



Resource Discovery

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Philippians 4:19-20

Introduction to Resource Discovery

“Resource Discovery” is more than simply a euphemism for fundraising. It encompasses a fundamental shift in thinking. Fundraising implies that if we don’t put our own effort into the process, then the funds will not be available. Resource discovery, however, recognizes that mission work is part of God’s plan and He has already provided the resources, we simply need to discover where they are. God has placed His resources in strategic locations for the purpose of furthering the cause of His Kingdom work.

Through resource discovery, we join God in His plan, with the result that our trip will be funded, others will be introduced to the mission, and ultimately, He will be glorified.

“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.”

Philippians 4:17-18

Multiplied Blessing

The above passage was penned by the Apostle Paul, who is arguably the greatest Gospel missionary in the history of the Church. While he was known to be a tentmaker, he worked this job for the purpose of contributing financially to the mission. While he was personally invested, he also recognized the benefits that come through seeking outside support.

- Paul was able to focus on his calling. God called him to take the Gospel to the Gentiles...the world. This monumental task required Paul’s focus and attention. With the help of outside funding, he could approach his mission without the distraction and burden of financing this worldwide endeavor.
- The church and community were drawn into the mission. Going into the world was a new concept for this new church. The Jewish temple system required people to journey from around the world to meet with God in His house. Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection broke through the old system and created a new way to relate to God. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. He charged us to take God to the people (Matthew 28:19-20). Through giving to support the mission, the early church could better understand and serve obediently in the mission even if they themselves weren’t traveling. The church and the church members were blessed by their contribution and their obedient generosity.
- Paul was blessed by knowing he had a support team. Those who gave financially were the same people who prayed for him. Whether he was in the field or in prison, there was tangible evidence that he was not alone. People loved him and they were approaching the throne of God in prayer on his behalf.

God's plan and provision for the mission in the early Church remains His plan and provision for the ongoing mission of the Church today. If we will understand that He has all the resources we need to be active in the Gospel mission, we can confidently, obediently go. Ours is not to create the resources needed but simply to discover where God has stored them. There is blessing in being obedient through giving. The concept of resource discovery provides others with an opportunity to be obedient even if they are not going on the current trip. We shouldn't withhold that opportunity simply because we aren't comfortable making it available.

A Healthy Mix

God places His resources for a mission trip in the hands of many partners. We must recognize that He has a purpose in involving each partner. We should strive for a healthy mix of support to ensure that we are making every opportunity available.

- **Personal:** We should contribute significantly to our own trip. There is a level of sacrifice that we should expect when we have been called to go. Your trip may come at the expense of a vacation or a hobby. It may mean giving up that fancy coffee for a time. Jesus made it clear that following Him comes with sacrifice. The personal financial sacrifice we make should be a reminder that we are called by the One who sacrificed His Son for this mission.
- **Church:** We should expect the support of the local church. Jesus' plan outlined in the Great Commission is for the church to make and send disciples. The leaders of your church should understand what you are doing and they should be willing to contribute financially and with prayer. Missionaries do not send themselves. The church sends. This may mean that the church voices support and allows members to support individually. This may mean that the church, as a body, voices approval and contributes financially, as a body. At Stafford Crossing, we are blessed with leaders who have a passion for the mission. As such, Stafford Crossing has already contributed significantly to the cost of your trip.
- **Family:** We should expect the support of believers in our families. Do they understand what you are doing and why? If not, you should have that conversation soon. They know you, your passions and your abilities. When they have heard what God has called you to do, they should be on board. For family members who are not believers, this is a great opportunity to share the mission and the reason behind your desire to go--to share the Good News of Jesus and what He is doing in your life.
- **Friends:** We all have a circle of influence. These folks will know that we are going away for a time. They will ask questions. We have an amazing opportunity to talk about what Jesus has done in our lives and what He wants to do in the lives of others. This is why we are going! We can start those conversations today.

We should not neglect any of these opportunities. Initiating these conversations requires that we think through why we are going and what we hope to accomplish. If we can't share that clearly

and succinctly with people we know, then we likely aren't ready to share it with people we don't know. This is our chance to understand and "prove" the calling we heard from God. It is in these conversations that our local mission field overlaps with our international mission field.

Also, these connections are a way to extend the trip and its impact once you have returned. You should report back to your contributors and share what became of their investment. Again, these are Gospel conversations that are tied to resource discovery. Allow God to use you back home the way He used you in the field.

Conclusion

Our mission starts now. We don't depart for weeks, but the conversations start now. God has planted His resources in strategic places so that we can engage right here at home. Start a conversation that will draw someone else into the mission. As they are drawn closer to the mission, they are drawn closer to God. Prepare to have conversations about your calling and about your faith.

For some, the easiest thing to do is provide the monetary resources for yourself. However, as you prepare to travel to unfamiliar and sometimes scary places, God doesn't want you to rely on self. Instead, He asks you to trust Him that He will provide.

Finally, you are in good company as you embrace resource discovery:

"...and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means."

Luke 8:2-3

Jesus, the Owner and Creator of all resources, went on a mission. He left His home to live and serve in a place of great need. Being God-clothed-in-flesh, every resource in all of creation was available to Him. Jesus could have started, sustained, and completed the mission entirely by Himself. However, He chose to include others. He got uncomfortable and invited others into the conversation and into the mission while He lived among them. He chose the more difficult way--not for His benefit, but for ours.

Today Jesus continues to include us. He invites us to follow Him into the mission, trusting in His calling and provision.

Do the hard work of resource discovery. The blessing is not just for you.