



WEEK 3 GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY SHAWN JOHNSON

START

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

In the message Shawn talked about growing up in Kansas and some of the unique things he experienced. Where did you grow up and what was 'unique' about the place you were raised?

SHARE

Welcome to our new series entitled, "Heritage."

When we hear the word 'heritage,' most of us think about a legacy or maybe deeply held values; the word itself sounds stoic and lofty. When we hear 'heritage' we think of how our past has formed who we are today.

Today, Red Rocks Church is one church in 6 locations. 2 of those locations meet in prisons, and we are nearly 10,000 people in weekly attendance. We are all one church, in various buildings, but at one time, we were only one tiny location with about 50 people and one life group. What has never changed is who we are. We are imperfect people being transformed by a perfect God. All that has happened at Red Rocks Church is because of Jesus Christ at work.

If you are sitting in a group today talking about this series, the chances are you most likely weren't able to attend our first service on January 9, 2005, nor would you probably have wanted to make that journey willingly. Imagine walking through the snow through a desolate, run-down theme park only to find a tiny church having their grand opening service in a building with plumbing, electrical and pest control problems ... at least there were excited people greeting you with hot coffee; a sort of hospitable, yet apologetic peace offering for the long walk to the building!

For those of us who were there at the start, when we hear the word 'heritage,' we think of Heritage Square Theme Park and over a decade of issues as our little church grew up there. Year after year, we battled frozen pipes, electrical outages, parking problems, and constant costly construction projects. Many of you who have attended our Golden Campus have experienced many of these issues more than you would have liked. So here we are, eleven years later and it is time to leave, but as Shawn stated in the message in week 1 of this series, **"the Square is going away ... our heritage never will."** A location is changing, but who we are as a church family never will.

The church isn't a building, it is a body of believers; it's the people who are the church. We are those people and regardless of the building we meet in, we are still Red Rocks Church. Throughout this series, we are going to talk about how there are seasons and situations in our lives that God can use to teach us great lessons, if we are willing to listen and keep our eyes focused on Jesus Christ. So whether you were here in the beginning or this is your very first week, allow God to speak to you about your own life as we look for the lessons that God might be trying to teach us.

This week Shawn talked about making Heaven more crowded. It is our mission as a church. We want to reach everyone we can with the gospel of Jesus Christ, baptize them and make disciples who make disciples. We want to make some noise for the Kingdom of God while we still have breath in our lungs. Shawn talked about how it is really easy for us to remember those that have made a Kingdom of God difference in our lives. It is easy to remember those who cared about us, invested into our lives, listened, helped, and disciplined us. We remember those who made a difference.

Can you think of someone who invested in your life or made a 'Kingdom of God' difference in your life? If so, what was their name and how have they impacted your life today?

Have you then, been able to invest into other people's lives?

GROW

Shawn pointed out that one of the first things he told his disciples was that they would become fishers of men. *Matthew 4:19* "Come follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." It is interesting of all the things Jesus could have said after "Come, follow me..." he tells them they will be fishing for people. Sure the disciples understood everything there was to fishing, but to fish for men was a whole new thing. Following Jesus meant they would be fishing. Jesus made this very evident to his disciples when he told a large group of tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees and teachers of the law three stories in a row to make his point about the value of those who are lost.

From a spiritual perspective, getting lost is unavoidable. Human nature is fundamentally flawed by sin. If people live their lives apart from God and follow their intuitions, they stay lost. That is because getting lost—physically or spiritually—is easy.

– John Kramp

Let's read Luke 15. Have a few people read, but be sure to read all three stories back to back.

In T.C. Butler's commentary on Luke, the tone is set for the way in which Jesus told these stories:

Jesus' parables, at first meant to reveal the mysteries of God's kingdom to the disciples and to conceal them from the crowds, have now become tools to teach the opponents (cf. 14:15–16). This parable retains its character as a story, but it is placed in the interrogative mood. The listeners become participants, characters in the story, and must choose a course of action. The story turns the self-righteous, ritually clean scribes and Pharisees into dirty shepherds involved in an occupation that constantly makes them unclean (see commentary on 2:8–12). The rabbis regarded shepherds—along with gamblers, tax collectors, camel drivers, and sailors—as despised, evil, thieving occupations.

As a shepherd, you care for one hundred sheep. One night one lone sheep wanders from the fold. When it comes time to count the sheep, you find one missing. What do you do? You leave the ninety nine to fend for themselves in the relative safety of the open field and begin an immediate search-and-rescue mission for the lost sheep. Having found the sheep, what do you do? Party! Celebrate! Rejoice! Gather all your friends and neighbors and share the good news with them.

What do all three stories have in common?

What do these stories say about God's heart for those who are lost?

As the commentary points out, Jesus turns all of the listeners into participants or characters in the story. Which character in the stories do you relate to most and why?

MOVE

As we continue in this series called "Heritage," we want to always remember our heritage as a church. As we follow Jesus, we are fishermen. When we follow Jesus we can be certain that it involves fishing. That is why we want to make Heaven more crowded and make disciples who will make disciples. Jesus was clear when he stood on that hillside with his disciples and said...

Matthew 28:19

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.

When you think of your current relational life, do you have anyone who is personally investing into you or discipling you? If not, don't be discouraged, but begin to pray about whom you might ask to mentor you or disciple you. A great place to start is just getting to know people in your life group.

Is there someone you feel you should begin investing in and discipling?

As we have talked about God's heart for the lost, has there been someone you know that you need to reach out to who doesn't know Jesus?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other, especially for the situations that people might be facing today.

TO GO

Matthew 10:5-7

Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge: "Don't begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don't try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here."