E. Conclusion: Obtaining a God’s-eye view

1. So you’re ready to define your goals. You’re ready to spell out your dream. How do you do it? **YOU HAVE TO GET ALONE WITH GOD.**

**2. Batterson: “Take a prayer retreat. Take a prayer journal. And take off. Get alone with God….”** (Circle Maker, 29)

3. When you’re alone with God, you can obtain a God’s-eye view. He will speak to you.

4. I’ve never had anything significant happen to me without my getting alone with God first. I got married after 5 years on my face before God. I started harp & bowl and leading worship after months on my face before God, interceding for this worship department. All the stuff happened with this Lifegroup starting and me getting to help to teach, when I was on a 21-day fast. I started seeing things explode with my writing, and some radical new doors open, this year after I started a 40-day fast. I can’t think of a single, significant thing that has happened in my life without my getting alone with God first.

5. **To get alone with God, it’s nice if you can go somewhere to get alone with God that inspires you. But it’s not required**. Example: This last fall after Connection Day, I was ready to keep working at anything anyone would have put me to work at. But God told me that I was to sit still and wait until the end of the year, because He had something new for me to do. I needed to hear from God about it, so Bruce and I went camping just for one night up at Cades Cove. In the morning, I let Bruce drive around the Cove, and I stayed in the tent and laid on my face before the Lord. He spoke to me, gave me some direction about writing, and renewed my spirit.

6. But I have had far more radical experiences with God laying on my face on the floor of my office (a spare bedroom) at home. I meet Him there daily. I spend my Saturday mornings with Him there, and He moves powerfully every time.

7. So you don’t have to go somewhere radical to have a life-changing encounter with God and get a vision for your life. But I do recommend that you get alone.

8. In his book “Man: The Dwelling Place of God,” A.W. Tozer wrote a chapter entitled “The Saint Must Walk Alone.” He wrote about Abraham: **“As far as we know not one word did God ever speak to him in the company of men. Face down he communed with his God…. There are some things too sacred for any eye but God's to look upon.”** (<http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/tozer/5j00.0010/5j00.0010.39.htm>)

9. Some of you are waiting for God to unload His whole plan into your mind before you take the first step. But that’s not how God works.

a. Ps. 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” A lamp doesn’t light up the world. It just shines enough to see your next step. If you want to fulfill your destiny, God will give you the next step. When you step out in faith, then He’ll give you another step. But He expects you to step out in faith.

b.Hebrews 11:8: “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

c. Proverbs 25:2: “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.”

d. Having to depend on God for each step keeps us needy. It keeps us trusting Him. He’s a Father and He wants us to cling to Him.

III. Application & Discussion:

1. Continue discussion of prayer cards and album.
2. Give album to someone else to take home this week. Ask them to covenant to pray for each card at least once.
3. Homework: On a 3x5 card, write 1-2 sentences to answer these questions:

1) What is your personal definition of success?

2) Would would you define success for this orchestra?

(Bring this back next week.)