

Breaking Free From Containment: 5

Lengthen Your Cords

Isaiah 54.1-3

So far in this series we have seen that:

- we need to make room for God to work in our lives;
- we must conform to His will and not expect God to conform to ours.
- we have to keep our dreams and visions alive by stretching back over our calling, and the promises of God by rehearsing and meditating what God has spoken to us
- we must not become content with our lot or get used to things the way they are but rather expect them to change
- we must not have a poverty mentality
- we must have a generous nature

'lengthen your cords' (vs2)

What function do the cords supply?

- attached to the curtains and structure of a tent to keep it upright and secure
- anchored to the ground by the pegs
- take in a greater compass – reach out beyond the curtains all around.

We must see beyond where we are. While you are focused on where you are, you become contained.

- Without vision the people perish (Proverbs 29.18)
- Without vision a church, ministry or group just drifts from week to week and becomes dry and stagnant
- While we're focused on where we are we will not move to where we need to be.
- God has a purpose and destiny for us but that inward focus will contain us and prevent us from fulfilling that destiny.

Remember Abram?

Abram was contained in a land that was too small and 'not able to support them' – Genesis 13

After Abram and Lot separate God gives Abram a specific instruction to bring him out of containment.

“Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are – northward, southward, eastward and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever” (vs14-15)

Look at those words – 'look from the place where you are'.

- Abram's focus had been on the land where he was – it was too small for the two families, not able to support them – that inward focus had brought him into containment.

- God tells him to look out further and wider – take in a greater compass – look beyond where he is at.
- Abram renews his vision and begins to move toward it

Elijah

1 Kings 18.41-46

- Elijah had declared God's Word to King Ahab – 'there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word'
- God supernaturally provided for him for three years
- He challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest on Mt Carmel and won a mighty victory
- Elijah announces to Ahab that the rain is coming
- Elijah climbs Mt Carmel and prays – sending his servant to 'look toward the sea'.

Clouds are formed out at sea - look from the place where you are at - that's where your breakthrough is coming from.

Look beyond your infirmities, your lack, your inabilities, your worries and fears, your circumstances and situations – lengthen your cords, take in a greater compass, reach further and wider, get a vision of your answer - that's where your victory is coming from.

You may not see it straight away but keep looking.

Early Church

Acts 1.8

Jesus commissioned the disciples to go into all the world and preach the good news.

His words to them were: begin where you are but take in a greater compass. Look beyond Jerusalem, look towards Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

Look at the first few chapters of Acts – it's all focused on Jerusalem.

- church activities were all centred around Jerusalem
- what happened to their worldwide plan?
- danger of becoming contained.

Something significant happens to the church at the end of ch.7 into chs.8 & 9 – SAUL - persecution - church is scattered and catches the worldwide vision
The church breaks free from containment and explodes onto the worldwide scene.