

MercEmail A Weekly Devotional by Steve Higginbotham

Shrewd!

June 20, 2012

Each year, Apple hosts the WWDC (World Wide Developer's Conference) at which time they roll out their newest and coolest upgrades and gadgets. Since I love technology I'm always anxious to see what new gadget or tweak has been done to make my life and work easier, better, more productive, or simply more fun. Whether it's a new operating system, a new version of the iPhone, or simply some application tweaks, this conference is the culmination of a year's worth of dreaming, planning, research, and development by the people at Apple. And as a result, each year I am "wowed" at some the new technology and left wondering, "what will they come up with next?"

But now, here's my point. Do you remember the parable of the "Shrewd Steward" (Luke 16:1-13)? Jesus commends this steward, not for his dishonesty, but for his shrewdness, and then says, "For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light" (Luke 16:8). In other words, ***could it be that "the world" dreams bigger, plans better, works harder, troubleshoots longer, and advertises louder for things that will perish than God's people do for that which is eternal?***

What "wow" moments are we creating for the kingdom of God? What have we done to cause people to sit up and take notice? How much time are we spending as individuals or collectively with our congregations in dreaming, planning, and troubleshooting for the kingdom's sake? Can you remember the last time you got together with fellow Christians for the purpose of brainstorming about the work of the church? Have you ever done that? Are you content to keep doing the same things in the same ways you've always done them? I'll tell you this, Apple didn't get where it is today by being content with the first generation of their products. They continually, dream, tweak, streamline, and enhance their product. Without changing the gospel, can we not; should we not; must we not tweak, streamline, jettison, and enhance how we do what we do as the church? Paul instructed Titus to "adorn" the doctrine of God (Titus 2:10). To adorn something is to make something more beautiful or attractive. What thought have we been giving lately to "adorning" the doctrine of God?

Friends, Jesus didn't speak this parable for nothing. Don't allow the sons of the world to be more shrewd than the sons of light. Don't allow the sons of the world to work harder for that which is perishing than the sons of light work for that which is eternal. To borrow the words of Jesus, "Go and learn what this means." One more thing. Don't sit and wait for someone else to take the initiative. Don't sit and blame your elders for having no vision. Don't blame your brethren for being in a "rut." If you understand what Jesus was saying in this parable, then get busy and obey it. If you understand the need to be shrewd, then take the initiative to pull people together and starting planning.

Just think how much more individuals and some congregations could do if they would just spend as much time thinking about the growth of the kingdom as they do planning their vacation or where to set the thermostat during worship.

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